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Metaphors Shaping Modern Architecture in Interwar Romania

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Abstract: In X-ray Architecture, Beatriz Colomina does a psychoanalysis of the image of the TB patient but also of other diseases (including mental) and of the mental associations induced by them, associations and representations that influenced modern architecture. If such hygienic concerns influenced the production, affirmation and supremacy of the Modern Movement in the Western world, in Romania it was more about the dissemination and adaptation of Western ideas to another urban fabric and other traditions.
Apart from the sanatorium perspective, another important metaphor used for the theoretical definition and affirmation of modern architecture in Romania was the metaphor of the machine (to be lived in but not only).
We can talk about the impact of these two metaphors that frame the discourse and creation of architects from interwar Bucharest and Romania.

Keywords: *interwar Bucharest; modern architecture; tuberculosis; mental model; sanatorium; machine.*

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Introduction

The integrated reality of architectural space is created by a moving observer and cannot be truly understood by transposition into other media such as photography or print (Zevi, 1993, p. 27) or even by virtual reality (because it lacks the tactile and auditory dimensions, ideas formulated by prof. architect Mircea Ochinciuc during an opening on 9.12.2021).

However, there are helpful tools for understanding the built space:

1. Plans, models, sketches, photos and texts used by architects as tools to help them think about space. All the more, these tools are also used to help non-architects who come in contact with architecture through books and magazines.

2. General formal or stylistic elements used to understand and describe architecture created by architectural history and theory.

3. Mental models that interpret and rethink architectural objects according to non-architectural concepts. Interwar architecture was not primarily seen as a physical object both because it was difficult to conceive and because non-architects were more interested in its role as a living environment with all the social and value connotations that stemmed from this.

There was a constant flow between the design and consumption of modern architecture. This ensured the circulation of opinions, discourses, representations, mental models about the interwar architecture.

In this article we are interested in the perception of architecture and not the organization of space (addressed by tools 1 and 2). The question arises how the conception of modern architecture projects was articulated within the architectural world and the reception of these projects outside it. The article aims to study how the mental models of the sanatorium and the machine were used to frame the perception of modern architecture by architects and non-architects in interwar Romania.

1. Mental models and architectural discourse

The discourses in the publications and memoirs of interwar Romania related to modern architecture are fundamentally incomplete. They can only become coherent if we understand the mental models of the participants (Van Dijk, 2014, p. 26). These mental models are structured by the parameters of the communication situation: Setting, Participants, social Action, Goals, Shared Knowledge of the participants (Van Dijk, 2014, p. 24).

Senturer and Istek consider architectural discourse a multimodal platform that connects writing, speech, visual and spatial transactions that occur before and after design thinking through the three domains of this discourse: architectural press, architectural education and practice (Şentürer & Istek, 2002).

According to van Dijk, discourses express mental models that they reproduce in society and public opinion. Mental models make possible the multimodal discourse processing that Senturer and Istek were talking about (Van Dijk, 2014, p. 53).

2. The Machine metaphor

If we consider the Herman Iancu house (1926) as the first example of modern architecture in Bucharest, then its reception in the press is very important.

"The modern construction of Mr. Marcel Iancu is interesting in terms of its construction, being a combination of a packet boat and an ordinary ship. Only the balcony seems not to be part and parcel with this construction." (Contimporanul, 1926, p. 3). The article from Rampa magazine comments on the Herman Iancu house presented on the cover of Contimporanul magazine no. 69. The mechanical description of the building is interesting, as is the consideration of the prismatic balcony as not being part of the construction. We wonder where the association with the ship came from? It is very likely that someone knew more than the strict content of the *Contimporanul* magazine and could supplement it with the opinions expressed by the architect Marcel Iancu on other occasions.

Here is another presentation of that building, also in Rampa magazine: "The long-awaited Contimporanul has appeared. One morning, the blue colour of the cover smiled at us on the wall, on which three clichés were photographically reproduced after a modern construction by Marcel Iancu. Volume of wide conception, classical simple line, depending on a fantasy that contradicts and overturns the messy banality of our styleless houses, Mr. Marcel Iancu's construction is more than an experience: an achievement" (Literary week, 1926, p. 1).

Here are Marcel Iancu's opinions presented in the same magazine. In the issue of Oct. 29, 1926, he presented some opinions about the modern artist who "loving today the meaning and power of the machine [...] [has] opened the world's eyes to the beauty of ships, factories and airplanes" (Architecture, 1926).

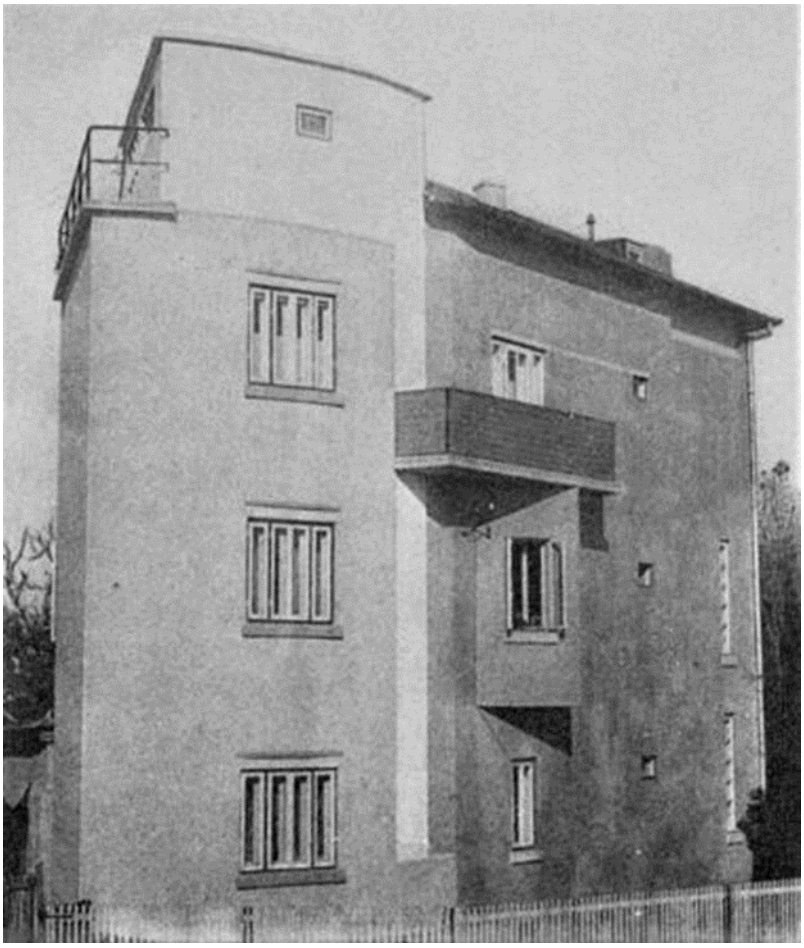


Image 1. Herman Iancu House (*Source:* Iancu, 1928, 17)

The architect's interest in the aesthetic appearance of industrial objects and interiors started from the fact that they short-circuited the process of intellectual allusions and narratives on which previous aesthetics were based (Postrel, 2003, p. 6).

Beyond the aesthetic diversity created by commercial competition, modern architects preferred to consider that there was only one correct aesthetic expression as a manifestation of truth, virtue, and even health (Postrel, 2003, p. 11). The need for authenticity (understood as purity, tradition or aura) and legitimization of the meaning of art and architecture encouraged the regulation of a correct modern aesthetics (Postrel, 2003, pp. 109-112). Health was an expression of the bare truth.

According to these remarks, the association between health and modern architecture was due to a rhetorical effort to legitimize a correct aesthetics through rational arguments and was the sign of an ideology (Postrel, 2003, p. 9). It was also a creative strategy because some constraints were needed in order to be able to create.

Here's what Marcel Iancu stated in 1925: "America is building typical cities with the most perfect hygiene and modernism facilities to be able to rent them in Longview (Washington). Palestine cannot be rebuilt with oriental methods when we want a new ideal and modern country. The misunderstood practical spirit should not kill the social-urban-architecture which alone guarantees the happiness of future generations" (Iancu, 1925, p. 22).

Modernist ideology contributed to a consolidation of a certain expression of the personal self bound up with some wider social and cultural changes. Thus the psychologist Kenneth Gergen believed that the metaphor of the machine (accompanied by themes such as rationality, observation, progress and essence) is useful for understanding the modernist construction of the autonomous, rational and independent self, which could be expressed by the aesthetics of the machine. Modern buildings reflected modern psychologies. The preoccupation with finding an essence of modern architecture or art reflected the similar preoccupation with finding an essence of the modern personality which thus became univocal, firm and recognizable (Gergen, 1991, pp. 36-39).

But the metaphor of the machine and the concern for hygiene were not only arguments in support of modern architecture, which contributed to its scientific, utilitarian and inevitable character. They were also desired for a healthy lifestyle, materialized by the TB sanatoriums and relevant especially in the case of architects who were also sick with lungs.

I will talk in the following about a personal involvement of architects, different from the signalling of the need for hygiene and light in the articles of Marcel Iancu or George Matei Catacuzino (Zahariade et al., 2003, p. 62).

3. The Sanatorium metaphor

In X-ray Architecture, Beatriz Colomina does a psychoanalysis of the image of the TB patient but also of other diseases (including mental disorders) and of the mental associations induced by them, associations and representations that influenced modern architecture and the 5 points of modern architecture formulated by Le Corbusier (Colomina, 2019). If such

hygienic concerns influenced the production, affirmation and supremacy of the Modern Movement in the Western world, in Romania it was more about the dissemination and adaptation of Western ideas to another urban fabric and other traditions.

Modern architecture in Colomina's opinion is organized around two bodies: the fragile one of the TB patient and the athletic one that offers prevention. It was a time when health / comfort maintained through sport, sun and modern technology had become a new form of religion, an aspect that was related to the prospect of a new world war but also to a new modern lifestyle (Colomina, 2019).

There was a concern at the time regarding the level of dust in interwar Bucharest, associated with a high percentage of tuberculosis: "in the zeal to realize grandiose plans, our city officials forget that mortality is increasing in the Capital and that we have built a reputation for being the dirtiest city in Europe, and with the highest percentage of tuberculosis" (Mihail, 1934, p. 13).

The citizens of Bucharest were not ignorant of the above realities, but the effective measures to fight tuberculosis through the construction of social housing were not effective enough, including due to a preference for the national style and the middle class in the constructions of the Communal Society for Cheap Housing (Voinea, 2018, p. 30).

This perspective also made use of the apprehensions coming from the benchmark country for Romanian culture: France. The magazine Urbanismul makes (in no. 5-6 of 1933) the summary of an article by Camille Monclaire, titled: Bolshevist architecture. The summary leans on the ideas of Le Corbusier and concludes: "all these claims and discussions on the novelty, the beauty of the new aesthetics, are only a mask of the tendency to overturn the current conditions; these agents of propaganda only aim to destroy the taste of bourgeois tradition"(p. 364). Opposing ideas were formulated by Emile Maigrot, the chief architect of the international exhibition in Paris, in the Municipal Gazette of May 16, 1937: „Suddenly I came into contact with the vision of uniform blockhouses from an architectural point of view: which have the justification of being built for business. They are in reality the madness of concrete and of an integral nakedness." (p. 5).

The experimental housing projects made of prefabricated concrete by the engineer Henri Coandă were mostly rejected (Mare, 2018). In order to overcome the traditionalist mentality a change of perspective was needed. Several architects affected by lung problems also contributed to this change, among which we will refer to Grigore Ionescu, Heinrich Schoenberg and

Nicolae Cucu. The last of these strikes a slightly discordant note as a stylistic expression compared to the first two, and that is precisely why he must be discussed. He belongs to a stage subsequent to the affirmation of modern architecture in Romania.

The interest of modern architects in Romania for industrial aesthetics was based on a hygienic concern, related to health (the architects Grigore Ionescu and Heinrich Schoenberg), an economic concern (Căminul magazine) and an ideological one, to create a new vision of man and of the world (Contimporanul magazine).

4. Models of architectural modernity in Grigore Ionescu and Heinrich Schoenberg

There are also architects for whom the concern for health was also personal. Their lung diseases, we can assume, influenced their architectural choices. They will elaborate some of the most influential presentations of modern architecture in Romania. Henrich Schoenberg will conference in front of the members of the Criterion association on July 16, 1932 (Bejan, 2019, p. 84) and Grigore Ionescu as an architectural historian, professor and dean of the Faculty of Architecture, will influence the perception of modern architecture on multiple levels.

We talked about the role of mental models in the conception and reception of architectural objects. Heinrich Schoenberg's texts are focused more on the conception side and Grigore Ionescu's on the reception side of modern architecture. Grigore Ionescu's strictly rational analysis was nuanced by his personal preference for contemplation and the inherent limits of modern architecture.

The architect Grigore Ionescu was known for the fact that, unlike some of his contemporaries, who oscillated between several stylistic expressions (Beldiman & Cârneci, 1994, p. 70), he remained faithful to the modern expression in all his projects. This is all the more surprising as we know the classicizing character of his Grigore Ionescu diploma project from the Academy of Architecture in Bucharest (Institute Museum of Archaeology, 1930). The transition from the classicist aesthetics of the diploma to the modern one of maturity could also be attributed to the two years the architect spent as a scholar of the Academia di Romania in Rome (1931-1933). Actually, the subject of Ionescu’s diploma project was closely related with the studies which he will follow in Rome.



Image 2. Grigore Ionescu diploma project, Institute Museum of Archaeology, 1930 (*Source:* Ionescu, 1930)

The activity of the Romanian school in Rome, founded by the historian Vasile Pârvan, had a historical bent. This is evident from its first varnished exhibition on January 9, 1933. In it were displayed surveys of the monuments studied by Horia Teodoru, Şt. Balş, Em. Costescu, R. Bordenache, N. Lupu, George Ionescu, Grigore Ionescu, and some creations of the sculptor Mac Constantinescu (Bărbulescu et al., 2012, p. 95).

A photograph from the Grigore Ionescu donation of the UAUIM library clarifies the content of the first exhibition. The knowledge of Byzantine and classical architecture and the way of studying historical monuments in depth at the Accademia di Romania will influence restoration architects such as Horia Teodoru, Şt. Balş, Em. Costescu, historians and teachers such as Grigore Ionescu, R. Bordenache, N . Lupu, N. Cucu.



Image 3. Exhibition from Academia di Romania in Rome 1933, Grigore Ionescu's plates (*Source:* Ionescu, 1933)

Following the stay of these scholars in Italy, Mr. Roland Kunst in the PhD thesis dedicated to Nicolae Cucu (Kunst, 2013, p. 31), found echoes of fascist italian architecture in the bas-reliefs of Mac Constantinescu, in the projects of the architects Richard Bordenache, Grigore Ionescu, Nicolae Lupu and Nicolae Cucu (Kunst, 2013, p. 39).

It is possible that his experience as a tuberculosis patient also contributed to Ionescu's change in style. This is what he wrote in his diary in May 1925, in Bucharest, where he was a student in the first year of the School of Architecture: "I found out today that V. got engaged. Only seven months have passed since the death of the one without whom she thought

she could no longer live. How quickly and easily the dead are forgotten!" (Ionescu, 1974).

The following diary entry occurs three years later, in January 1928, and probably explains the melancholy of the above notation (melancholia specific to tuberculosis):

"I have been here for three days installed in the T.B.C. Sanatorium. which was once the Bisericani monastery. I feel so lonely surrounded by so many strangers of all walks of life, all sick" (Ionescu, 1974).

On June 11, 1934, the young architect, recently returned from the Academia di Romania in Rome, is hired for repair estimates for the buildings of the Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis and has a different tone:

"I am in a new era of life, but the detachment from the old one has not yet been done. Trials are difficult and painful. I saw Bisericani again. It wears the same garment made of natural beauty, pain and hope that I have known five years ago. However, I find it more cheerful and the surrounding mountains more harmonious" (Ionescu, 1974).

According to the newspaper Viitorul, the League for the Prevention of Tuberculosis was founded in 1934 and after 3 years of activity was proud of doubling the capacity of the existing sanatoriums ("Inauguration of the Bugaz sanatorium", 1937, p. 3).

The "new life detached from the old one" created a change of perspective that would facilitate the adoption of modern architecture by the young architect. His employment as a design architect with the Society for the Prevention of Tuberculosis in 1935 and his first project in this capacity, the Toria Sanatorium (1935-36), would complete this process.

The detachment from the old life/identity was more important for the adoption of modern aesthetics than the lung disease which functioned only as a catalyst for this process. We think also of the cases of the architects Marcel Iancu or Horia Creangă, firmly decided to break away from the old world (Iancu et al., 1935).

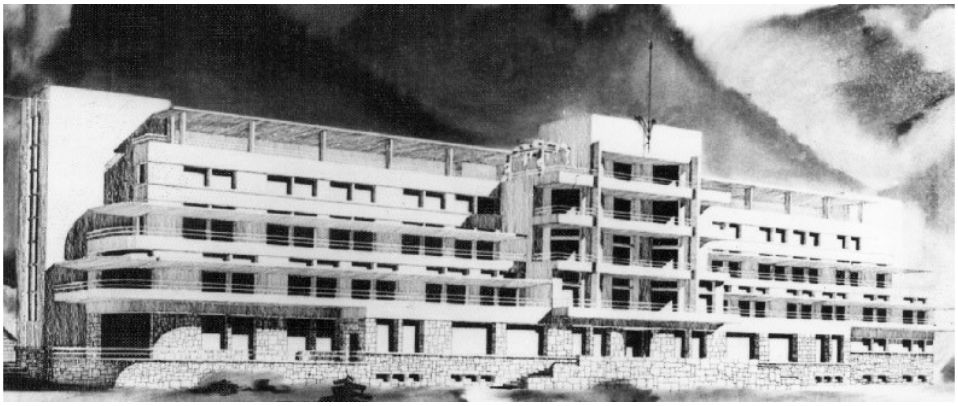


Image 4. Perspective of the Toria sanatorium, 1935, designed by Grigore Ionescu (*Source:* "1986 Union of Architects Awards", 1988, p. 14)

The perspective proposed by the architect in the project for the sanatorium in Toria expresses his feelings. The sanatorium appears as a white, luminous ship against the dark and wet background of the mountains. We also notice the Art Deco lightning rod that defined the axis of symmetry of a building with a slight asymmetry. The new perception of Grigore Ionescu was also due to his power to change the lives of the sick through modern projects.

These sanatorium projects influenced his perception of modern architecture in general. Wasn't Grigore Ionescu's trenchant position in his History of Architecture due to personal considerations according to which modern = healthy and not just to the ideological constraints of the communist period in which he wrote?

In the final part of the History of Architecture in Romania, he launches a criticism of some widespread typologies of interwar architecture in Bucharest:

"Along with these positive examples of creative use of the heritage of the past, Romanian architecture from the last 10-12 years before the Second World War also saw a vast production of apartment buildings and villa-type residential buildings. The first ones are characterized by an architecture resulting from the uninspired combination of a mass of straight lines and often inexpressive volumes. A for the the villas, executed especially to the orders of the newly rich, they present a collection of pastiches based on bizarre combinations of eclectic elements, Florentine, Venetian or Moorish, whose plastic expression, enriched with false heraldic elements, expressed on the one hand the tendency towards the ennoblement of the

aristocracy of money, on the other hand the exploitative class position of the bourgeoisie." (Ionescu, 1965, p. 501).

In addition to the political-ideological considerations related to the criticism of the bourgeoisie, the fragment above represents a stylistic criticism of the Art Deco or Mediterranean disorder. On the one hand we have a mess of lines and on the other we have bizarre combinations of elements. The opinions of 1965 mirror those of 1938 of the young sanatorium designer: "Most of our architects today make modern architecture. Very few, however, so few that they can be counted on the fingers of one hand, understood what modern architecture is and how it should be done. The others waste themselves in the repetition of the most banal geometric shapes resulting from the pairing of straight lines. In fact, something even worse, some of the younger ones, trying a reaction against modernism, created a current of fashionable architecture that could be called "heteroclite" or "romantic-archaeological"" (Ionescu, 1938, p. 93).

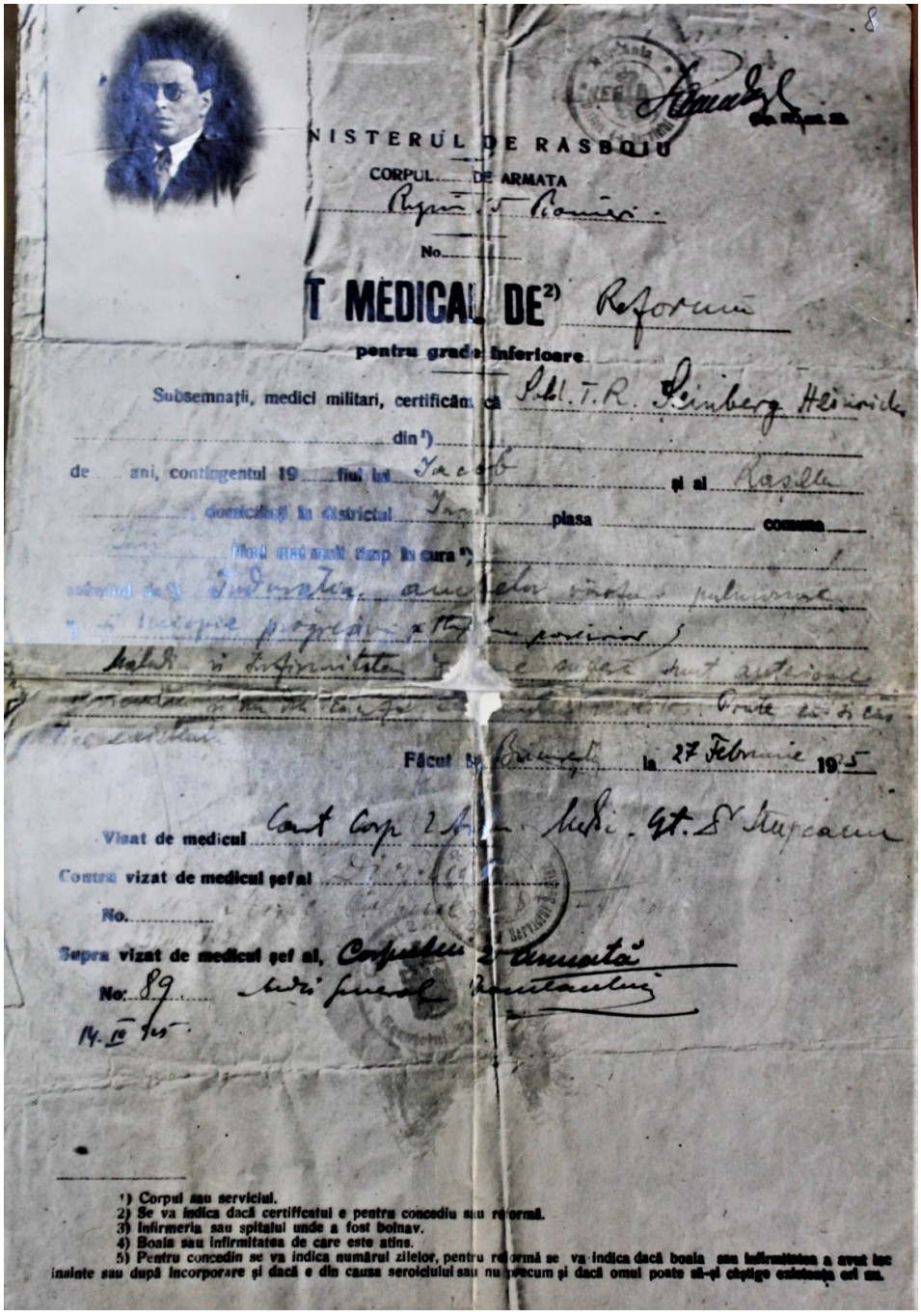
It should be noted that the eclectic return to the styles of the past (Mediterranean architecture) is considered by Grigore Ionescu to be even worse than the simple geometric formulas of Art Deco architecture.

In his 1938 articole Grigore Ionescu was not shy to offer suggestions for his colleagues, inspired by a 1936 article by Petre Antonescu from the Adevărul newspaper (Antonescu, July 6, 1936, p. 3). It should be mentioned that at that time Grigore Ionescu was working at the Academy of Architecture, thanks to Petre Antonescu's invitation (Ionescu, 1974).

Grigore Ionescu's views on modern architecture are expressed more extensively in a radio conference from 1936 from which we quote: "Light means health. Modern architecture is architecture of light. […] The long shape of the windows in modern architecture responds to the need to bring as much light as possible into the interior. A long window, cut into the wall from one end to the other of a room, gives better light than two vertical windows whose area equals that of the long window" (Ionescu, 2014, p. 159). In the same speech, where comfort and health meet, the architect drew attention to the noise and heat problems created by concrete. These could be solved by better insulation, which also keeps dust away.

For Grigore Ionescu, comfort is the watchword, it means health and modernization of life but also of the psyche.

A lesser-known modernist architect, Heinrich Schoenberg, had similar concerns (Popescu, 2021). He also had health problems related to the lungs that led to his army reform certificate dated 27.02.1925. His disability was caused before the incorporation, as specified in the document (Schoenberg, 1925).



NISTERUL DE RASBOIU

CORPUL ... DE ARMATA

No.

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Vizat de medicul Cpt. Corp 2 Armată Medic. Gr. I. Stupcanu

Contra vizat de medicul șef al

No.

Supra vizat de medicul șef al, Corpului 2 Armată

No: 89 Medic Inspector

14.10 Iun.

[1)] Corpul sau serviciul.
[2)] Se va indica dacă certificatul e pentru concediu sau reformă.
[3)] Infirmeria sau spitalul unde a fost bolnav.
[4)] Boala sau infirmitatea de care este atins.
[5)] Pentru concedii se va indica numărul zilelor, pentru reformă se va indica dacă boala sau infirmitatea a avut loc înainte sau după incorporare și dacă e din causa serviciului sau nu precum și dacă omul poate să-și câștige existența cel puțin.

Image 5. Harry Schoenberg's military reform certificate, 1925
(*Source:* Schoenberg, 1925)

Harry Schoenberg's health problems influenced his clear perception of modern architecture and his concern for cleanliness: "On the outside: simplicity, precision, clarity. Small volumes, well defined. Large flat surfaces. Architectural effect obtained by fair proportioning and balancing of these elements. Play of shadows and lights, making ornaments useless. Large windows, more low than high, giving ample access to light. Inside: the well-thought-out economic plan, aiming to achieve a maximum of comfort on a minimum of surface area. And here, the ornaments, the columns, the arches, disappeared. Simple, white ceilings, smooth walls, a discreet painting or wallpaper, providing a quiet background for the furniture volumes. A lot of light.[…] That is why plaster stucco, walls and ceilings, deposits of dust and insects also disappeared; today, the walls are smooth, the ceilings low. With a brush, in a few minutes, the dust is radically removed. Then, on the floor, in kitchens, bathrooms, toilets, cement or slate helps to keep perfect cleanliness in a short time and with minimal effort" (Schoenberg, 1932, p. 16).

According to the biography sketched by historian David Ussishkin, the architect Schoenberg married nurse Miriam Mosh in 1935 (Ussishkin, 2012, p. 63), a fact that was part of the way this architect viewed the world.

We should take into account that in Romanian "maşină" means machine but also automobile, different from the French "voiture" or English "car(t)", meaning carriage but also automobile. This semantical problem derives from a way of thinking in which the industrial revolution happened gradually in the Western Europe and the perception of industrial objects such as cars, ships was not different from that of pre-industrial objects. So the Romanian translation for machine-a-vivre was "maşină de locuit", meaning machine to inhabit but also inhabitable car, this feature lead to both an argument and a criticism of Le Corbusier's idea.

Architect Schoenberg's views on the quality of the modern home can be supplemented with those expressed on the occasion of his exhibition from 1929 (My Home): "The meaning of our exhibition is to prove to the public, the possibility of creating a modest, civilized and comfortable home, accessible even to a person with limited means - i.e. the strict necessary for a couple (possibly with a child). This problem is one of the most attractive for the architect permeated by his social purpose. The physical and moral health of the many, strong in numbers, but weak in wallets, largely depends on its just solution. [...] By reducing the number of pieces of furniture to what is strictly necessary and replacing their useless piles - admirable dust nests - with simple lines and surfaces, we greatly reduce the time and energy spent on dusting. Through the special shape of the kitchen furniture and their distribution corresponding to the sequence of operations to be performed:

unnecessary roads and movements are avoided. The result is saving both time and energy" (Rep., 1929, p. 2).

Schoenberg dealt with the insufficiently addressed problem of cheap and hygienic housing.

5. Arguments to argue the thesis

A concern for health does not necessarily lead to modern industrial-western inspired architecture. These two are not necessarily connected, as can be seen in Spiridon Cegăneanu's comment from 1931: "The new line born from the principles of hygiene and comfort and served by new construction materials, fortunately finds some talented performers, who save the prestige of the profession and contribute to the formation of the new current. This current, for now, it's true, can be felt in the manifestations here, of the latest products of foreignness. But considering the critical sense I show, in the interpretation of the plan, and in the connection between it and the geometric view, it makes us hope for a differentiation imposed by the local environment soon" (Cegăneanu, 1931, pp. 1-2).

Although Cegăneanu admits that hygiene and comfort are satisfied by the new current, he does not forget to reproach it with the influence of foreignness and to hope for a local influence exerted on it. It should be noted that the author also criticizes a national-style project, the Apprentice Dormitory in front of the Eastern Railway Station (the current Ferdinand I School), designed by Taşcu Ciulli in 1931, for the lack of air and light. In Cegăneanu's text, a concern for economy and health can be observed beyond personal preferences for the national style.

Modern architecture was not inevitable for the modernization of Romanian architecture. Sculptor Oscar Han suggested: "Le Corbusier created a form of construction for the needs of the Western proletariat. Its formula is presented to us by Mr. Cantacuzino (1934) as the only constructive solution here, with a functional ideal. He is today the carrier of the Le Corbusier art formula just as a few years ago he was the carrier of the art forms of the Italian Renaissance." (Han, 1934, p. 2).

A presentation of Juster House juxtaposes the artistic considerations, associated with industrial aesthetics (which upset the aesthetic habits of the neighbours) with those related to hygiene: "(their appreciation [of the neighbours] is the most deserved eulogy for the unsurpassed artist Marcel Iancu!) The neighbours don't wonder why, instead of the old ancestral windows, the new house has a window that goes from one end of the wall to the other, like a mortuary window. The attic window, usually on the roof, is

here in triplicate, like first class cabins of a transatlantic ship, and the garage looks like a branch of the central crematorium ... The huge window, no matter how artistic the concept may be based, corresponds above all to the most categorical desire for hygiene" (Faur, 1930).

It follows that sanitary concerns are not confused with modern aesthetics.

Another interwar architect suffering from TB seems to offer the proof that this disease does not necessarily affect his stylistic choices. Nicolae Cucu was another scholar at the Accademia di Romania in Rome. During March-April 1929, he was in Turkey with the Faculty of Architecture. In the autobiography kept in the Personal File for the records of the UAUIM teachers, the architect mentioned that he returned to the country in 1937 from Italy and was employed as a designer architect at the architectural service of the Romanian National Railway Company (CFR). In October 1937, after 5 months of service, he is forced to stop his activity completely and to be hospitalized in a TB sanatorium for a year due to an injury to his right lung, after which he resumes his activity in September 1938 as an employee at the Technical Service of the Ministry of Arts. He resigned from here on May 1, 1940 because of the low salary, insufficient for hid health care. He was employed on May 8, 1940 at the Ministry of Information as an architect draftsman, where he works until November 1944, when the employment ceases for budgetary reasons. He executed together with the architects Pompiliu Macovei, Constantin Gherghiceanu and Ascanio Damian, 25 exhibitions abroad (Ascanio Damian was the last employed in this service to supervise exhibitions abroad in 1943). In 1946 he was appointed head of works at the Faculty of Architecture (Kunst, 2013, p. 64).

We can see a fairly clear influence of the architecture of the Sapienzia University in Rome on the architecture of Nicolae Cucu during his employment in the Ministry of Information (Pavilion of Romanian Culture), but also the influence of Italian classicizing architecture. Given that he was also a scholar of the Rome Academy, we can attribute it to this experience, similarly to the modernity of Grigore Ionescu's projects.

But we also observe similar influences in architects who did not study in Italy such as Duiliu Marcu, Octav Doicescu, Florea Stănculescu, Horia Creangă, Haralamb Georgescu, Nicolae Goga and others. The expression of the Romanian national architecture was no longer the national style in the interwar period, there were styles of wider European breath such as the rationalist (Stripped Classicism) that were considered by contemporaries to be Romanian (perhaps by virtue of their Roman

character). Of all of them, Cucu's designs remain the finest examples of classicizing modern architecture.

6. Dismantling the arguments against

Ideological pressures make some architects switch sides.

Architect Ion D. Enescu's conference in January 1931 was inoculated with Fordist and

modernist beliefs: "The palace can be a working factory, in favourable conditions for life and productivity, and the house a living machine, adapted to all the requirements of human life. We must adapt to the conditions imposed by social life, giving up romance for comfort and better living conditions" (Enescu, January 26, 1931, p. 4).

After being hailed as a modern architect for his conference in 1931, Enescu would change sides during the war. In 1941 he criticizes the uniformity and placelessness of modernist architecture: "- Since reinforced concrete is the same everywhere, why wouldn't the house, the building, the palace be the same everywhere?, some say. And others, perhaps all of them, hurried to make,..., to be. And that's how we arrived at boxes or warehouses for living, of relative comfort and of a strangely uniform, universal and international appearance, so that anyone can confuse the neighbour's house, closer or further away, with his own" (Enescu, 1941, p. 18).

However in the case of Nicolae Cucu, we cannot talk about a change of opinion, especially since we do not know much about his opinions, we know more about his architectural expression. And we can see in this expression (in the case of the building in which he also lived, Splaiul Unirii no. 5, Bucharest) an influence of the lung disease from which he suffered, even if this does not necessarily imply the adoption of Le Corbusier's aesthetics.

However, we must bear in mind that the architectural expression of Nicolae Cucu's projects is marked by the idea of returning to order and tradition from the war period, under the influence of militant-authoritarian political propaganda (Gavriş, 1998, p. 97).

We can also observe the preservation of some mythological concerns already present in his diploma project from 1934, An Education Center (the medallion of the goddess Athena placed above the entrance and below the inscription Fiat lux) in the case of the medallions of this building, placed right next to his apartment on the 7th floor.

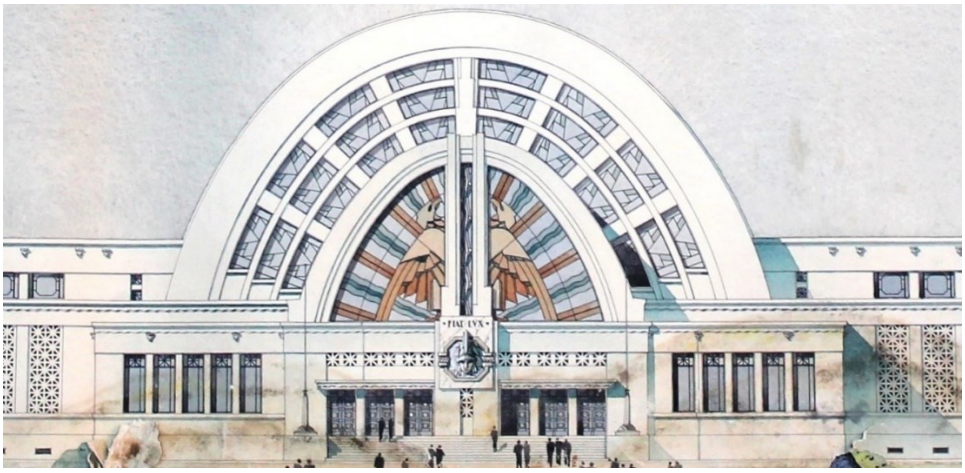


Image 6. Nicolae Cucu, Diploma Project: An Education Center, 1934
(Source: Cucu, 1934)



Image 7. National Savings Bank Pension House, Splaiul Unirii no. 5, Bucharest, Dâmboviţa façade (Source: the author)



Image 8 National Savings Bank Pension House, Bucharest, Nicolae Tonitza street façade (Source: the author)

On a functional level the architect Cucu ensures the Building of the CEC (National Savings Bank) Pension House, on Splaiul Unirii no. 5 (1939-40), where he lived, a series of technical features that remind us of the metaphor of Le Corbusier's living machine. At the level of built shapes we no longer recognize the industrial design we were used to in the case of modern architecture. With or without intention, in the case of this building, the architect Cucu solves some of the problems that Grigore Ionescu had pointed out in the case of modern blocks (noise and cold). In order not to disturb the tenants of noisy refrigerators, their motors were placed in the basement of the building. There was only a silent cold room, located in the kitchen of the apartments. The block was the first construction equipped with a hydrophore also placed in the basement that ensured sufficient water pressure. Because the vacuum cleaners had already appeared, the architect placed suction pumps in the basement. Near the plinth in the apartments he provided several holes where the vacuum cleaner tube could be inserted (informations provided by mr. prof. Sorin Vasilescu).

It should be noted that the classic aspect is only found on the facade facing Dâmboviţa of the building on Splaiul Unirii no. 5. The facade facing

Nicolae Tonitza Street has a more modern aspect that corrects the perspective limited by the narrowness of the street by proposing a facade with an inclination towards the viewer and with a height that is not too high (three floors) to be fully contemplated. The stylistic choice was probably determined by the Palace of Justice located on the other side of Dâmboviţa (and perhaps also with the the neighbouring building designed by Petre Antonescu).

Conclusions

The autonomy of architecture, associated with a romantic view of the profession, was a relative one. Prosaic models such as the metaphors of the car and the sanatorium were more realistic in relation to the real possibilities of architects in an increasingly dense urban environment, oscillating between the need for profit and the constraints of urbanism and those imposed by building permits.

People can simultaneously belong to several ideological groups, which can lead to contradictions between different mental models associated with them (Van Dijk, 2014, p. 98).

The metaphors of the sanatorium and the car as the inspiration of modern architecture were especially relevant to architects suffering from lung diseases (including TB). This model could come into conflict with their affiliation within the Bucharest School/Academy/Faculty of Architecture, with the specialized knowledge of the community of architects in Romania and its values or with the values of the reference community (the Romanian nation affected by the threat of war and the USSR in special).

Perhaps it is no coincidence that the architect Harry Schoenberg, erased from the public consciousness, had contacts with communism and the no. 1 enemy of Romania at that time: USSR (Popescu, 2021). It should be noted, however, that Bucharest architects also had social concerns in a modern key, not just traditional-modern, such as Florea Stănculescu (Tabacu, 2014, 65-66) or Octav Doicescu (Celac et al., 2005, p. 123).

It should also be noted that the USSR's architectural preferences changed within a few years of the outbreak of the war. If in 1935 the USSR embassy was in a modern villa designed by the architect Harry Schoenberg on Tuberozelor street no. 7 (formerly Toma Stelian), starting from 1937 the embassy will be located in a building designed by the same architect but in a refined classical style. The two-story villa on Tuberozelor Street had an apartment for Minister Ostrovski and offices for the consulate (Dimineaţa, February 21, 1935).

With the start of the war, mental models change through the association between the theme of autochthonism and that of hygienic and comfortable architecture: "Instead of the diversity of decorative forms and motifs, architecture will create harmonious and unitary ensembles, from which the power of the nation and the stability of its settlements will emerge naturally. Instead of the broken, interrupted, fragmented line, the continuous line will appear, framing in the extent and capitalizing in height all the elements that make up the spatial edifice, recalling the social one. From small openings, which express fear, insecurity or fear of light, we will not pass to full and imprudent openings, through which anyone could look or enter; but to the openings that express safety but also prudence, that do not obstruct the view and the light" (Enescu, 1939, p. 9).

As William Lescaze noticed in 1937: "In a deep sense, modern architecture, in its search for functional order, is part of the creation of that social order itself" (p. 120).

Unquestionably there was a troubled social order in Romania after king Carol's abdication. In such difficult times, the metaphors of the living machine and the sanatorium were no longer tenable.

The result was a gradual abandonment of the metaphor of the living machine, considered more and more as inhumane and inappropriate in the Romanian context even by the former modernist architects: "The interior of the houses is made according to the spatial economy of wagons and ships. This preoccupation also extends to the details of the furniture, to put everyday life in the nostalgic atmosphere of travel, instability, movement... projections of machinery. This is how we end up destroying the notion of sustainable values and the sense of continuity, of soul security... Today's Romania is only superficially touched by machinery. In this field we have concluded our experiences. Folk arts and moral tradition, expressed in religious art, are a part of our becoming" (Cantacuzino & Doicescu, 1940, p. 16).

Due to the change of style of the USSR embassy in Bucharest we cannot say that the abandonment of this metaphor was determined solely by the fight against communism. Rather we can say it was determined by a struggle to maintain the social order that influenced both communist and non-communist regimes.

The abandonment of this metaphor will be continued during the beginning of the communist regime in Romania: „Houses and cities are not viewed by the Soviet architect as "living machines" - but as human settlements that are not only comfortable, but also beautiful" (Sevastos, 1947). The metaphor will only re-surface in the 60s and 70s Romania as a

companion to modern architecture. In the era of prefabricated housing Le Corbusier was no longer the enemy of the regime: "Le Corbusier said that, in the 20th century, the house was a "living machine", thus wanting to emphasize the explosive character of the construction, and probably its inevitable stereotyping" (Stoian, 1970).

Images



Image 9. Toria Sanatorium
(*Source: Smigelschi, 1941*)

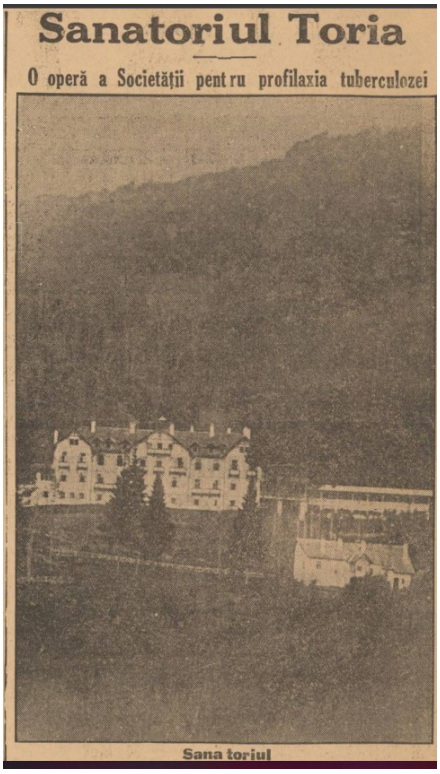


Image 10. Toria Sanatorium
(*Source: Petcan. 1934*)



Image 11. Villa în Bucharest, designed by Harry Schoenberg
(*Source:* Schoenberg, 1932)

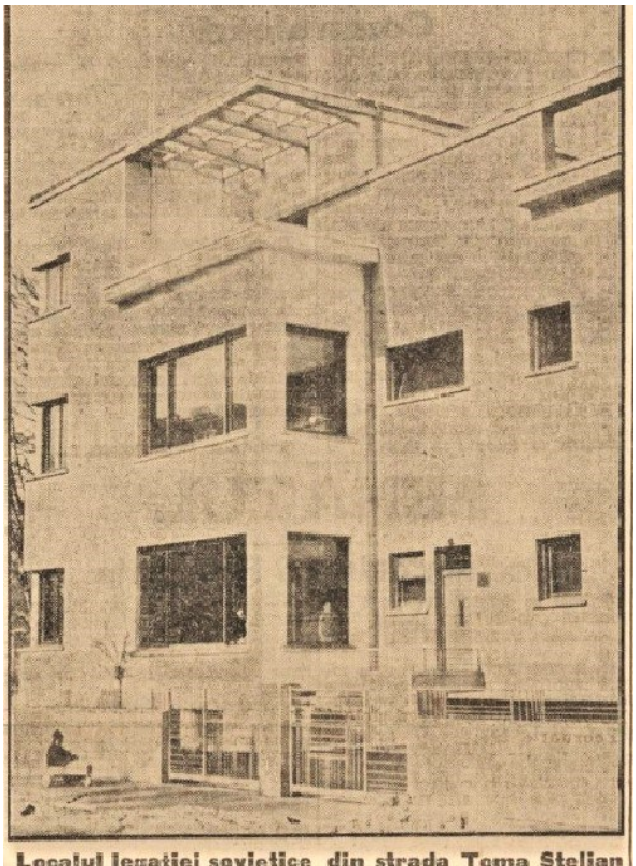


Image 12. Embassy of the USSR, arch. Schoenberg, str. Tuberozelor no. 7, former Toma Stelian str. (*Source:* "Resumption of Romanian-Russian", 1935, p. 9)

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