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Modernist Architecture in Illustrative Art for Children and Teenagers in the People's Republic of Poland

Interest in the architectural legacy of the People's Republic of Poland has grown significantly in recent years. The trend has resulted in new academic publications and texts aimed at a wider audience. Apart from works tackling the subject strictly from the perspective of the history of architecture, there are also those that situate it in the broader context of the history of architectural culture. Nevertheless, this area still awaits more focused scholarly attention.

The presence of architectural motifs in publications intended for children and younger teenagers is but one of the many issues that are yet to be thoroughly analysed. Significantly, such publications – books and periodicals alike – were often printed in large quantities, amounting to several dozen or even several hundred thousand copies. The influence of these works was therefore enormous, while their content shaped the identity of several generations of children growing up in post-war Poland.¹ Young readers could choose from hundreds of books in which architec-

1 For a long time, the issues of the persuasive, ideological or even propagandist aspect of illustrated publications for children remained outside of the scope of scholarly interests. This has begun to change, partially owing to the emergence of specialised collections of such publications, such as Cotsen Children's Library at Princeton University (a part of this collection, comprising ca. one thousand Soviet children's books issued between 1917–1941 was analysed by Anika Burgess in *The Artful Propaganda of Soviet Children's Literature*, <https://www.atlasobscura.com/articles/soviet-childrens-books-propaganda> [accessed 15 September 2018]. The milieu of scholars associated with that collection is conducting a digitalisation project entitled "Playing Soviet: Visual Language of Early Soviet Children's Books, 1917–1953" (cf: S. A. Oushakine, *The Pedagogy of Images. Depicting Communism for Children*, <https://www.aseees.org/news-events/aseees-blog-feed/pedagogy-images-depicting-communism-children> [accessed 15 September 2018]; furthermore, two academic conferences have recently been organised, both bearing the title of "The Pedagogy of Images. Depicting Communism for Children" (2015 and 2017). Unfortunately, it appears that the results have not yet been published. Earlier publications discussing similar issues include Julian Rothenstein's *Inside the Rainbow: Russian Children's Literature 1920–35. Beautiful Books, Terrible Times*, London, 2013. One of the earlier monographs of the type is Anke Schmidt's, *Kinder- und Jugendliteratur im Dritten Reich. Strategien zur Indoktrination des Judenhasses mit Texten und Bildern*, Munich, 2005, which, as

ture played a more or less significant role. Architectural motifs were also present in periodicals such as *Miś*, *Świerszczyk*, *Płomyczek* or *Płomyk*. The nature of such themes was, naturally, very varied; at times architecture – modern or historical – moved to the foreground, yet in the majority of cases the images of buildings provided nothing more than a visual backdrop for the narrated story. However, even presented as only the background, the forms of architecture chosen by the illustrators were not received indifferently by the readers, since they conveyed a certain model imagery of houses, flats and housing estates, or entire cities.

The images in question (as well as the accompanying texts, which should not be artificially isolated from visual representations) could be counted by the thousand, which is why a comprehensive overview of this topic cannot fit into the spatial constraints of a modest article. I will therefore only focus on a single theme, namely the methods in which publications for children and young readers issued in communist Poland presented, and often even propagated, modernist architecture. Due to the choice of the subject matter, the article will mainly focus on the period of the post-Stalinist Thaw when, after several years of dominance of socialist realism, artists in Poland started to reach for modern forms, both in architectural and graphic design.

much as can be judged from fragments available on the Internet, puts emphasis on the textual aspects rather than on the imagery (<https://www.grin.com/document/161307>; accessed 15 September 2018). The same is true of the publication by Lucy Raby, “Pleasure or Propaganda? The Role of Children’s Publishing during 1914–1918”, *The Journal of Publishing Culture*, 2017, vol. 7 (April), <http://journalpublishingculture.weebly.com/uploads/1/6/8/4/16842954/raby.pdf> [accessed 15 September 2018]. In the Polish context, an ambitious attempt at a synthetic approach to the issue of historical fiction, inherently burdened with a heavy ideological message, was presented by Gertruda Skotnicka in her book *Barwy przeszłości. O opowieściach historycznych dla dzieci i młodzieży 1939–1989* [The colours of yesteryear. On historical stories for children and teenagers in 1939–1989], Gdańsk, 2008. As far as the visual aspect is concerned, the most interesting part of the book is the one devoted to, as the title of the relevant subchapter suggests, “translating the past into visual language” (pp. 218–223). Unfortunately, the section proves thoroughly disappointing; the chosen examples seem entirely random and the author appears to have very little knowledge in the subject of illustrative arts. The relations between ideology and illustrative art for children and teenagers have become the subject of several of my own publications, e.g. J. Friedrich, “Fakty i pamięć. Obraz Grunwaldu i Krzyżaków w ilustracjach do podręczników szkolnych sprzed czterdziestu lat jako pretekst do zastanowienia się nad kilkoma sprawami” [Facts and memory. The image of the battle of Grunwald and Teutonic knights in school book illustrations from forty years ago as the starting point for the analysis of several issues], *RYMS. Kwartalnik o książkach dla dzieci i młodzieży*, 2011, no. 15, pp. 19–22; idem, “Grunwald i Krzyżacy w ilustracjach polskich czasopism dla dzieci i młodzieży w latach 60. i 70. XX wieku” [Grunwald and Teutonic Knights depicted in illustrations in Polish periodicals for children and teenagers], *Porta Aurea. Rocznik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, 2011, 10, pp. 198–222; idem, “Tematyka krzyżacka i grunwaldzka w ilustracjach książek beletrystycznych dla dzieci i młodzieży w Polsce w latach 1945–1989” [The motifs of Teutonic knights and the battle of Grunwald in illustrations for *belles lettres* books for children and teenagers in Poland between 1945–1989], *Porta Aurea. Rocznik Instytutu Historii Sztuki Uniwersytetu Gdańskiego*, 2017, 16, pp. 162–195.

After the pivotal year of 1956, the modernist paradigm in Polish architecture was not questioned for more than a decade. The earliest voices of criticism, especially regarding the practice of housing estate building, were not heard until the 1970s. As demonstrated below, the situation was more or less vividly reflected in publications for young readers issued at the time. The article, as stated above, focuses on the period after 1956, with the closing date being 1981. The choice of these liminal dates is justified not only in the obvious connection with the political history of Poland, but also in the history of architecture: the post-Stalinist Thaw established the monopoly of modernist style in architectural design, which in Poland began to be contested in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Such a time frame is also accordant with the history of Polish illustrative arts, which was at its peak of prominence between the late 1950s and late 1970s. It should also be noted that, due to the preliminary nature of the present work, the analysis concentrates on non-serial publications, treating the material dispersed throughout periodicals as supplementary to the image emerging from book publications.²

It seems logical to open with a brief overview of the situation before the Thaw, as architectural motifs appearing in illustrative arts for children and teenagers were relatively common even in the Stalinist era. At that time, the most frequently presented objects were those significant for communist propaganda, i.e. ones connected with either industrialisation (for instance factories, shipyards, foundries, mines or dams),³ or, if less frequently, with housing architecture.⁴ The art propa-

2 The books presented below were selected from more than three thousand volumes of source material (my own collection). Naturally, not all of these publications include architectural themes, let alone examples of modernist architecture, although not all of the ones that do were included in the present article. Naturally, the number of illustrated books published in the analysed period greatly exceeds three thousand, so the pool of source material may certainly be expanded in the future. I do hope, however, that the presented selection of sources is representative enough to justify the formulation of certain generalised statements.

3 E.g. Alfred Liebfeld, *Opowiadania młodych hutników* [Stories of young steelworkers], ill. Stefan Styczyński, Warsaw, 1951, pp. 6–7, 33; Anna Lanota, *O sześcioletnim Bronku i sześcioletnim planie* [The six-year-old Broniek and the Six-Year Plan], ill. Tadeusz Jodłowski, Warsaw, 1951, p. [12]; Stanisław Aleksandrak, *Obrazki* [Images], ill. Joanna Grabska and Antoni Pucek, Warsaw, 1952, pp. 5, 13, 15; Marian Niżyński, *Soła*, ill. Bohdan Bocianowski and Zbigniew Piotrowski, Warsaw, 1952, pp. 13–15, 18–22, 28–29; Halina Koszutska, *Podróże Macka* [Maciek's travels], ill. Tadeusz Jodłowski, Warsaw, 1953 (2nd edition), p. 67; Janusz Jurjewicz, *Skarby ziemi* [Treasures of the land], ill. Janusz Jurjewicz, Warsaw, 1956, p. 7; Zbigniew Rychlicki, *Węgiel* [Coal], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1956, p. [1]; Jan Wilkowski, *Podróż po mapie* [A journey round the map], ill. Zbigniew Kaja, Warsaw, 1956, pp. 38–39, 58–59, 61. The great investments of the Stalinist era were also represented in periodicals for children; see, for example, Zbigniew Rychlicki's illustrations to the poem *Piosenka o Nowej Hucie* [A song of Nowa Huta] by Maria Terlikowska, *Świerszczyle-Iskierki*, 1952/1953, no. 5, p. 69.

4 One of the better examples comes from a booklet devoted entirely to this issue: Hanna Mortkowicz-Olczakowa, *Na budowie* [On the construction site], ill. Hanna Czajkowska, Warsaw, 1952. An earlier work, published before the official introduction of socialist realism, also provides an example – it is Helena Sołtanówna's illustration for the book *Towarzysze* [Comrades] by Ewa Szelburg-Zarembina, (n.p.), 1947, p. 14. The illustration depicts the construction of

gated socialist realist forms, both in the depiction of existing structures, and in the representations of synthetic visions of the city as such.⁵ As in the propaganda of the time, the pride of place in Polish publications for children and young readers in the Stalinist period was taken by images of Warsaw, such as the Mariensztat district,⁶ the reconstructed Old Town,⁷ the Marszałkowska housing district (MDM),⁸ and the underground, whose construction had not yet commenced at the time.⁹ The W-Z Route with its most characteristic section, the tunnel near St. Anne's church, was depicted exceptionally often.¹⁰ The popularity of this motif was indubitably increased by the fact that the W-Z Route constituted one of the earliest and most recognisable elements of the post-war reconstruction of Warsaw. In contrast, to the best of my knowledge, depictions of the Palace of Culture and Science were a rare sight in book publications,¹¹ which may be explained with the fact that its construction was not completed until 1955, i.e. by the very end of the Stalinist era,

a city which is clearly modernist in its design. See also, for example, Czesław Janczarski, *Przed-szkole na Kole* [The kindergarten in the Koło district], ill. Anna Kopczyńska, Warsaw, 1952, p. 5; Zdzisław Witwicki, *Warszawa* [Warsaw], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1956, p. 10.

- 5 Such imagery is vividly exemplified by Jadwiga Okońska's drawing captioned "This is a street in a city" and depicting rows of buildings of several floors, topped with cornices, with bossage at their bases, with decorative friezes and window surrounds. At the far end of the street the illustrator added a monumental edifice with a colonnaded portico. Simplified as they are, the forms may easily be associated with socialist realism (*Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 8, p. 125).
- 6 E.g. Hanna Januszewska, *To Trasa śpiewa* [It's the Route singing], ill. Ignacy Witz, Warsaw, [1950], pp. 6, 16, 17, 19; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 3; *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 3, Mieczysław's Piotrowski's illustration on p. 1 of the cover.
- 7 E.g. Krzysztof Gruszczyński, *Stare Miasto* [The Old Town], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1956; Z. Witwicki, *Warszawa*, ill. on p. 2; Barbara Baro's illustrations to Hanna Łochocka's poem *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 313; *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 35, p. 549, ill. Mieczysław Piotrowski.
- 8 E.g. Lanota, op. cit., p. 25; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 11. The motif also appeared in periodicals at the time, see, for example, Jan Marcin Szancer's illustrations to one of the poems comprising *Abecadło warszawskie* [The Warsaw alphabet] by Wanda Chotomska, *Świerszczyk*, 1956/1957, no. 4, p. 57.
- 9 E.g. Lanota, op. cit., pp. 20–23.
- 10 E.g. Januszewska, op. cit., p. 27; Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, *Elektryczne schody* [Electric stairs], ill. Józef Mroszczak, Warsaw, 1950, p. 5; Jan Brzechwa, *Kaczka dziwaczka* [The odd duck], ill. Henryk Tomaszewski, Warsaw, 1953 (3rd edition), p. 29; Koszutska, op. cit., p. 99; Maria Kownacka, *Kłoczek* [The block], ill. Janusz Jurjewicz, Warsaw, 1954, p. 15; Witwicki, op. cit., p. 4; Konstanty Ildefons Gałczyński, *Wiersze dla dzieci* [Poems for children], ill. Marek Rudnicki, Warsaw, 1957 (submitted for publication on 25 July 1956, i.e. before the pivotal October), p. 13; Barbara Baro's illustrations for Hanna Łochocka's poem, *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 313. The characteristic shape of the W-Z Route tunnel also appeared in the edition of Falski's *Elementarz* [Reading primer] issued in 1957 (cf. note 14), p. 166, as well as in later publications about Warsaw, as exemplified by, e.g., Janusz Stanny's illustrations to Stanisław Szymborski's *Poeta i źrebę* [The poet and the colt], Warsaw, 1969, pp. [12–13].
- 11 E.g. Witwicki, op. cit., p. 12.

when the process of transition from the socialist realist model to modernist ideas had already begun.¹²

The transformations that took place in the years that followed (as well as the cognitive value of the material presented here) become clearly apparent if one compares two highly influential depictions, namely illustrations for Marian Falski's *Elementarz* [Reading primer], used for several dozen years in Polish schools and familiar to all students of the day.¹³ The first of the illustrations in question, drawn by Jerzy Karolak in 1957, appeared in the post-Thaw version of the textbook.¹⁴ It accompanies a sentence to be learnt by pupils attending the first grade of primary school, which reads: "This is a house". The illustrator had to translate this simple sentence into an image, which inevitably concretised the abstract concept. The array of possibilities was vast: the house could have been small or big, a detached building or a multi-family housing estate, traditional or modern. As far as the present analysis is concerned, it is the illustrator's choice in this case that proves the most relevant. Karolak depicted a decidedly traditional building, featuring a sloping roof, a dormer with volute ornaments, and stairs leading directly from the street up to the front door framed by a classical porch with a triangular pediment (Fig. 1).¹⁵

12 In contrast, the Palace of Culture and Science appeared frequently in periodicals for children, which may probably be explained with the faster pace of the publishing process. See, for example, Antoni Pucek's drawing depicting construction cranes and the lower part of the Palace building (*Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1952/1953, no. 26, p. 1 of the cover), the art by Zbigniew Rychlicki, showing the almost completed structure (*Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 2, p. 1 of the cover), or the one by Walentyna Symonowicz depicting the silhouette of the Palace towering over the view of Warsaw as seen from the Vistula (*Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955 no. 20, p. 1 of the cover). See also: *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1953/1954, no. 26, p. 402 and 1954/1955, no. 46, p. 723 (both illustrations by Krystyna Łopuszyńska); *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1953/1954, no. 45, p. 714 (ill. Barbara Dutkowska); *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1954/1955, no. 3, p. 36 and 1954/1955, no. 20, p. 312 (both illustrations by Barbara Baro). One of the publications acquainted Polish children with the Moscow prototypes of the Warsaw skyscraper (see: *Świerszczyk-Iskierki*, 1955/1956, no. 2, p. 22, ill. Józef Czerwiński). It should be noted that the Warsaw Palace of Culture and Science was frequently depicted in illustrations published after the breakthrough year 1956, both in books and in periodicals for children and teenagers.

13 The significance of the illustrations in the reading primer went beyond their decorative function; they also played a prominent role in the didactic process. Cf. Marian Falski, *Przewodnik metodyczny do elementarza i ćwiczeń elementarzowych* [Methodological guide to the reading primer and primer exercises], Warsaw, 1963, p. 72–73.

14 Marian Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1957, p. 36 (I reference the 16th edition published in 1972). The 1957 edition did not include the most glaring ideological content present in the previous versions, such as texts about model workers from Nowa Huta, the meeting of young pioneers from Poland and the USSR, or the portraits of Bierut and Rokossowski; DS, *Ukazał się reprint „Elementarza” z 1957 roku* [A reissue of the reading primer from 1957], <https://wiadomosci.onet.pl/ukazal-sie-reprint-elementarza-z-1957-roku/wml9x>, published on 12 March 2003 [accessed 15 September 2018].

15 Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. J. Karolak, p. 8. This version also included one more depiction of a school, which was no less traditional in appearance; *ibid.* p. 133.

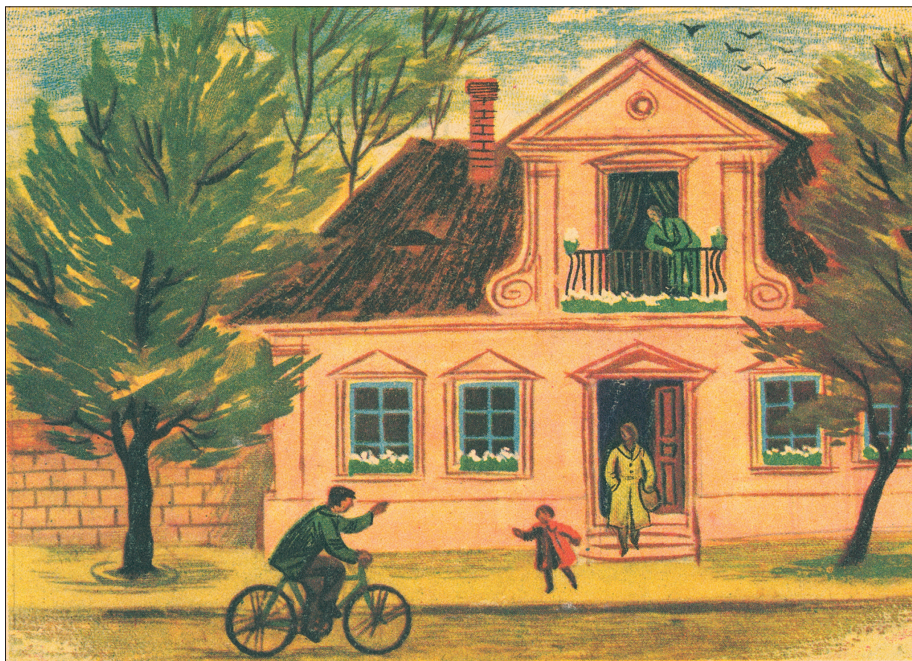


Fig. 1. Jerzy Karolak, illustration for *Elementarz* by Marian Falski, 1957



Fig. 2. Janusz Grabiański, illustration for *Elementarz* by Marian Falski, 1974

After more than a decade, the reading primer illustrated by Karolak was replaced with a new edition, featuring art by Janusz Grabiański. This version, first published in 1974, also included the sentence “This is a house”, yet the accompanying illustration was very different. This time the young readers were shown a modernist block of flats with distinct rectangular divisions of the façade and with colourful balconies, the entire structure covered with a expressively shaped roof of reinforced concrete (Fig. 2).¹⁶ It is a house with a different message than its predecessor from 1957.

School buildings depicted in the two editions of the *Elementarz* are equally dissimilar. In Karolak’s version, the children enter the school grounds through a gate framed with posts in the historicist style, while the school edifice itself appears rather traditional. The school in Grabiański’s illustrations, in turn, is fully modernist in appearance: it features an “undercut” lower floor and a projecting upper floor resting on slender ferroconcrete pillars, and, most prominently of all, ribbon windows spanning the entire breadth of the façade.¹⁷

The difference between the two images described above may easily be explained with the changes in architecture and social life in Poland that took place between the late 1950s and early 1970s. On the one hand (as mentioned above), modernist forms became the uncontested norm in Polish architecture; on the other, a substantial portion of the population moved to modern housing estates, while the plan to build “one thousand schools for the millennial anniversary [of Polish statehood]”, initiated in 1958, radically modernised the designs of educational institutions. Let us examine how this transformation was reflected in illustrated publications for children and teenagers.

First of all, Polish illustrators in the 1960s started to portray blocks of flats and housing estates as the living space of the young protagonists. Hanna Krajnik’s illustrations for the Polish translation of a Russian book *Iryska* by Anna Aksyonova provide a good example.¹⁸ In almost all the images, the titular character appears against the background of a housing estate, a flat or a stairwell in a block. The first illustration shows only the protagonist, with her hair in pigtails and wearing a warm winter cap; the next one presents the girl’s everyday environment – a modern housing estate with flat-roofed blocks of flats and vertical stairwells

16 Falski, *Elementarz* [Reading primer], ill. Janusz Grabiański, Warsaw, 1974 (I reference the 3rd edition published in 1977), p. 34. It should be emphasised that the architectural quality of the building depicted by the illustrator resembles Western-European standards rather than the ones known from the People’s Republic of Poland. This is in line with the trend visible in other illustrations by the same author, who showed Polish children a world which was much more idealised than the one they encountered in their everyday life. For instance, the cars depicted in the textbook included western models, from a Mini Morris to a Rolls-Royce (!), but not a single Syrena, Warszawa or even a Fiat 126p, which began to appear on Polish roads roughly at the time when the new edition of the primer was published.

17 Falski, *Elementarz*, ill. Grabiański, p. 8. This version includes two more depictions of school buildings, both clearly modern in form; *ibid.*, pp. 106, 154.

18 Anna Aksyonova, *Iryska* [The girl Iris], trans. Janina Lewandowska, ill. Hanna Krajnik, Warsaw, 1967.

featuring expressively displayed steps of reinforced concrete, which Iryska is climbing (Fig. 3). The image is an accurate depiction of the situation described on the following page: "She has just moved in to a new house with her parents. The house is nice, big and bright, and the courtyard that surrounds it is spacious as well. All houses in the estate look similar, only some have red stripes, and some blue stripes painted on them".¹⁹

The description hints at the problem of a certain monotony which had already been identified in modernist residential architecture (the text refers both to the Soviet and the Polish reality of the time), while also pointing to the attempts at overcoming through the introduction of different colour schemes to specific blocks. Similar problems were encountered by illustrators, who had to find ways to enliven the geometric forms of modern architecture.²⁰ Krajnik's solution was to introduce a certain painterly quality to her illustrations, presenting a limited, but sensual colour palette. She also countered the geometric forms by adding the motif of a snowman standing between trees covered in frost. Maria Uszacka, in turn, put blocks of flats against the backdrop of the moon and stars and drew potted plants inside the windows lit with electric lights (Fig. 4).²¹ A similarly idyllic vision was presented by Maria Mackiewicz, who illustrated a typical scene from the life of a housing estate, with children being called by their mothers to come up for dinner.²² The block shown in this illustration is small, even cosy-looking; it is also colourful, which was a feature which the post-Thaw propaganda presented as a significant asset of the new style of architecture. This fact was not lost on authors writing for children. One of the poems published at the time mentions "new estates and new houses, colourful like a wreath of flowers";²³ another reads: "Just nearby there is a house with a pattern of squares: / colourful squares and plants in the windows, / here hang colourful planter boxes, / there shine colourful stuccos. / The entire district, I give you my word, / is vibrant with magnificent colour!"²⁴

These assets could not be seen in the monumental buildings appearing in children's books from the 1970s, which were already, to some extent at least, expressing the alienation of the block housing estates. An early example of such a cold block

19 Ibid., p. 6. Unless stated otherwise, all passages from non-English-language sources have been translated solely for the purpose of the present article.

20 The difficulties of integrating the image of a block of flats with the traditional repertoire of motifs in illustrations for children are clearly apparent in Jan Marcin Szancer's images for *Krakowskie abecadło* [The Cracow alphabet]. When depicting older architectural styles and street life Szancer uses a dense style full of detail and colour. The illustration depicting the modernist blocks of Nowa Huta, in turn, seems rather stiff and schematic, clearly different from the others; Wanda Chotomska, *Krakowskie abecadło*, ill. Jan Marcin Szancer, Warsaw, 1962, p. [15].

21 Inga Borg, *Niezwykły dzień Agnieszki* [Agnetta's extraordinary day], trans. Teresa Chłapowska, ill. Maria Uszacka, Warsaw, 1969, p. 49.

22 Krystyna Pokorska, *Ja to powiem* [I will say this], ill. Maria Mackiewicz, Warsaw, 1969, p. 10.

23 Włodzimierz Ścisłowski, "Co we Wrocławiu dzieci zachwyca?" [What awes the children in Wrocław?], ill. Barbara Dutkowska, *Świerszczyk*, 1969, no. 20, p. 313.

24 Maria Terlikowska, "Kolorowe domy" [Colourful houses], ill. Adam Kilian, *Płomyczek*, 1960, no. 18, p. 509.



Fig. 3. Hanna Krajnik, illustration for the book *Iryska* by Anna Aksyonova, 1967



Fig. 4. Maria Uszacka, illustration for the book *Niezwyczajny dzień Agnieszki* by Inga Borg, 1969

of flats comes from Uszacka's illustrations to *Bardzo straszna historia* [A very scary story] by Anatoly Aleksin. The massive building was deliberately stripped of all elements that could mitigate the austerity of its form.²⁵ The protagonist was confronted with the menacing edifice; it must, however, be noted that the feelings of unease induced by the image are justified by the contents of the book itself.²⁶ Similar impressions are evoked by the residential high-rise (ca. fifty stories high) depicted by Tomasz Bogacki²⁷ and the sombre blocks from an illustration by Teresa Wilbik,²⁸ standing in an estate devoid of all greenery and resembling the inhuman visions conjured by Hilberseimer. Such disturbing imagery could have been a symptom of the criticism of the idea of modernist housing estates, growing in volume since the early 1970s, yet the handful of illustrations is not enough to serve as the basis for far-reaching conclusions, especially since their appearance was heavily influenced

25 Anatoly Aleksin, *Bardzo straszna historia, czyli powieść detektywistyczna, którą napisał Alik Detkin* [A very scary story. A detective story written by Alik Detkin], trans. Irena Piotrowska, Warsaw, 1970, p. 211.

26 Uszacka depicted the motif of a modern housing block at least once more; see Elżbieta Burakowska, *Elektroniczny detektyw* [An electronic detective], ill. Maria Uszacka, Warsaw, 1977, p. 43.

27 Magda Leja, *Chłopiec z wieżowca* [The boy from the high-rise], ill. Tomasz Bogacki, Warsaw, 1975, p. 5.

28 Wanda Chotomska, *Leonek i lew* [Leonek and the lion], ill. Teresa Wilbik, Warsaw, 1976, ill. no. 12–13.

by the texts themselves, and some of them – for instance the previously mentioned *A Very Scary Story* – definitely called for an atmosphere of uncertainty or unease.

This being said, such negative emotions are not found in publications dating from the 1960s. The optimism apparent in the texts of the time is well exemplified by a poem by Roman Pisarski published in *Płomyczek* under the telling title of *Nowe osiedle* [A new housing estate]. It mentioned “new glass houses”, “nice flats”, “bright rooms”, and life “in pleasant harmony with the neighbours”, as well as “new thoughts and hopes” of the people who would inhabit the place.²⁹ Clues as to the modernist appearance of these dwellings may already be found in the poem itself; the phrases “glass houses” and “bright rooms” make it rather clear. The imagery accompanying the poem fills the remaining gaps. The illustration, drawn by Wiesław Majchrzak, depicts buildings clearly modernist in form (Fig. 5).

Another example of the methods used to instil in young readers a positive attitude towards housing estate architecture may be found in a slightly later poem by Czesław Janczarski, entitled *Na Żoliborskich Sadach* [In the estate of Sady Żoliborskie]. It includes the following passages: “Sady Żoliborskie/ are almost like



Fig. 5. Wiesław Majchrzak, illustration for the poem *Nowe osiedle* by Roman Pisarski, 1967

29 Roman Pisarski, “Nowe osiedle” [A new housing estate], ill. Wiesław Majchrzak, *Płomyczek*, 1967, no. 18, p. 521.

a park” and “Among the lawns, the pathways / the blue of a hundred windows. / Every window wears a smile / and looks deeply in your eye. / So many hoops and skipping ropes! / All in the colours of the rainbow. / Be it the evening or the morning – / kids are running, / laughter is ringing”. Maria Sołtyk’s illustrations to this text feature children playing among the greenery and a modern block of a Warsaw housing estate (Fig. 6).³⁰

The schools attended by the young protagonists of the publications issued at the time were no less modern in form.³¹ There was even a book devoted entirely to the stages of constructing a school building.³² The rhyming text was accompanied by illustrations drawn by Czesław Wielhorski, which included an image of the



Fig. 6. Maria Sołtyk, illustration for the poem *Na Żoliborskich Sadach* by Czesław Janczarski, 1970

- 30 Czesław Janczarski, “Na Żoliborskich Sadach” [In the estate of Sady Żoliborskie], ill. Maria Sołtyk, *Świerszczyk*, 1970, no. 37, p. 580.
- 31 The modernist form of school edifices presented in Janusz Grabiański’s illustrations to the 1970s edition of the reading primer have already been discussed above. See also e.g.: Halina Gutsche, *Witaj szkoło* [Back to school], ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [12–13]; Adam Kilian’s illustrations to Czesław Janczarski’s poem *Szkoła – pomnik Tysiąclecia* [The school – a monument to the millennium], *Płomyczek*, 1963, no. 18, p. 485; Danuta Konwicka’s cover illustration for *Świerszczyk*, 1968, no. 46.
- 32 Stanisław Sztydłowski, *Jak zostałem kłapouchem* [How I became lop-eared], ill. Czesław Wielhorski, Warsaw, 1968.

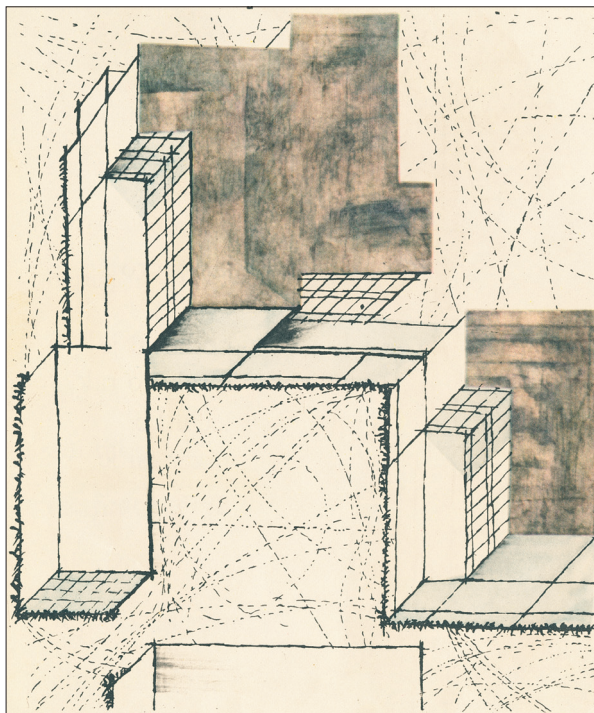


Fig. 7. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Jak zostałem kłapouchem* by Stanisław Sztybelowski, 1968

completed edifice (Fig. 7). The latter drawing proves interesting due to not only the very modern shape of the building, but also the chosen form of visual expression. The artist used an axonometrical drawing derived directly from architectural design.³³ Such a depiction is slightly surprising in an illustration for children, even though it seems justified given that the book is about architecture and was illustrated by an artist with an education in that field.

Significant elements of modernist housing estates included the playground, which the periodical *Świerszczyk* described as follows: “In front of the house there are slides, climbing frames and sandboxes. There is no need to ask mom for permission to go to the park. Children can have a lot of fun out in the yard”.³⁴ Images of playgrounds, scarce as they may be, are also found in illustrative art of the time.³⁵

33 Ibid., p. [34]. One more depiction of the same school appears in the book, this time as an illustration of a photographed 3D model of the edifice. Ibid. p. [40].

34 “Malowane domy” [Painted houses], ill. Krystyna Bieniek, *Świerszczyk*, 1963, no. 25, p. 394.

35 E.g. Danuta Gellnerowa, *W mieście* [In the city], ill. Anna Stylo-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977, p. [5]; Maria Sołtyk’s cover illustration for *Świerszczyk*, 1969, no. 38. The caption for the latter image mentions a Jordan Garden Park [a type of green area common in cities at the time], yet the image presents something more akin to a large playground – in the jargon of the time both terms were often used interchangeably. A suggestive depiction of a playground may also be found in the previously mentioned book by Anna Lanota *O sześcioletnim Bronku i sześcioletnim*

A unique depiction of this motif is found on the illustration by Wanda Orlińska and Bogusław Orliński drawn in the mid-1970s and accompanying the iconic poem by Władysław Bełza starting with the verses *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały* [Who are you? A young Pole].³⁶ It shows a playground full of smiling children located at the edge of a large modernist housing estate lush with greenery, featuring many varied forms of architecture (Fig. 8), which was a rare sight in the architectural practice of the time, already largely dependent on prefabricated units and standardisation. Even more interesting than the idealisation of modernist architecture is the location the illustration is given within the book. The poem is accompanied by ca. one hundred and forty images of differing sizes, depicting various aspects of Poland's past and present.³⁷ The illustration in question is the last one in the presented set. It may therefore be surmised that it was meant to show a synthetic representation of a very young Pole who could answer the question "Where do you live?" not only with "Among my people" (as the original poem professes), but also "In a housing estate".

The illustrators did not, however, limit themselves to depicting housing estates and blocks. At times they also revealed the interiors of flats. Interestingly, these were rarely entirely modernist in style. Even Iryska, the protagonist of the previously mentioned book, finds her way into a flat which, although located in a modernist block, is furnished in a rather traditional manner:³⁸ an upholstered sofa with arm panels stands next to a huge wardrobe with a prominent crown moulding and carved ornaments. Some illustrations in books for children depict the protagonists in consistently modern interiors.³⁹ Hanna Czajkowska's work from 1961 provides a rather early example. The illustration features not only a modernist table and

planie, p. [21], published a few years earlier. Czesław Wielhorski also produced interesting images of playgrounds, published in two editions of the book *Śląski Park Kultury* [The Silesian Park of Culture], Katowice, [1959] and Katowice, 1963, each with a separate set of illustrations. Although these publications were intended for adult readers, the illustrations deserve a mention due to the subject matter and the author himself, since he is usually associated with illustrations for children.

- 36 Władysław Bełza, *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały!* [Who are you? A young Pole!], adapted by Mieczysław Siemiński, ill. Wanda Orlińska and Bogusław Orliński, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [26–27]. The edition may have been intended as a jubilee publication, since the introduction states that it was published on the thirtieth anniversary of the proclamation of the Polish People's Republic and the 150th anniversary of the poem's first appearance (which was, incidentally, untrue, as the poem was written in 1900).
- 37 In the context of the present analysis it must be mentioned that the book presents a modern housing estate as an element of the Polish reality or even the future, since it is accompanied with images such as a six-lane highway, a space rocket and a supersonic Tu-144 jet in the colours of the LOT airlines. This medley resembles the "fictional" images in Grabiański's illustrations to the reading primer (cf. note 16).
- 38 Aksyonova, op. cit., p. 13.
- 39 E.g. Ludwik Jerzy Kern, *Proszę słonia* [Dear elephant], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1964, p. 21 (I reference the 2nd edition, published in 1967); Celina Żmihorska, *Tak czy nie* [Yes or no], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1967, p. [8]; Joanna Papużyńska, *Pims, którego nie ma* [The non-existent Pims], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1967, p. 21; Jadwiga Wernerowa, *Isia i chomik* [Isia and the hamster], ill. Bożena Truchanowska, Warsaw, 1971, p. 39.



Fig. 8. Wanda i Bogusław Orlińscy, illustration for the book *Kto ty jesteś? Polak mały!* adapted from Władysław Bełza, 1974



Fig. 9. Hanna Czajkowska, illustration for the book *Zajaczek z rozbitego lusterka* by Helena Bechlerowa, 1961

chair, but also a modern regulated lamp and a curtain with an abstract pattern (Fig. 9).⁴⁰ The smooth floor is not covered with any carpets or rugs. The furnishings in Czajkowska's drawing are in line with the depiction of a modern flat included in an educational book for children entitled *Gdyby dożył pan Ambroży* [Had Mr. Ambroży lived to see], published only two years later. The publication compares various aspects of life past and present. The description in question reads as follows:

The room is different than the chambers of old. The furnishings comprise a light table covered with a transparent smooth napery of plastic foil, a soft, comfortable armchair, which may, if need be, be unfolded and converted into a bed. [...] The floor, tiled with plastic, is smooth and lustrous like a mirror. There is no crack for dust to gather in. Such a space is easy to keep clean. The light furniture may be moved at will.⁴¹

The text, which resembles similar descriptions published in reference books for adult readers,⁴² is accompanied by a relevant photograph.⁴³ Incidentally, the book about Mr. Ambroży was only one of the many educational publications of the time that included motifs referring to modern architecture. Such themes usually appeared in texts about architecture and construction as such. The pride of place here goes to books by the duo of Witold Szolginia and Romuald Klaybor, published in the early 1960s by "Nasza Księgarnia".⁴⁴ Although this valuable editorial series deserves a separate analysis as an outstanding early example of architectural education, the present article will only identify those passages that vividly illustrate the authors' ideas regarding what modern architecture should and should not be.

Interesting information may already be found in the first publication in the series, entitled *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* [What is your home like, Tomek?]. It presents four types of dwellings, namely a Roman house, a mediaeval castle, a modern flat and a house of the future. In line with the modernist paradigm, the description of a modern flat puts emphasis mainly on the kitchen and the bathroom, as well as on the means of keeping the living space clean. Let us turn to the presentation of

40 Helena Bechlerowa, *Zajęczek z rozbitego lusterka* [Catching sunbeams in a broken mirror], ill. Hanna Czajkowska, Warsaw, 1961, p. [6] (I reference the 2nd edition, 1972).

41 Zbigniew Przyrowski, *Gdyby dożył pan Ambroży* [Had Mr. Ambroży lived to see], ill. Romuald Klaybor, photos by. Władysław Jabłoński, Warsaw, 1963, p. [13].

42 E.g. Jan Szymański, *Książka o mieszkaniu ładnym i wygodnym* [A book on nice and comfortable flats], Warsaw, 1962; idem, *Małe mieszkanko* [A small flat], Warsaw, 1966.

43 The book consistently uses illustrations to present the world of the past and photographs to depict the present. It should be noted that the same principle was used in the case of housing. Modernity is, naturally, represented with the image of a residential block; Przyrowski, op. cit., p. [7].

44 The series included: *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* [What is your home like, Tomek?], Warsaw, 1960; *Tajemnica rurek w ścianie* [The mystery of pipes in the walls], Warsaw, 1962; *Przyroda uczy budować* [Nature teaches how to build], Warsaw, 1962 (note: on the title page the name of the illustrator is misspelled: "Kleibor"); *Domy z fabryki* [Houses from the factory], Warsaw, 1963. The latter three books were later given a re-edition with new visuals: *Tajemnica rurek w ścianie*, ill. Janusz Ciszewski, Warsaw, 1978; *Przyroda uczy budować*, ill. Zdzisław Milach, Warsaw, 1977; *Domy z fabryki*, ill. Stefan Jackowski, Warsaw, 1980.

the modern kitchen. As with the already cited passage from *Pan Ambroży*, published several years later, the text stresses simplicity, lightness and comfort:

Tomek's mom goes to the kitchen, which is rather small, but comfortable, colourful and full of light. It's comfortable, because the furnishings are sparse: the most important of them – the gas stove. A little further away there is the refrigerator, the table and several stools now slid under the table. This is all. Several cupboards are hidden... in the wall.⁴⁵

The importance of the gas stove and the refrigerator in the modern kitchen is emphasised by the accompanying illustration. Both appliances have been highlighted by red arrows pointing towards them in the picture, in a sense drawing them out of the illustration and presenting them in a more technical aspect. This special treatment testifies to the fact that at the time of the book's publication, i.e. the year 1960, many young readers in Poland were not very familiar with such modern appliances.⁴⁶

More evidence for this claim is found in a humorous book published several years later. It tells the tale of hams, pork loins and head cheeses dreaming of "moving from the old tenement of the sideboard to the new refrigerator housing as soon as possible".⁴⁷ Apparently, an electric refrigerator was not owned by every Polish family in the late 1960s.⁴⁸

Thus, the young people reading *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* must have been all the more amazed by the description of the kitchen of the future included in the final chapter. Both the text and the visual representation of the kitchen (Fig. 10) were clearly based on the experimental project entitled "The Kitchen of Tomorrow" presented several years prior by the American company Frigidaire.⁴⁹ Modern-looking kitchens and bathrooms were a backdrop for the story-book adventures, which shows that modernity was seeping ever deeper into everyday life.⁵⁰

As far as the propaganda of modernism in architecture is concerned, the book entitled *Przyroda uczy budować* [Nature teaches how to build] proves to be the most interesting in the series by Szolginia and Klaybor. Unlike the majority of publica-

45 Szolginia, *A jak Tomku...*, p. [20].

46 Cf. Wanda Chotomska's poem about the pantry and the refrigerator, *Pan Motorek* [Mr. Generator] ill. Bohdan Butenko, *Świerszczyk*, 1960, no. 46 p. 736.

47 Wanda Chotomska, *Od rzeczy do rzeczy* [From matter to matter], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki, Warsaw, 1969 (I reference the 2nd edition published in 1976), p. 37.

48 Apart from the emphasis on how significant refrigerators were as an appliance in a modern flat, the cited passage is a clear reference to the process commonly referred to as moving from "older" to "new" housing, which was underway in the 1960s.

49 For more on this kitchen, see, for example, Jonathan Woodham, *Twentieth-Century Design*, Oxford–New York, 1997, pp. 116–117.

50 E.g. Krystyna Boglar, *Wiercipiętek* [Wiggler], ill. Mirosław Pokora, Warsaw, 1969, p. 10; Halina Gutsche, Wiera Badalska, *Kasia*, ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1974, pp. [24-25], [28-29]; Anna Kozerska, *Gospodarstwo Ani i Gosi* [Ania and Gosia's farm], ill. Halina Gutsche, Warsaw, 1976 (I reference the 2nd edition published in 1982). See also the interesting visual puzzle, most probably drawn by Anna Hoffmannowa (the illustration is not signed), *Świerszczyk*, 1963, no. 20, p. 319.



Fig. 10. Romuald Klaybor, illustration for the book *A jak Tomku w twoim domku* by Witold Szolginia, 1960

tions of the time, it is not limited to describing a generalised vision of modernity, but presents specific examples of contemporary design which drew inspiration from structural forms known in the natural world. Thus, a book for young readers included forms referring to the experiments of Félix Candela and Richard Buckminster Fuller, as well as designs by Jørn Utzon and Eero Saarinen. The authors of the publication even made the exceedingly rare choice to identify this last architect by name. The book was, however, unique.⁵¹ Even the publications that did make an effort to introduce young readers to the world of construction and modern architecture, mostly followed a synthetic approach, explaining general principles or processes rather than specific phenomena.

The two books on prefabrication could be counted among such publications. The first of them appeared in 1963, when the trend for using prefabricated units was just beginning to take hold in Poland. It was another one in the series by Szolginia and Klaybor, bearing the title *Domy z fabryki* [Houses from the factory]. The book described the titular phenomenon in considerable detail, with a slightly older reader in mind. The second example was *Duży dom* [A big house] by Adam Jońca, published nearly twenty years later and illustrated by Bogusław Orliński. This book was, in turn, designed for very young readers; the text was brief and simple, as exemplified by the following passage: “So many new houses! They grew so fast! Such

⁵¹ The privilege of having his works presented in a separate “monographic” work was only granted to Le Corbusier, yet it was in a periodical publication. See: “Słoneczne miasta” [Sunny cities], *Płomyk*, 1965, no. 22, p. 675.

ready-made panels are a great thing [...]”.⁵² In this case the onus of explanation lay with the visual aspect of the publication (Fig. 11), the educational quality of which was further enhanced by plates designed by Orliński. Cut in an appropriate manner, the plates could serve as the basis for constructing the young reader’s own houses of “prefabricated units” made of paper.

At the time when Jońca’s book was published, modern architecture had already become an obvious framework of everyday life for a large portion of the prospective readers, especially those living in large cities. This fact was reflected in the illustrative art of the time, which frequently included images of modern metropolises. Two types of depiction were dominant. The first was a modern city as a generalisation, a place which could not be identified with any specific location. This treatment was sometimes given even to cities that were clearly named in the text itself.⁵³ The most important aspect in such depictions was the holistic vision of a metropolis, with wide streets full of cars, busses and trams, lit by neon signs and electric lamps (Fig. 12),⁵⁴ and last but not least, featuring numerous high-rise buildings (Fig. 13, 14).⁵⁵ It is the high-rise, the skyscraper, that the illustrators of the day perceived

52 Adam Jońca, *Duży dom* [A big house], ill. Bogusław Orliński, Warsaw, 1982, p. [21]. The concept of using prefabricated units was also propagated in periodicals for children, e.g. the cover art for *Świerszczyk*, 1961, no 40, ill. Bohdan Butenko; Witold Szolginia, “Domy z fabryk” [Houses from the factories], *Plomyk*, 1971 no. 5, pp. 143–145; “Warszawska Fabryka Domów” [The Warsaw factory of houses], *Plomyczek*, 1972, no. 18, pp. 546–547.

53 For examples of purely fantastic visions of Chicago and Warsaw see (respectively): Maria Szypowska, *Panie Janie niech pan wstanie* [Are you sleeping, Brother John?], ill. Barbara Świdzińska, Warsaw, 1969, pp. [16–17]; Tadeusz Kubiak, *Warszawskim statkiem* [By Warsaw Boat], ill. Tomasz Borowski, Warsaw, 1974, p. [21].

54 E.g. Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1961, p. [11]; Wacław Gołembowicz, Jadwiga Wernerowa, *Tu i tam podobnie* [Similar here and there], ill. Zbigniew Rychlicki and Janusz Grabiański, Warsaw, 1964, p. 106 (the relevant illustration was drawn by Grabiański); Falski, op. cit. (ill. Grabiański), p. 68; Elżbieta Burakowska, *Stara latarnia* [The old lantern], ill. Elżbieta Murawska, Warsaw, 1974. Depictions of big-city neon lights were also a relatively frequent sight in periodicals for children: see, for example, Eugenia Różańska’s illustrations to the poem *Na spacerze* [During a walk] by Wiera Badalska, *Świerszczyk*, 1961, no. 3, pp. 40–41; Janusz Grabiański’s cover art for *Plomyczek*, 1962, no. 21 (featuring a telling caption: “At night the city looks like something from a fairytale”); Barbara Dutkowska’s illustrations for *Świerszczyk*, 1964, no. 49, pp. 780–781; Zbigniew Rychlicki’s illustration for *Miś*, 1966, no. 5, p. 5; Elżbieta Gaudasińska illustration for Hanna Łochocka’s poem *Światła Warszawy* [The lights of Warsaw], *Świerszczyk*, 1970, no. 3, p. 36.

55 Since such depictions are numerous, it is sufficient to just mention several examples: Czesław Janczarski, *Listy, listy, listy* [Letters, letters, letters], ill. Juliusz Makowski, Warsaw, 1964, pp. [8–9]; Regina Pietusko, Zbigniew Wojciechowski, *Uważaj!* [Watch out!], ill. Mateusz Gawryś, Warsaw, 1964, p. 7; Aleksander Blachowski, Przemysław Trzeciak, *Polska, Twoja Ojczyzna* [Poland, your homeland], graphic design by Mateusz Gawryś, ill. Antoni Boratyński, Mateusz Gawryś, Stanisław Kaźmierczak, Grzegorz Rosiński, Warsaw, 1969, p. 37 (the relevant illustration was drawn by Boratyński); Maria Terlikowska, *W pogoni za kwadratem* [Chasing the square], ill. Stanisław Zamecznik, Warsaw, 1970, pp. [22–23]; Ryszard Marek Groński, *Kiedy tramwaje idą spać* [When trams go to sleep], ill. Olga Siemaszko, Warsaw, 1973, p. 11; Janusz Laskowski, “Warszawski wieżowiec” [The Warsaw high-rise], ill. Maria Jastrzębska, *Świerszczyk*, 1964, no. 17, p. 260. Extraordinary evidence for the fascination with

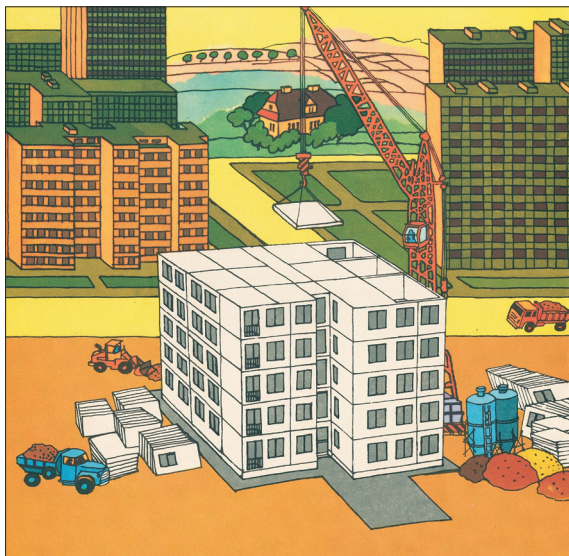


Fig. 11. Bogusław Orliński, illustration for the book *Duży dom* by Adam Jońca, 1982



Fig. 12. Janusz Grabiański, illustration for the book *Tu i tam podobnie* by Wacław Gołembowicz and Jadwiga Wernerowa, 1964

modernity observable at the time may be found on the cover of *Miś*, 1966, no. 9 (ill. Janina Krzemińska), where even the words of the 19th-century poet Maria Konopnicka: “Jadą, jadą dzieci drogą, / siostrzyczka i brat / i nadziwić się nie mogą: / jaki piękny świat!” [Children travelling along a road, / a sister and a brother / Staring out in wonder / at the beautiful world] were illustrated with an image of two children on a train passing a factory and modernist high-rises!



Fig. 13. Stanisław Zamecznik, illustration for the book *W pogoni za kwadratem* by Maria Terlikowska, 1970

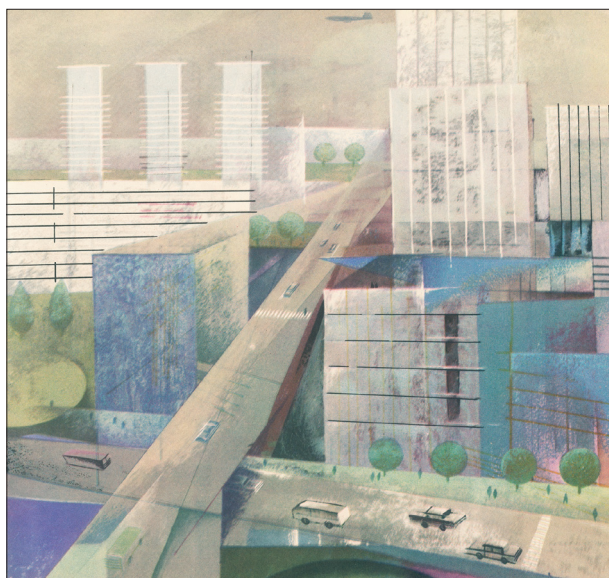


Fig. 14. Antoni Boratyński, illustration for the book *Polska, Twoja Ojczyzna* by Aleksander Blachowski and Przemysław Trzeciak, 1969

as the true symbol of the modern city, and even the city of the future. This view is exemplified, for instance, in the relevant vision presented in the book entitled *W krainie jutra* [In the land of tomorrow] (Fig. 15).⁵⁶

⁵⁶ Zbigniew Przyrowski, *W krainie jutra* [In the land of tomorrow], ill. Mateusz Gawryś, Warsaw, 1966, p. 33.

The second type of depictions are illustrations presenting a specific modern city. Interestingly, it is almost invariably Warsaw, or, more specifically, the section of Marszałkowska street known as the Eastern Wall.⁵⁷ The prevalence of this architectural complex in Polish illustrative art could only be matched by the ubiquity of W-Z Route depictions, observable more than ten years before. Other frequently portrayed views included the Warsaw CDT (Central Department Store), yet the scale of its popularity was much smaller (Fig. 16).⁵⁸ Graphic representations of the Eastern Wall could be found both in book publications and in periodicals (Fig. 17);⁵⁹ photographic depictions were no less common.⁶⁰

The choice of the Eastern Wall as the epitome of metropolitan environment proves especially significant in the case of the cover for the second edition of Danuta Gellnerowa's book *W mieście* [In the city], published in 1977.⁶¹ The publication differed greatly from its first edition (1961),⁶² especially in the visual aspect. The original version illustrated by Jerzy Karolak, presented a generalised city, and a medium-sized one at that. However, the new edition with Anna Stylo-Ginter's illustrations presented the titular "city" very specifically as Warsaw, clearly portrayed as a modern metropolis. Admittedly, the panorama of the Old Town does feature in one image, peeking shyly from above the lush vegetation of the Vistula embankment (and the focus of the illustration clearly lies on presenting municipal greenery), as does the view of the Castle Square as seen from Krakowskie Przedmieście Street. In the dozen images that comprise the visual narrative of the book these two are the only ones referring to the history of the capital, and even they have been drawn into the life of the contemporary city: the foreground of the illustration with the Castle Square features pedestrians on a crossing, cars, busses, and

57 It should be emphasised that this statement only refers to book illustrations. Periodicals showed other Warsaw edifices and the modern architecture of other cities, yet usually in the form of photographs and not illustrations.

58 E.g. Niżyński, op. cit., p. 17; Roman Pisarski, *Gliniane koguciki* [Clay cockerels], ill. Antoni Uniechowski, Warsaw, 1962, p. [22]; Szydłowski, op. cit., p. [7].

59 E.g. Jerzy Ficowski, *Tęcza na niedzielę* [A rainbow on Sunday], ill. Zdzisław Witwicki, Warsaw, 1971, p. 44; Wanda Chotomska, *Abecadło warszawskie* [The Warsaw alphabet], ill. Witold Parzydło, Piotr Zamecznik, Warsaw [1973], p. [10]; Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Anna Stylo-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977, cover art and p. [10]; Hanna Łochocka, *Księżyc nad Warszawą* [The moon over Warsaw], ill. Anna Stylo-Ginter, Warsaw 1983 (note: the book was submitted for print in 1981), p. [4]; Barbara Dutkowska's illustration to Hanna Łochocka's poem *Warszawa* [Warsaw], *Świerszczyk*, 1965, no. 37, pp. 584–585; Maria Mackiewicz's art for Wiera Badalska's poem *Kwiaty dla Warszawy* [Flowers for Warsaw], *Świerszczyk*, 1971, no. 3, p. 40; Józef Wilkoń's cover art for *Płomycezek*, 1971, no. 2.

60 E.g. "Warszawa dziś i jutro" [Warsaw today and tomorrow], *Płomycezek*, 1963, no. 1, pp. 14–15 (a photographed model); Witold Szolginia, "Szkłane domy 'Ściany Wschodniej'" [The glass houses of the Eastern Wall], *Płomycezek*, 1965, pp. 558–559; *Płomycezek*, 1967, no. 2, p. 37; "Warszawa w nocy" [Warsaw by night], *Płomycezek*, 1970, no. 7, pp. 204–205; "Warszawa da się lubić" [Warsaw is likeable], *Płomyk*, 1975, no. 17/18, p. 469.

61 Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Anna Stylo-Ginter, Warsaw, 1977.

62 Gellnerowa, op. cit., ill. Jerzy Karolak, Warsaw, 1961.

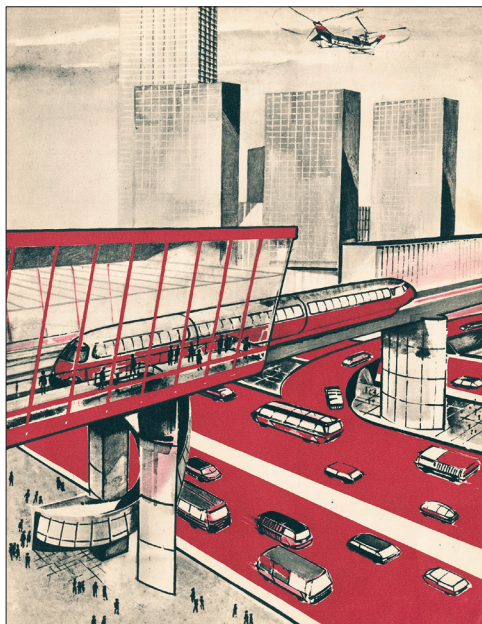


Fig. 15. Romuald Klaybor, illustration for the book *W krainie jutra* by Zbigniew Przyrowski, 1966

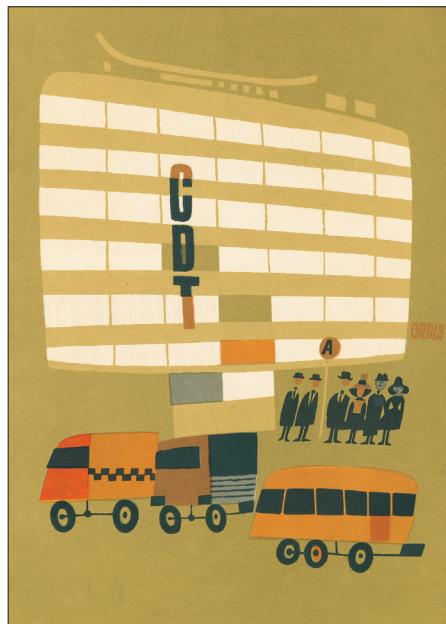


Fig. 16. Janusz Stanny, illustration for the book *Poeta i żrebię* by Stanisław Sztybel, 1969

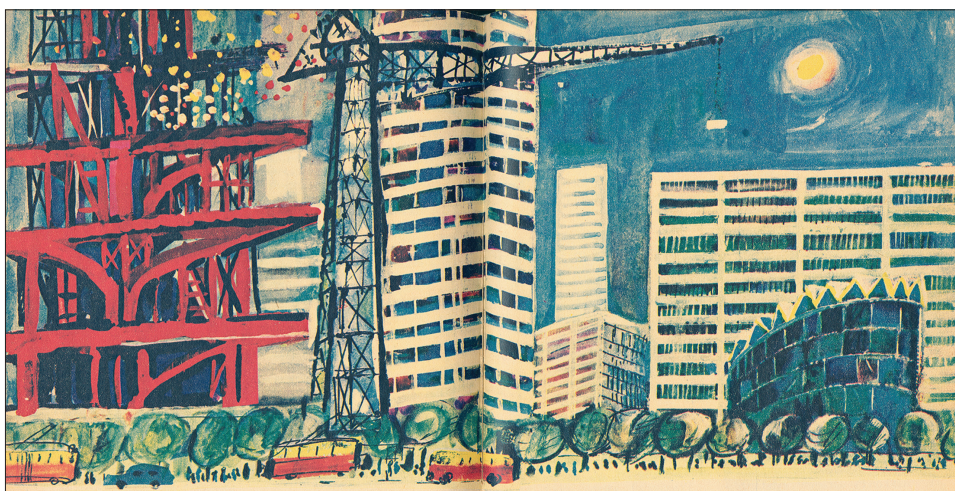


Fig. 17. Barbara Dutkowska, illustration for the poem *Warszawa* by Hanna Łochocka, 1965



Fig. 18. Anna Stylo-Ginter, illustration for the book *W mieście* by Danuta Gellnerowa, 1977

even a single Melex electric vehicle! The remaining nine images show the life of the modern city: steel bridges, high rises, the edifice of the “Relax” cinema lit with neon signs, the “Junior” Department Store, the Palace of Culture and the “Cepelia” art and handicraft centre (Fig. 18), automobile and pedestrian traffic, shopping in the “Supersam” self-service store, and passengers at the Central Railway Station.⁶³ It was an apparent triumph of modernity over the history of the city.

A similar victory was announced more than ten years prior, specifically in relation to architecture, in the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* [Houses, castles, palaces] written by Roman Pisarski and Czesław Wielhorski. It presented the history of architecture in the form of poems for the young reader. Aside from verses about the Pyramids, the Acropolis, the Wawel castle, early-modern town houses in Gdańsk or the Łazienki palace, it contained two poems which prove particularly interesting for the present analysis.

One of them is entitled *Czynszowa kamienica z drugiej połowy XIX wieku* [A tenement house from the latter half of the 19th century]. The very title is puzzling enough, as it seems more apt as a chapter in some academic publication or a non-fiction book for the general reader than as the title of a children’s rhyme. The text

⁶³ It was one of the first illustrations to depict the recently opened Central Railway Station. The station was, naturally, also advertised in publications for children and teenagers, see, for example, “Dworzec jak w baśni” [A station straight out of a fairy tale], *Płomyczek*, 1976, no. 1, pp. 35–37. The article was illustrated with Józef Kicman’s photographs.

itself is no less intriguing. Due to its highly polemical – one almost dares to say “propagandist” – nature, it ought to be presented in full.

Gipsowi siłacze dźwigają balkony,
 (balkon z ozdobami waży cztery tony).
 Zgina się pod gzymsem jakiś brodaczy stary,
 smutne kariatydy dźwigają filary.
 Mogłoby się zdawać, że runie dom cały,
 gdyby go figury podpierać nie chciały.
 – Panie architekcie, po co te figury?
 Dlaczego tak dziwnie pan ozdobił mury?
 – Taka dzisiaj moda... Poza tym nadmienię,
 że co okazałe, to robi wrażenie... –
 W oficynach za to są wąziutkie schody,
 mieszkanka niewielkie, niewielkie wygody...
 Gaz tam nie dochodzi i nie ma łazienki,
 dach tam byle jaki, a mur bardzo cienki.⁶⁴

[Plaster atlases support the balconies (a balcony with its ornaments weighs 4 tonnes). Under the cornice some aged greybeard is bent in half, sad caryatids hoist the pillars up. It seems that the whole house would fall if the figures refused to support it at all. – Mr. Architect, what are those figures for? Why did you add such strange decoration to the walls? – Such are today’s fashions... Also, may I add that opulent forms make quite an impression... In the rear buildings, however, the stairs are very narrow, the flats are tiny, amenities are few... There is no gas connection and no bathroom, the roofing is poor and the walls are thin.]

The message conveyed by this unassuming poem is in line with the modernist criticism of 19th-century architecture to a truly astonishing extent. The author includes the vision of poor social and hygienic standards which modernists associated with capitalist cities (one feels as if reading some rhyming summary of the Athens Charter!), as well as an image of the aesthetic falsity, in which the apparent opulence of the façade (“plaster atlases”) is juxtaposed with the destitution behind it. Everything appears to be on the verge of a catastrophe: the bearded atlas is bent under the weight of the cornice, while the terribly heavy balcony is in danger of falling off any minute. The author expressly states that the edifice would fall if it were not for the figures straining to hold it upright. The figures themselves seem to be reaching their limit, since the poet noticed sadness in the faces of the caryatids. The gloomy vision leaves no doubt that the author was expressing the modernist, polemical view on 19th-century tenements. The substantive criticism included in the poem aside, the dark mood suggestively evoked by the verses was clearly intended to instil in young readers an emotional, strictly negative attitude towards the described phenomenon.

64 Roman Pisarski, *Domy, zamki, pałace* [Houses, castles, palaces], ill. Czesław Wielhorski, Warsaw, 1963, p. 28.

The aims were very different in the case of the latter poem relevant for the present analysis, describing a modernist block of flats in a modern housing estate. It also deserves to be presented in full.

Żelazobeton, szkło i plastik,
szerokich okien prostokąty,
numer mieszkania sto dwunasty,
blok numer piąty.
Z balkonu widać park zielony,
słysząc jak miasto z dala brzęczy,
wieczorem błysną tam neony
kolorem tęczy.
Niebo jak łąka ponad nami,
na niebie chmurek białe owce.
Ptaki wesołe nad dachami
i odrzutowce.
Mieszkanie miłe, choć nieduże:
klimatyzacja, szafa w ścianie...
W kuchni lodówka. Telewizor
tuż przy tapczanie.

[Ferroconcrete, glass and plastic, rectangles of wide windows, flat number one hundred twelve, block number five. A verdant park can be seen from the balcony, the buzz of the city audible in the distance, in the evening the neon lights will flash with the colours of the rainbow. The sky like a meadow above us, white sheep of clouds in the sky. Cheerful birds above the rooftops and jet planes. The flat is nice, if small: air conditioning, a wardrobe built in the wall... A refrigerator in the kitchen. A TV set next to the couch.]

The above poem is titled *Nasz dom* [Our home] and paints an entirely different picture than the one about the tenement house. The former created a sense of distance and coldness, whereas the latter seeks to develop a positive emotional bond. It is to this effect that the author chose to include phrases like “a verdant park”, “the colours of the rainbow”, “the sky like a meadow” and “cheerful birds”, as well as – getting to the crux of the matter – “a nice flat”. All of them evoke a feeling of carefree joy and leisure, in stark contrast to the “few amenities”, “narrow stairs” and “sad caryatids” of the other poem.

As before, the author does not stop at creating a purely emotional picture. The poem describing the block of flats also contains a number of expressions conveying certain information about the merits of modernist estate housing: its technologically advance nature (“ferroconcrete, glass and plastic”), proper lighting in the interiors (“rectangles of wide windows”), the presence of greenery (“a verdant park” – which is nearby, as it is visible from “the balcony”); noise zoning (“the buzz of the city audible in the distance”); and modern appliances (“air conditioning”, “refrigerator”, “TV set”).

Considering all these details, it seems obvious that the short poem was intended as a means of persuasion. It ought to convince its young readers that modern housing estates were a better place to live than 19th-century tenements, and that they

were, in a sense, the final step, the pinnacle of the many centuries of progress in Western architecture (a belief which was in line with the historicist vision of modernists, such as for instance Pevsner or Giedion). Significantly from the social point of view, this modern block truly appeared to be “our home”, the house of contemporary people.⁶⁵ Such a view certainly made it easier for people moving into “modern housing” to adapt to these new conditions, thus facilitating the implementation of the housing policies created by the authorities of the day.

Both of these fascinating texts are accompanied by illustrations drawn by Czesław Wielhorski. As noted above, Wielhorski was not a graphic designer, but an architect by training, which may be the reason why his presentation of the modernist housing estate (Fig. 19) is so focused on the architectural component, entirely ignoring elements present in other artistic renditions of the topic which mitigate the rather harsh impression of the geometric, austere forms of the blocks. His

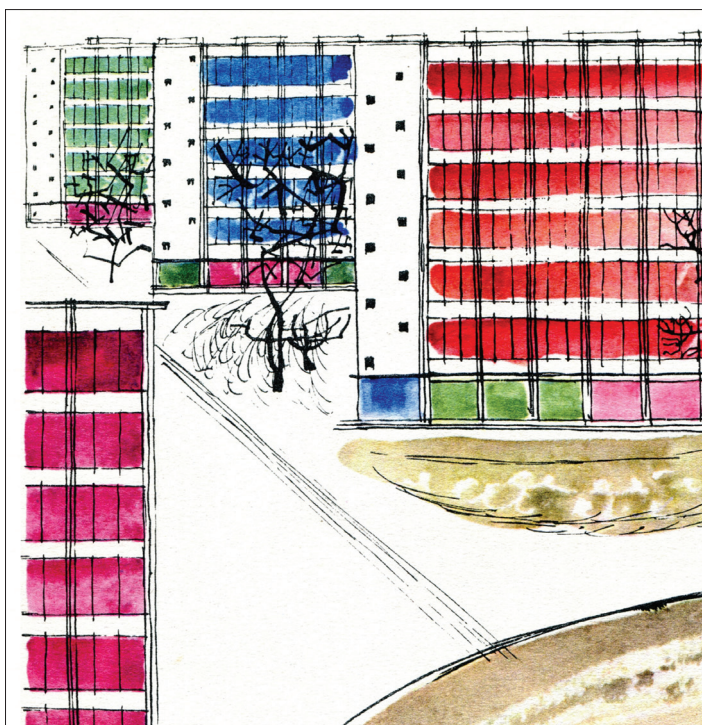


Fig. 19. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* by Roman Pisarski, 1963

65 Similar undertones may be found in Maria Sołtyk’s illustration to Tadeusz Chudy’s poem *Dom, w którym mieszkasz* [The house you live in], *Świerszczyk*, 1973, no. 30, p. 468. In this case, the text itself does not contain any references to the architectural form of the house, which could very well be a country cottage, a tenement house or a villa in the suburbs. However, the illustrator decided to visually revise the concept of the home by presenting it as a modern housing estate lush with greenery.

illustration features no greenery (the scarce trees are leafless), no potted plants on the balconies, no snowmen, no children playing outside, no vehicles on the street, not even any birds or planes in the sky, even though their presence would be justified by the narrative. Regarded outside of its context as an illustration in a children's book, Wielhorski's artwork would not look out of place in one of the architectural periodicals of the day, perhaps as a "general view" of one of the planned housing estates. The coldness and even alienation emanating from this image contrasts vividly with the text, which goes to such great lengths to present a humanised, pleasant and warm vision of modern housing estates.

The illustration of the poem about the 19th-century tenement proves no less surprising and incongruous with the text (Fig. 20). First of all, following the ideological message of Pisarski's poem, the illustrator could, and perhaps even should have depicted the courtyard of the tenement house, showcasing the dirt, lack of space and chaos of the rear buildings. Wielhorski, however, chose to present the façade, judged so harshly by the author of the poem. One may even get the impression that the illustrator took pleasure in showing the sumptuousness of the frontage, the variety and charm of its forms (which were, incidentally, rather *fin de siècle* in style), as well as its inhabitants – a girl in a light-coloured dress accompanied by a lady in



Fig. 20. Czesław Wielhorski, illustration for the book *Domy, zamki, pałace* by Roman Pisarski, 1963

a dark hat. He also found enough space on the following page to include a horse-driven carriage, a cabbie with a rakish moustache and two elegant ladies carrying parasols. The mood of the entire image differs greatly from the bleak lyrical vision it was meant to illustrate.

Wielhorski's artwork seems more focused on the visual attractiveness of the subject matter than the ideological message of the text itself, thus introducing a certain ambiguity into the illustrated discourse on modernism. The previously mentioned images of barren concrete jungles presented a decade later by Uszacka and Wilbik are equally disturbing, if for different reasons. These were, however, isolated cases which did not change the largely positive or even affirmative image of modernity emerging from the books and periodicals intended for young readers in communist Poland.

There can be no doubt that this positive representation reflected the views on modern architecture expressed in publications for adult audiences, be it professional or non-professional, especially in the few years after the pivotal year 1956. Unfortunately, the issues of modernist discourse on architecture in post-war Poland, or the social impact of modern architecture and urban planning, have not been properly analysed to date.⁶⁶ Thus, the above statement as to the favourable reception of modernist advances in architecture in post-Thaw Poland is based solely on the general impression emerging from the perusal of a more or less random sample of texts from the period rather than a systematic analysis, which would definitely exceed the spatial constraints of the present article.⁶⁷ This being said, it appears that even at this preliminary stage of research one can identify no discrepancies between the imagery

66 Significantly, in recent years such topics are more likely to be tackled by reporters than by scholars (the high standing of publications for the general reader in the discourse on the architectural heritage of the People's Republic of Poland has recently been noted by Piotr Marciniak, *Konteksty i modernizacje. Studia z dziejów architektury i urbanistyki PRL* [Contexts and modernisations. Studies on the history of architecture and urban planning in the People's Republic of Poland], Poznań, 2018, p. 13). Consequently, there are no publications that would constitute the Polish equivalent of the pioneering monograph by Adrian Forty, *Words and Buildings. A Vocabulary of Modern Architecture*, London, 2004 (1st edition 2000). I myself dealt with a small aspect of the subject of architectural discourse in the article "Nowoczesność w polskim dyskursie architektonicznym: 1945–1949. Wstępne rozpoznanie zagadnienia" [Modernity in Polish architectural discourse: 1945–1949. Preliminary study], in: *Definiowanie modernizmu* [Defining modernism], eds. Piotr Marciniak, Gabriela Klause, (*Zeszyty Naukowe Politechniki Poznańskiej*, 15), Poznań, 2008, pp. 309–335. The social conditions of modern architecture in the People's Republic of Poland have been described, for instance by Gabriela Świtek, "Za Żelazną Bramą" [Behind the Iron Gate], in: eadem, *Aporie architektury* [The aporias of architecture], Warsaw, 2012, pp. 113–135 and by Andrzej Szczerski, "Dekada luksusu. PRL i hotele w latach 70. XX wieku" [The decade of luxury. The People's Republic of Poland and hotels in the 1970s], in: idem, *Cztery nowoczesności. Teksty o sztuce i architekturze polskiej XX wieku* [The four modernities. Texts on Polish art and architecture in the 20th century], Cracow, 2015, pp. 143–168.

67 One of the better examples of the largely positive (though with many reservations) contemporaneous evaluation of the changes observable in Polish architecture after 1956 comes from Adam Kotarbiński and his fundamental work *Rozwój urbanistyki i architektury polskiej w latach 1944–1964. Próba charakterystyki krytycznej* [The development of urban planning and archi-

presented in publications for adult readers and those for children and teenagers (the form of the latter works was naturally adjusted to fit the cognitive apparatus of the audience). At this stage it would be difficult to determine the degree to which the certain type of social engineering present in the analysed publications met the expectations of those authorising such messages (which, incidentally seems a task for sociologists or experts in pedagogy rather than for historians of art). However, given the substantial weight of social influence the publications in question brought to bear (at least potentially), I may venture the opinion that it would certainly be worthwhile to conduct a more thorough study of the atypical, rarely considered source material from the category of publications for children and teenagers. Analysed with due attention, they offer the chance to broaden our knowledge not only on the architectural culture of the People's Republic of Poland, but also on other issues related to the social and political changes that took place in Poland under the communist government.⁶⁸

Translated by Julita Mastalerz

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tecture in Poland between 1944 and 1964. A critical characterisation], Warsaw, 1967; *passim*, esp. pp. 74–83.

- 68 Easily recognisable fields for potential research include for instance issues revolving around the role of women in society and the processes of emancipation. In this case, both literature and illustrative arts provide ample source material, not only in the form of illustrations in publications for younger audiences, but also those in illustrated works for adult readers. Good examples may be found, for example, in cookbooks of the day. The presence of certain gender stereotypes in such publications was noted in my article "Socrealizm w kuchni. Wstępne rozeznanie problemu badawczego" [Socialist realism in the kitchen. A preliminary study], in: *W kuchni i za stołem. Dystanse i przenikanie kultur* [In the kitchen and round the table. Distance and culture permeation], ed. Tadeusz Stegner, Gdańsk, 2003, esp. p. 221.

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Abstract

Books and periodicals for children and teenagers constituted an important instrument of education and also social persuasion in the People's Republic of Poland. In such publications, illustrations played a crucial role. Printed in several dozen or even several hundred thousand copies, such publications circulated among great numbers of young readers, therefore becoming a very effective medium for disseminating certain desired views. There can be no doubt that the messages directed at the youth largely reflected the opinions held by the adult section of the society: the authors and the people ordering and authorising the publication. The numerous topics presented in a form suitable for young readers included architecture. The nature of architecture-related themes was varied indeed; at times architecture (historical or contemporary) appeared in the foreground, but most often depictions of buildings served only as a visual backdrop for the narrated story. However, even presented in the background, the forms of architecture chosen by illustrators were not received indifferently by the readers, since they conveyed a certain model imagery of houses, flats, housing estates, or entire cities.

Since such images were published by the thousand, a thorough analysis of the issue would not fit the spatial constraints of a single article. The aim of the text is, therefore, restricted to identifying the possibility for expanding the source material for studies on architectural culture; it focuses on a single theme, namely the methods in which publications for children and young readers issued in communist Poland presented, and often even propagated, modernist architecture. Due to the choice of the subject matter, the article mainly concentrates on the period of the post-Stalinist Thaw when modern forms gained a true monopoly in Polish architecture.

The tendencies observable in architectural theory and practice at the time were reflected with considerable fidelity in publications for young audiences. Popular images included the vision of a modern metropolis with heavy pedestrian and automobile traffic, full of high-rise buildings, lit by lamps and neon lights after dark. Depictions of modernist housing estates with blocks of flats, as well as modern schools or playgrounds were equally common. The message conveyed by such imagery may easily be summarised by the title of one of the children's rhymes analysed above, namely *Nasz dom* [Our home]. Both the texts and the visual depictions of the day constructed a vision in which modernist architecture became the natural habitat of contemporary people. The present article describes numerous depictions which corroborate such an interpretation of the phenomenon under analysis.

Keywords: illustrative art, children's literature, modern architecture, People's Republic of Poland, popular culture