

# VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE IN SERBIA IN THE 19<sup>TH</sup> AND FIRST HALF OF THE 20<sup>TH</sup> CENTURIES Transformation and Disappearance

## A B S T R A C T

The purpose of this study is to reevaluate general theoretical and practical interpretation of vernacular architecture in Serbia in the 19th and the first half of 20th century. This incorporates the understanding of vernacular architecture in a wider context, through interpretations of various authors, who do not only observe its design value, but also the cultural and spiritual values. Since vernacular architecture cannot be recognized as a singular discipline, but within the area of many disciplines, the wider interpretation is mandatory. Although celebrated and recognized as archetypal, vernacular architecture in the studied period is fading away and gradually disappears, faced with modern building techniques and architectural styles, brought by formally educated builders. The goal of this study is to examine the processes within which mentioned transformation is occurring and, accordingly, to understand the vernacular architecture which developed in practice.

Since vernacular architecture in Serbian historiography has up to now only been examined in the context of traditional rural architecture, or of, so called *national style*, the main premise of the study is to offer another approach to this kind of creation, so as to examine and critically view the recent dominant understanding of application of vernacular principles and elements in the architecture of the mentioned period.

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## INTRODUCTION

The transformations that took place in the approach to shaping of buildings in Serbia during the 19th and early 20th century caused vernacular architecture to gradually cede its place to other approaches. This study will examine a wider context of various events, in society as well as in art, which defined the period in question and transformed not only architecture in Serbia, but the entire world. Through the global dominance of Europe, the processes that began in Western European societies affected the entire world.

The goal is to show how changes in architecture were not only changes in shapes of architectural works, but in the entire understanding of the world, i.e. in the relationship of an individual to the Universe, or the world in general. Through formation of the identity of an individual, a new understanding of the surroundings and the world one lives in will emerge, and have an effect on how the individual understands and creates his living space. We will try to explain how the European political and societal changes stoked the desire of Serbian elite to relate to the developed societies of the West, and thus affected radical changes in the society and culture of Serbia through the 19th century, as well as for the first part of the 20th century.

Certain ideas, which will develop through many upheavals and changes of the tempestuous 19th century, will drastically influence the subject of interest in this study. In the context of Serbia, these ideas will have a deciding role. The architecture that will start developing from that point on will be marked by tendencies to build a national Serbian (and later on - Yugoslav) culture as an answer to European national cultures, but also as an integral part of the entire European culture. The study will be focused on the elementary thesis: that the inclusion/understanding of the vernacular in the context of the national will mark the end of the vernacular. On the other hand, modern technological developments of the time will largely affect changes in the structure and shapes of buildings, gradually destroying and deforming the traditional approach.

## UNDERSTANDING OF THE VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE AND ITS DISAPPEARANCE IN EUROPE

The importance and difficulty in defining the vernacular were specifically discussed by Paul Oliver.<sup>1</sup> His conclusions in the field are extremely significant and thus warrant inclusion in this research. According to Oliver:

“Vernacular architecture comprises the dwellings and all other buildings of the people. Related to their environmental contexts and available

resources, they are customarily owner- or community-built, utilizing traditional technologies. All forms of vernacular architecture are built to meet specific needs, accommodating the values, economies and ways of living of the cultures that produce them.”<sup>22</sup>

Additionally, “... societies that have developed traditional forms of vernacular architecture see their buildings as the focus of their social, ritual and spiritual life.”<sup>23</sup> In this context it is necessary to observe and examine the Serbian vernacular architecture. Nevertheless, since the focus of this paper is on the vanishing of vernacular architecture, it would be wise to pay attention to Oliver’s approach to its duration and disappearance. He talks of many Romanian vernacular buildings which until recently were in use, and of the fully existent African vernacular architecture. We can add that certain forms of vernacular building can still be recognized in Serbia today. In rural areas, some customs, as well as the way of life, which coexisted with vernacular architecture, survived the waves of modernization and in some form still live today. On the other hand, the existence of certain customs or traces of vernacular architecture cannot be the reason to define the contemporary architecture of rural areas as vernacular. Considering this, Oliver’s explanation of how the disappearance of vernacular architecture is explained in Britain is significant for this study.

“In Britain, where the study of the vernacular architecture is quite inflexible and defined by the national boundaries within the United Kingdom, it is contended that the tradition ended in the 1840s with the development of the railways, which moved materials and people. This contention is presumably based on the assumption that vernacular builders only used local materials, and that the structures were raised only by indigenous people.”<sup>24</sup>

Meanwhile, the 1840s will not only see the railway established in Britain, this epoch is part of something bigger that will entirely change the world. We are talking about the Industrial Revolution - “if it began with the ‘takeoff’ in the 1780s, it may plausibly be said to be concluded with the building of the railways and the construction of a massive heavy industry in Britain in the 1840s.”<sup>25</sup> Hobsbawm calls this time period “the age of revolution,” and the world will be, through the undeniable influence of Western culture, transformed, according to him, by the Dual revolution – Industrial (British) and Bourgeois (French).<sup>6</sup> However, apart from the global influence exercised by the western culture, Serbia had its own reasons to adopt it – on one side there was the *backward eastern* Ottoman Empire whose rule the Balkans were trying to shed, on the other, there was a *modern and advanced* western civilization.<sup>7</sup>

## THE SYMBOLIC AND SPIRITUAL ELEMENTS OF VERNACULAR ARCHITECTURE

It is necessary to consider, if the goal is to explain the disappearance of vernacular architecture in Serbia, in what ways this architecture was manifested. The building of a house, as well as other forms of folk structures, by Serbian people, is a specific and complex process, with clearly defined rules. Observing this process, we realize that founding of the house/home was designed for the in-between the earth and the sky,<sup>8</sup> as Christian Norberg-Schulz poetically noted.

A house, from the prehistoric to the modern times, has never been a simple dwelling space, but also a connection of its inhabitants to the transcendental, to the world of their ancestors, as well as of deities and other supernatural beings important for the prosperity of the home. Considering this, it was important to do everything necessary for building a new home, so that the house would become such a place. The first step in this process was determining the most auspicious location where one could shape his living space and establish the communication channel with ancestors' souls. The location where the house was being built had above all to be "religiously clean".<sup>9</sup> The choice of the location was the first step in forming the new home. It was made in a number of ways, by performing various rituals, of which we'll only mention a few. In one of the rituals, in the designed space of the new home, inhabitants would bring offerings, mostly beverages, and leave them overnight, to check in the morning whether anything had been consumed. In other areas, a loaf of bread would be baked and then thrown on the ground; wherever it fell was the place to build the house.<sup>10</sup> The goal of these rituals was to cause signs to appear; based on the signs, the quality of the space was determined; the quality of the space mattered for founding the home. The beginning of construction was marked by sacrificing an animal.<sup>11</sup> This was most often done during the laying of foundations. What varied was the location where the *ritual sacrificing* took place. That location was usually a corner, the east wall or, simply, the central part of the house. There was also a custom of sacrificing at the location of the future threshold.<sup>12</sup> The belief was that ancestors' souls lived under the threshold, as well as under the hearth. This belief stems from the custom according to which Serbs, as well as other Slavic peoples, in the times before Christianity, buried their dead in these two locations.<sup>13</sup> The goal of these activities was to connect the home to the chthonic world – to demons and deities of the chthonic world, to the souls of ancestors. The chthonic character of the floor, the foundations, is evident in the belief that the serpent that protects the home lives under the threshold, or under the hearth.<sup>14</sup> Some see the embodiment of ancestors' souls in the symbol of serpent. The connection between the hearth, the ancestors and the protective

serpent can be seen in certain of the decorative hearth elements, such as iron wood holders (*prijekladi*), sometimes molten in the shape of the serpent, or with a serpent's head.<sup>15</sup>

Just like the foundations, the threshold and the hearth are elements of the chthonic in Serbian vernacular architecture, so the roof is the element of the sky. This relationship between the house and the sky is similar to the one mentioned by Christian Norberg-Schulz,<sup>16</sup> citing Jost Trier: "The ridge is the heavenly axis... The gables at the ends of the ridge are heavenly poles... beams are *universalis columna quasi sustiens omnis*."<sup>17</sup> Although he is describing Nordic homes in this case, one can easily recognize the similarities to Serbian traditional structures. First and foremost we shall examine the importance of the structure's orientation, and then also the symbolic meaning and the accentuation of the ridge. The prominence of ridges is largely featured in the log cabins of the so-called *Dinara type*. The ridge is one of the most noticeable shaping features of the structure. The ridge is lengthened comparatively to the sides of the roof and the house, and most often it is additionally decorated.<sup>18</sup> At the end of the ridge approximately ten cogs are carved out, and in the front, a number of holes are punctured. The role of this final touch is not only the form but also the magic - it serves to protect from evil eye and other harm.<sup>19</sup> In order to assert the prominence of the house amidst other household structures, a carved wooden spike is nailed at the end of the ridge.<sup>20</sup> Also at the end of the ridge, a decorated cross is often nailed on Christian houses, or a hewn wooden ax on Muslim houses.<sup>21</sup> Through these customs we recognize the connection of the ridge and the supporting beams to the supernatural, and mostly to the divine – the solar space and the sky. In that context one can understand the tendency to not only always position the house perpendicular to the terrain, but also on the north-south axis, since thus the ridge becomes "... the axis of the sky...and the gables at the ends are heavenly poles."<sup>22</sup> (Fig. 1)

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Figure 1. The decoration of the log cabin roof – the cap of chimney (*kapich*) and the ridge (drawing: Dj. Mandrapa)

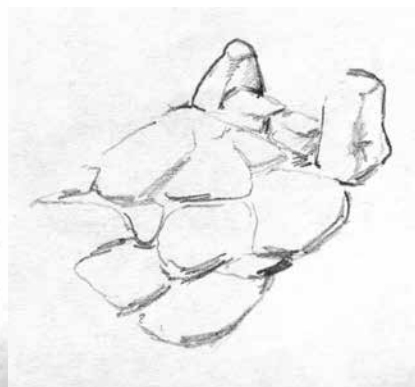


Figure 2. The hearth in the Dinaras log cabin (drawing: Dj. Mandrapa)

In reference to the log cabin of the so-called Dinara type, the important role in the connection of the sky and the house goes to the accentuated element on the cap of the chimney (*kapich*), which serves to carry out smoke. It is probably the most prominent shaping element of the house and at the same time it is the vertical element that accentuates the central axis. As among the herdsman-breeders of Central Asia where "... the mythico-ritual function of the pillar is transferred to the upper opening for the escape of smoke..."<sup>23</sup>, so *kapich* takes on the role of the pillar (Axis Mundi), the connection of the building to the sky "*universalis columna quasi sustiens omnis*." The importance of *kapich* becomes obvious if one considers that it is directly connected to the hearth of the house.<sup>24</sup>

In-between the foundation and the ridge, the hearth and the chimney cap, the house is formed in the space between the sky and earth – the chthonic and the solar. In this manner the house is defined on the vertical line underground-sky, i.e. in relation to the transcendental. Its east-west orientation, which in many ways shapes the everyday life, defines the house in relation to this world, forming thus the full system – underground-earth-sky.

Just as the north-south axis is defined by the position of the house, above all the position of the ridge, the east-west axis is defined by the position of the main doors, which always show in twos and are positioned facing each other. In the east there is the main entrance, while in the west is the small, exit door and all movement within the house is defined by this separation. The house is swept from the main toward the small door, the east entrance serves for guests to enter, for the "religious paraphernalia to be brought in, for the bride to be led in," the western one serves to "throw the trash and the ashes out, to carry out the dead."<sup>25</sup> This speaks of not only the functional, but the essential positioning of the doors and the everyday life in a traditional Serbian house.

The hearth is the essential part of the house and its center.<sup>26</sup> It is most prominently displayed in the log cabin, where it is located in the center, but it is equally important in other types of traditional structures, despite the fact that sometimes it leans on one of the walls, most often the wall that separates the basic living space from the additional room.<sup>27</sup> The great importance of the hearth can also be seen from the fact that the term *house* (*kuća*) is often equivalent to the term *hearth*. In some regions, the position of the hearth is decided before building the house; in others the hearth is also built first.<sup>28</sup> It is where the ancestors' souls assemble, or where the protector serpent lives; it is the place where the break in plane occurs, and if one considers its bond to the heavenly expanses (especially through the cap or the chimney), the connection to the transcendental becomes

clear and complete. Thus, the hearth becomes the center of the world, just as the house itself, is the center of the world and at the same time the image of the Universe. “This multiplicity of centers and this reiteration of the image of the world on smaller and smaller scales constitute one of the specific characteristics of traditional societies.”<sup>29</sup>

Thusly formed house is not only an architectural structure, it is the manner and the image of the builder’s existence on earth. All elements of the structure create a clear and meaningful entity, within which they all have their clearly defined roles. The traditional man builds the house in this manner so that he can exist, because “...in short, whatever the dimensions of the space with which he is familiar and in which he regards himself as situated - his country, his city, his village, his house a religious man feels the need always to exist in a total and organized world, in a cosmos.”<sup>30</sup> Every act of building a house is a cosmogonic act, with “the creation of the universe by the gods”<sup>31</sup> as its model. By living in a house the traditional man, in fact, reveals his manner of existence on Earth. This was explained by Heidegger when he tried to, analyzing the linguistic qualities of the term *to inhabit*, and pointing to its similarity to the term *to exist*, point out that “...inhabiting is how we exist on Earth.”<sup>32</sup> The similarity is recognized in Serbian language in the verb *to inhabit (obitavati)*. The traditional man thus inhabits in the same way as he exists – his house is always a settled *world* as opposed to the unsettled *chaos*. (Fig. 2)

#### ART VS. VERNACULAR CREATION

Despite the fact that creations of traditional builders were omnipresent in rural and urban settlements in Serbia in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, and some even later, this was the period when the strongest influence was felt from the western art and architecture.<sup>33</sup> Almost at the same time as the traditional houses, modern western buildings were being raised as the work of educated builders. Theoretic works in the fields of art and architecture became available. A new school of thought emerged and art, as well as architecture, became “...the natural result of the human organism, which innately enjoys certain combinations of shapes, lines, colors, movements, sounds, rhythms, rejoices in them and admires them.”<sup>34</sup> There are even certain occurrences for which scientific explanations are sought in optics and acoustics.<sup>35</sup> There is no space anymore for traditional building, and where certain builders commence to include elements of folk creations or start to use them in their works, it is done in the context of *art*.<sup>36</sup>

The art that flourished in Europe at that time was under strong influence of changes that were happening in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the roots of which can be found in the Renaissance. One should stress that according to certain authors “the term ‘Art’, with a capital A and in its modern sense, and the related term ‘Fine Arts’ (*Beaux Arts*) originated in all probability in the 18<sup>th</sup> century.”<sup>37</sup> Or, as Kristeller points out: “The grouping together of the visual arts with poetry and music into the system of the fine arts with which we are familiar did not exist in classical antiquity, in the Middle Ages or in the Renaissance.”<sup>38</sup>

Even though certain art historians, in various epochs, demanded that entire human creation be observed as Art, opposing the division into art and non-art, or lower and higher arts,<sup>39</sup> here we do not question the qualitative hierarchy between “beautiful” and “not so beautiful” and what is maybe art, and thus more valuable. We are talking about the concept that came into existence at a certain moment, which grouped certain human activities into the same overarching activity, i.e. Fine Arts. In other words - the recognition that similar human activities should be grouped together. The appearance of the idea of Art, which Kristeller discusses, is part of the process of formation of philosophy of arts, meaning *esthetics*. Since the beginning of the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the Renaissance tractates and rhetoric are replaced by philosophy of arts (*esthetics*).<sup>40</sup>

Thus, we can stress that “philosophical theory and the art of forming, inventing, producing and using concepts related to the **sensual cognition** of the world can be called *esthetics*.”<sup>41</sup> Looking at this definition of esthetics brings to mind Andra Stevanović’s words that Art is “...the natural result of the human organism, which innately enjoys certain combinations of shapes, lines, colors...” The fully formed *art* of the 19<sup>th</sup> century encounters and in some ways clashes with the traditional Serbian builder.

From the early 19<sup>th</sup> century the architecture in Serbia starts to follow its western models, and the whole process is intensified during the second half of the century.

“This is the period of the much more solid evolution definitely based on western European social order and development in the technical and spiritual sense, in relation to new life necessities, and perspectives on fashion, music and leisure.”<sup>42</sup>



But in Serbia, folkloric arts, as a certain approach to creation, had a long tradition and a special place. After the gradual acceptance of western styles, through the employment of foreign builders, as well as through the formal education of the local cadre, inspired by the tendency to draw Serbia closer to the *universal* European culture,<sup>43</sup> the need to form autochthonous artistic expressions is starting to develop, bearing witness to the importance of Serbian medieval art. Romanticism, as an epoch in western European art will have a special role in this process.<sup>44</sup>

In this kind of climate, national styles begin to develop,<sup>45</sup> and this emergence of national styles will mark the whole first half of the 20th century. An animated example of the folkloric can be found in Dragutin Inkiostri's text, in which he, complaining of the current situation in architecture, suggests taking a cue from folk creations and says that "what the Turks could not manage through the centuries - to alienate our national character, costumes, customs, song, faith, our architects are successfully accomplishing."<sup>46</sup>

The recognition of national character in vernacular architecture is a specific and important artistic element of the Serbian state, which is defined in historiography as *folklorism*.<sup>47</sup> The contemporary tendencies will explain the earlier ones, which began with the desire to give the new Serbian art a local character. These tendencies will specially explain the relationship between the vernacular and *folklorism*, as well as the relationship between the vernacular and the entire art scene, which was being developed in the newly-created Serbian state. The idea that Serbian, as well as other Yugoslav nations, consisted of primarily rural, peasant people, gave an exceptional strength to this approach to architecture and art in general.

"It is important to remember that every request for vernacular mobilization was by rule based on the idealized image of the village and rural culture, and that there was always a political apparatus behind it."<sup>48</sup>

"The ideological basis of his (Inkiostri's) texts lies in the secularization of national culture, and incorporates – as every ideology of nationalism does – the ultimate national determination of folkloric art."<sup>49</sup>

Indeed the secularization of creation is an important element of the process that we speak of. It is here that we can notice the immediate effect of the Dual revolution. "Identifying 'the people' with 'the nation' was a revolutionary concept."<sup>50</sup> The French Revolution (as well as the American Revolution) is the first event of that size in the history of Europe in which Christianity, or religion in general, does not play a part.<sup>51</sup> We are speaking of the general secularization,

which, in the end, replaced the religious imperative with the concept of national identity. The mobilization of the vernacular with the goal of forming a sense of the national, happens in multiple spheres of human activities, and can be followed in Serbia since the beginning of the 19th century.

“The ‘folk’ could be a revolutionary concept, especially among oppressed peoples about to discover or reassert their national identity, particularly those which lacked a native middle class or aristocracy. There the first dictionary, grammar or collection of folksong was an event of major political importance, a first declaration of independence.”<sup>52</sup>

As for Serbia, it is enough to remember *Vuk's Dictionary*, from 1818, or the *Anthology of Serbian folk songs*, from 1823-1833.<sup>53</sup> One can even talk about the breakthrough of national spirit into rural areas. Although the peasant continues to observe his customs and rituals, his national identity slowly takes over, while the religious identity often remains, but as the testimony to the national.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, the national is only an indicator, while the essence of the change is in the secularization of the vernacular, which in its core used to be religious.<sup>55</sup> The *desacralization* of art can be seen in the definition of the esthetic already mentioned, based on what we recognize as the clash between the idea of art as sensual understanding of the world and folk creations as spiritual, or transcendental awareness.

#### ART OF THE NEW ERA AS A PROCESS OF DESACRALIZATION

When we speak of two different concepts of understanding the world, or Universe, the *spiritual* and the *sensual*, one can inquire what kind of universe we are describing and in what manner and what capacity is it possible to understand it. Didn't the folk builder, while building, create the Universe and does it not mean then that in that manner he was trying, and succeeding, in understanding it? Claude Levi-Strauss will explain that our builder is trying "... to reach by the shortest possible means a general understanding of the universe—and not only a general but a total understanding."<sup>56</sup> Describing the disappearance of this pre-scientific way of thinking in Western Europe, Levi-Strauss says that "the real gap, the real separation between science and what we might as well call mythical thought... the real separation occurred in the seventeenth and the eighteenth century."<sup>57</sup> We can observe that this is the same period during which esthetics is formed, as well as the idea of Art. Accordingly, we can note that only one, unified process related to transformation of the way of thinking affected all segments of human social activity.

Speaking of disparity between the spiritual and sensual cognizance of the world, i.e. speaking of the shift from spiritual to sensual understanding, we, in essence, are describing the process of desacralization of human residence which is "...an integral part of the gigantic transformation of the world undertaken by the industrial societies, a transformation made possible by the desacralization of the cosmos accomplished by scientific thought."<sup>58</sup> This leads us to another interpretation, more architectural one, according to which, the political city of antiquity and the East, and the trading city of the Middle Ages are succeeded by the industrial city. Lefevre identifies the critical point, the crossover moment in the 16th century.<sup>59</sup> The interdependence of the industrial and scientific influences is indicative and speaks of the overarching changes that took place in the period in question. In the process of industrialization, important social changes take place, including the disappearance of work (*oeuvre*) and the appearance of products. When the newly created bourgeoisie "...replaces oppression by exploitation, this class as such no longer creates – it replaces *oeuvre*, by the product."<sup>60</sup> Thus this relationship work-product helps characterize the difference between the industrial and the pre-industrial society.

The basic trait of nature, as the source creator of *oeuvre*, according to Lefevre, is the absence of consciousness as to the outcome "...unless one is prepared to postulate the existence within it of a calculating god or providence." The author goes on to quote: "the rose is without 'why'; it blooms simply because it blooms. It pays no attention to itself, nor does it ask whether anyone sees it."<sup>61</sup>



Figure 3. The log cabin in the village Ljubiš, at the Zlatibor  
(drawing: Dj. Mandrapa)

Nevertheless, if we accept the fact that nature's creation is certainly a *work*, and on the other hand we accept the existence of a “calculating god,” then that *work* has its why, although it might not be aware of it, and that is the meaning of Silesius's quote. In other words, for a traditional man, a religious man, a rose certainly has its why, although he is aware of his incapacity to understand the why. Above all, the rose for him is a work of the Creator. What is undisputed is that the *work* – nature, can have its why if observed through eyes of the traditional man. Thus, if we are talking about the relationship *work*-product, we believe that it is necessary to consider the context in which the two appear. A man, who through his creation tries to create the World, tries to reproduce the primordial act of Creator's creation, thus creating a *work*. Nevertheless, “that nature is being murdered by ‘anti-nature’ – by abstraction, by signs and images, by discourse, and also by labor and its products. Along with God, nature is dying.”<sup>62</sup>

For most people, as Lefebvre points out, saying that something is a *work of art* is the greatest possible compliment. Nevertheless, he wonders if it is not actually the appearance of art, before the establishment of the concept itself, the proof of degeneration of *work*, and “... could it be that art, as a specialized activity, has destroyed works and replaced them, slowly but implacably, by products destined to be exchanged, traded and reproduced *ad infinitum*?”<sup>63</sup> (Fig. 3)

We believe that therein lies the gist: “specialization of processes and functions might divide the old craft or create a complex of semi-skilled workers from among peasants.”<sup>64</sup> New creativity, transformed by the Dual revolution, which has lost its religious basis by accepting new ideas, had to be specialized in order to find its place in the new system of production, consumption and exchange. “At the moment when the autonomy of art is confirmed, the problem of its consonance with other activities emerges, i.e. its place and function in cultural and social activities of the epoch.”<sup>65</sup> Similarly, there were requests for *specialization of art* in the newly formed Serbian culture of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In words of Andra Stevanović:

“A work of art is and should be an independent product and a subjective expression of its creator – the artist. The artist must not and should not be dependent on any kind of academic rule that teaches him how to express his ideas and feelings...”<sup>66</sup>

Among the first specialized builders of the 19<sup>th</sup> century we count the master seasonal workers *pechalbars* who from their native lands would leave in the summer to work all over the Balkans. Especially important are the workers from the village Osat in Bosnia, who were specialized in building log cabins

and who mostly worked in western Serbia. Well-known are also the master builders from areas around Pirot and Vlasina, specialized in building the light timber framed houses, and who mostly built around Pomoravlje, but also in Šumadija and western Serbia.<sup>67</sup> Although these master builders travelled and spread the building styles of their native lands, and regardless of the fact that this process reminded of the already mentioned one of connecting Britain through railways, we still wouldn't claim that this process ended the vernacular. Primarily because these masters continued to construct dwellings similar to the ones in their native lands, but also because these dwellings still enabled their users to live the kind of life they were used to, including rituals, customs, etc. In this period rural households were still in charge of constructing their own buildings. Nevertheless, this method of building would become the basis for changes that were to happen.

Seasonal work will become an economic activity and a way to acquire an excess of financial means. Seasonal workers were masters of various trades, but construction quickly became the dominant one. "It is estimated that 35% of all seasonal workers were representatives of various building trades."<sup>68</sup> What especially affected the transformation of building was the employment of seasonal workers on projects of great importance to the newly-formed Serbian state. Such projects included building of government institutions, where seasonal workers would come into contact with western workers, new ways of thinking and understanding architecture.<sup>69</sup>

Seasonal workers were the forerunners of the future Serbian builders. In the next round of migrations, at the end of the 19th century, the new industry would attract even larger numbers of workers, not only from the already mentioned areas, but from rural areas as well:

"With the sizeable inflow of workers from rural areas, a new composition of inhabitants formed in the surrounding of techno-industrial regions. The appearance of many older settlements, which used to be mostly agricultural, changed. That was the first consequence of industrialization in the history of settlements, which occurred in the areas surrounding plants, mines and railway routes."<sup>70</sup>

As in Great Britain, new traffic patterns noticeably affected changes in architecture, as well as the disappearance of traditional settlements. Not only through transportation of goods, materials and ideas, but by their mere existence. Road settlements<sup>71</sup> were being created, most often as simple and spontaneous groupings of buildings next to the road (most often close to an industrial center,

mine, etc.), while, on the other hand, towns were quickly changing appearance by adopting European models of urban design – ordered street matrix, central square, etc.<sup>72</sup> Moreover, since the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and especially in between the two world wars, new settlements would appear as the consequence of the new, poor, working class' need to build their houses the only way they can and know how. The construction and appearance of these houses are best described below:

“They drag in beams during the night, stick them in the ground, build the roof from cheap leftover materials, cover it with old tin pieces, torn tin buckets, porcelain pots, advertising boards.....they stretch sheets and tents to serve as walls, bring in an old furnace or a banged up stove...”<sup>73</sup>

On the other hand, advancements in resolving residential questions were slowed down by investors' interests, since the building of apartments was left to the private initiative. This is where one can observe the newly-developed sentiment of private entrepreneurs transformed by the novel credo, “by the first commandment of the age, to buy in the cheapest market and to sell in the dearest.”<sup>74</sup>

“Since the smallest and the most dilapidated residential units were bringing the largest income from rents, the incentive to modernize was lacking. It paid off much better to own small, badly maintained apartments at the edge of a large city than better and more presentable buildings.”<sup>75</sup>

The relationship between the market value of these residential units versus their usability recalls Lefebvre's disparity between a work and a product. The building of such cheap rental units was defined for their owners by one motive only – to earn more. On the other hand, it is clear that these dwellings, not only were not part of traditional building, but by their form prevented any kind of traditional living in any and all spheres of life. The additional overcrowding of these units speaks volumes. When we add that most inhabitants of these units were people who emigrated from villages, it is completely clear how industry started to change the peasant.

Industrialization was destroying the traditional building not only by its market politics and necessity for work force, but also by its products. Already in the time of Prince Milos, new structures, including government buildings, required corresponding materials to be built. Bricks are starting to be used for mass constructions. Underdeveloped production of bricks was not sufficient to satisfy the demand, so the materials were being imported from Austria. Thus, the

development of new ideas in architecture came to Serbia before the industry had a chance to develop. However, the production of new building materials will start to develop quickly, which will influence the development of architecture and acceptance of western ways of building and shaping. The materials in question are primarily brick and tile.<sup>76</sup>

One can observe that new ideas and new architecture require an entire socio-economic machinery which follows, but in the same way affects their development, while on the other hand, the development of necessary industries reciprocally affects those segments of construction which were not transformed, and changes them irretrievably. This will have a special effect on rural households, which will be gradually transformed at the end of the 19th century with appearance of new products. As the departure of certain family members to work in cities will affect transformation of village life, thus new materials and new household products will affect transformation of traditional homes. This is especially true in the use of manufactured and industrially produced bricks in the areas where wood is lacking, as well as the use of tile which becomes the dominant roof covering. In the same way the hearth disappears, replaced by furnaces and stoves, and the interior organization of houses increasingly resembles city houses.<sup>77</sup> The destroyed form certainly influences destruction of understanding of what *home* is, and transforms, together with new ideas and new identities, even the inhabitants of most remote rural areas. Thus, practically, industry functionally desacralized the dwelling of the previously traditional man, as the use of non-local materials, but industrially manufactured ones and new, *foreign*, architectural shapes pushed away the last vestiges of vernacular building.<sup>78</sup>

Kojić ended his considerations of traditional folk building saying that after the First World War the rural house acquired a new shape and spatial disposition, so that he no longer considered it pertinent to his study.<sup>79</sup> Especially conspicuous is the influence of the industry and its products in transforming the essence of traditional Serbian houses. This can be seen in many elements of the new buildings – from building systems and materials, to certain elements, which not only served to shape, but also served for ritual use and had a clear function in recreating the Universe. On the other hand, the migration of people from rural to urban areas was affected by industrialization, and also by the formation of the new state, sparked by the First Serbian Uprising (1804) when a very small population lived in towns,<sup>80</sup> so this process can be attributed to the formation of the new state as well as to the development of industry – in other words, even this element, when talking about Serbia, resulted in a way from the Dual revolution.

With the birth of the Serbian Principality, at the beginning of 1830s, the first inflows of European architecture aim to legitimize Serbia and the Serbian nation as the fully-fledged member of European nations and to separate it from oriental cultural influences. The birth of European Romanticism in great measure corresponds to the renewed Serbian art, which could not fully espouse the stern Classicism. In the next phase of Serbian art, the Romantic tendencies of renewing folk styles, will in effect agree with Serbia's need to be seen as not only a European nation, but also an autonomous nation, which preserves its heritage while participating in the creation of a European culture.

The transformation from the religious to the national played an important role in suppressing the vernacular. Then again, the industry itself, with its influence in creating new settlements, population migration, and finally with its products, destroyed the essence of vernacular dwellings. Definitely, certain customs, and possibly some vestiges of functional vernacular architecture can still be found in present day Serbia, as is the case with Romanian villages mentioned by Oliver. However, even when traditional customs survive, the destroyed nucleus of the vernacular context renders them dysfunctional.

“It is necessary to consider that the development of civilization and technology after the Second World War contributed to disappearance of some customs, rituals and beliefs, rendering them dysfunctional. For instance, decorating the cart on its way to the fields for the first wheat sowing became obsolete when tractors appeared. In the same way, in a number of villages, during the ritual bread baking on Christmas Eve, apart from symbolic and oxen bread ornaments, tractor ornaments are made as well...”<sup>81</sup>

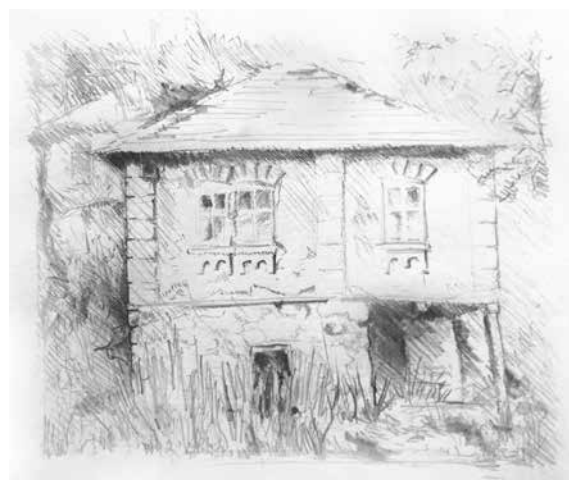


Figure 4. The village house made to resemble the urban one, Papratna, near Knjaževac (drawing: Dj. Mandrapa)



Although rural populations do not easily abandon their beliefs, their world is slowly changing its appearance, and many elements of the new stultify the old and render it meaningless. Thus one can say that “the savage who adopts something of foreign civilization too often loses his ruder virtues without gaining an equivalent.”<sup>82</sup> The tendency alone and the desire for the custom to survive, as is the case with the tractor ornament mentioned above, corroborate this statement.

### CONCLUDING NOTE

The transformations that began in western societies found a fertile ground in the 19<sup>th</sup> century Serbia. The Dual Revolution, with its Romantic spirit, will leave an important mark on the entire world. The mere formation of the Princedom, later on Kingdom, of Serbia we can ascribe to these happenings in Europe and the world. Also, we can encounter cultural and economic vestiges of these events in Serbia. The revolutionary concept of a nation will greatly change the understanding of identity, which will serve as the key role in transforming vernacular architecture and the way of life in general. Industrialization will help out this overarching process by securing the material needs. What is important is to perceive in what capacity the development of scientific thought transformed the understanding of the world, which will serve as the foundation for the described events. Shifting the focus from the religious to the scientific understanding of the world will enable the appearance of educational ideas, which will carry out the French Revolution, just as the sciences will stoke the process of industrialization.

In Serbia, the new social idea, greatly influenced by the national, will succeed in building the new identity, which will incorporate the vernacular solely in the context of constructing the image of an autochthone nation. Furthermore, the development of industry will enable a spontaneous and painless transformation of the physical dwelling space through use of new products. This transformation will not offer a context for the way of life that existed until then. In combination with the new understanding of self in relation to the world, these changes will bring on a lasting repression of the vernacular way of existing. All later echoes of the vernacular will appear as either faded, dysfunctional customs without context, and thus mostly meaningless, or as attempts at folk creations deprived of vernacular mentality. Certainly we cannot speak of the extinguishing of the vernacular as a process that has ended, but we must be aware of minimal traces of the vernacular in existence today in the choppy life of the man striving to find his place in today’s world. (Fig. 4)

## NOTES

- 1 Paul Oliver, *Built to Meet Needs, Cultural Issues in Vernacular Architecture* (Oxford: Elsevier Ltd, 2006), p.4.
- 2 Ibid, 30.
- 3 Ibid, 16.
- 4 Ibid, 37.
- 5 Eric Hobsbawm, *The Age of Revolution 1789-1848* (New York: Vintage Books, a division of Random House, Inc, 1996), 29.
- 6 Ibid, 2.
- 7 As a picturesque example of the desire for faster Europeanisation of post-uprising Serbia, look at “Srbske Novine,” writing about its reader base and concluding: “Thus amidst us we have another national treasure; we have advanced another step toward European education!” See: Miloš Popović, ed. „Srbija, Beograd, 24. februar“, *Srbske novine*, 26. february 1846. <http://scc.digital.nb.rs/view/P-2588-1846&e=f&ID=585&p=001&z=3&x=0&w=1680&h=839> (Accessed: 30 July 2012)
- 8 Kristijan Norberg-Šulc, *Stanovanje: Stanište, urbani prostor, kuća* (Beograd: Građevinska knjiga, 1990), 106.
- 9 Sreten Petrović, *Srpska mitologija, V knjiga - mitologija magija i običaji, istraživanje svrljiške oblasti* (Niš: Prosveta, 2000), 213.
- 10 Ibid, 213-214.

- 11 See: Sima Trojanović, *Glavni srpski žrtveni običaji* (Beograd: Službeni glasnik, 2008)
- 12 Petrović, *Srpska mitologija, V knjiga*, 215.
- 13 Sreten Petrović, *Srpska mitologija – Sistem srpske mitologije, I knjiga* (Niš: Prosveta, 1999.), 14.
- 14 Petrović, *Srpska mitologija, V knjiga*, 221. Petrović, *Srpska mitologija, I knjiga*, 46-50.
- 15 Ranko Findrik, *Dinarska brvnara* (Sirogojno: Muzej „Staro selo,“ 1998), 44.
- 16 Norberg-Šulc, 106
- 17 *Universalis columna quasi sustiens omnis* (authors translation: *pillar of the universe which, as it were, supports all thing*). See: Mircea Eliade, *The Sacred and the Profane: The Nature of Religion* (Orlando, Florida: Harcourt Inc, 1987), 35.
- 18 Aleksandar Deroko, *Narodno neimarstvo I* (Beograd: SANU, 1968), 66.
- 19 Findrik, *Dinarska brvnara*, 199-201.
- 20 Ranko Findrik, *Narodno neimarstvo* (Sirogojno: Muzej „Staro selo,“ 1994), 30.
- 21 Ibid; Findrik, *Dinarska brvnara*, 202-203.
- 22 Norberg-Šulc, 106.
- 23 The pillar here refers to the symbolic meaning of the central column of the house as a specific kind of world axis– *Axis mundi*. See: Eliade, 53.
- 24 Eliade speaks of the relationship hearth – smoke opening. See: Ibid, 57-58. Slobodan M. Nenadović, *Ilustrovani rečnik izraza u narodnoj arhitekturi* (Beograd: Prosveta, 2002), 33.
- 25 Findrik, *Narodno neimarstvo*, 32.
- 26 Kojić, 143.
- 27 Findrik, *Narodno neimarstvo*, 77-78, 117.
- 28 Findrik, *Dinarska brvnara*, 41.
- 29 Eliade, 43.
- 30 Ibid, 44.
- 31 Ibid, 31.
- 32 Martin Hajdeger, „Građenje, stanovanje, mišljenje,“ in *Teorija arhitekture i urbanizma*, ed. Petar Bojanić i Vladan Đokić (Beograd: Univerzitet u Beogradu, Arhitektonski fakultet, 2009), 116.
- 33 Bogdan Nestorović, *Arhitektura Srbije u XIX veku* (Beograd: Art Press, 2006.), 18.
- 34 Andra Stevanović, „Umetnost i arhitektura (1890),“ in *Jugosloveska umetnost XX veka – srpska arhitektura 1990 – 1970*, ed. Sovra Baračković et al. (Beograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1972.), 39.
- 35 Ibid.
- 36 As described in Dragutin Inkiostri, „Naša arhitektura (1907),“ in *Jugosloveska umetnost XX veka – srpska arhitektura 1990 – 1970*, ed. Sovra Baračković et al. (Beograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1972.), 41-44.
- 37 Paul Oskar Kristeller. „The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics Part I,“ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 12-4, (Oct. 1951): 497.
- 38 Paul Oskar Kristeller. „The Modern System of the Arts: A Study in the History of Aesthetics Part II,“ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 13 (1) (Jan. 1952): 43.
- 39 Aloise Riegl, as well as other representatives of the so called Viennese School of Art History, tried to find a way to interpret the entire human creation through history, observing it in its entirety as art. See: Michael Gubser. „Time and History in Alois Riegl’s Theory of Perception,“ *Journal of the History of Ideas* 66 (3) (Jul., 2005); Kathryn Simpson. „Viennese art, ugliness, and the Vienna school of art history: the vicissitudes of theory and practice“, *Journal of Art Historiography* 3 (December., 2010)
- 40 Đulio Karlo Argan and Akile Bonito Oliva, *Moderna umetnost 1770-1970-2000 I* (Beograd: Clio, 2004.), 21-22.
- 41 Miško Šuvaković, *Diskurzivna analiza* (Beograd: Orion art i Katedra za muzikologiju Fakulteta muzičke umetnosti, 2010.), 93. – bolded by the author
- 42 Nestorović, 18.
- 43 Mirjana Roter-Blagojević. „Nastava arhitekture na višim i visokoškolskim ustanovama u Beogradu tokom 19. i početkom 20. veka, uticaj stranih i domaćih graditelja,“ *Godišnjak grada Beograda*, 44 (1997): 125-168. Mirjana Roter-Blagojević, *Стамбена архитектура Београда у 19. и почетком*

20. veka (Beograd: Arhitektonski fakultet Univerziteta u Beogradu/Orión art, 2006.), 290-291.
- 44 Nestorović, 18.
- 45 Aleksandar Kadjević, *Jedan vek traženja nacionalnog stila u srpskoj arhitekturi (sredina XIX – sredina XX veka)* (Beograd: građevinska knjiga, 2007.) Aleksandar Ignjatović, *Jugoslovnestvo u arhitekturi: 1904 – 1941.* (Beograd: Građevinska knjiga, 2007.)
- 46 Inkiostri, 42.
- 47 Zoran Manević, “Novija srpska arhitektura,” in *Jugoslovnenska umetnost XX veka – srpska arhitektura 1990 – 1970*, ed. Sovra Baraćković et al. (Beograd: Muzej savremene umetnosti, 1972.), 20.
- 48 Ignjatović, 400.
- 49 Ibid, 403.
- 50 Hobsbawm, 60.
- 51 Ibid, 220.
- 52 Ibid, 266.
- 53 Gabriela Šubert. „Kada se Gete sreo sa Vukom,“ in *Srpska akademija nauka i umetnosti* 2009, <<http://www.sanu.ac.rs/Inicijative.aspx?arg=3,undefinedhttp://www.sanu.ac.rs/Inicijative/2009GabrijelaSubert.pdf>> (Accessed: 15. January 2015.), 5.
- 54 The short story titled „Razmišljanje jednog običnog srpskog vola“ (from 1902) by Radoje Domanović animatedly describes national sentiments of a peasant, see: Radoje Domanović. „Razmišljanje jednog običnog srpskog vola,“ in *Vikizvornik* 15. jun 2012, <[http://sr.wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%88%D1%99%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5\\_%D1%98%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3\\_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3\\_%D1%81%D1%80%D0%BF%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3\\_%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B0](http://sr.wikisource.org/wiki/%D0%A0%D0%B0%D0%B7%D0%BC%D0%B8%D1%88%D1%99%D0%B0%D1%9A%D0%B5_%D1%98%D0%B5%D0%B4%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3_%D0%BE%D0%B1%D0%B8%D1%87%D0%BD%D0%BE%D0%B3_%D1%81%D1%80%D0%BF%D1%81%D0%BA%D0%BE%D0%B3_%D0%B2%D0%BE%D0%BB%D0%B0)> (Accessed: 28. July 2012.).
- 55 Speaking of the adoption of the vernacular into the national architecture, of its use in constructing the national identity, it is interesting to mention a somewhat later example of exhibiting the *Dinara* log cabin as the “Bosnian house” within the Yugoslav pavilion in Paris in 1937, where this house was exhibited as the representative house of the unified Yugoslav identity, while in effect the *Dinara* log cabin was primarily a specific image of its builder’s world, and not a symbol of his national identity. See: Ignjatović, 114.
- 56 Claude Lévi-Strauss, *Myth and Meaning* (London: Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2005.), 5-6.
- 57 Ibid, 1.
- 58 Eliade, 51.
- 59 Henry Lefebvre, „Right to the City,“ in *Writing on the Cities*, ed. and trans. Eleonore Kofman and Elizabeth Lebas (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers Inc, 2000.), 122.
- 60 Ibid, 75.
- 61 Henry Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Basil Blackwell Inc, 1991.), 70.
- 62 Ibid, 71.
- 63 Ibid, 74.
- 64 Hobsbawm, 20.
- 65 Argan i Oliva, 22
- 66 Cited according to Nestorović, 30.
- 67 Kojić, 11-12.
- 68 Mari-Žanin Čalić, *Socijalna istorija Srbije 1815-1941, Usporedni napredak u industrijalizaciji* (Beograd: Clío, 2004.), 175.
- 69 Ibid.
- 70 Ibid, 178.
- 71 Kojić, 180.
- 72 Ibid, 45-47.
- 73 Dušan Stevović-Jazmin. „Trinaesti red,“ *Beogradske opštinske novine*, 1938, 392. Cited according to: Čalić, 314.

- 74 Hobsbawm, 32.  
 75 Čalić, 316-317.  
 76 Nestorović, 38-43; Čalić, 138.  
 77 Kojić, 180.  
 78 Ibid, 180.  
 79 Ibid, 181.  
 80 Nestorović, 10.  
 81 Petrović, *Srpska mitologija, V knjiga*, 61.  
 82 Edward Burnett Tylor, *Primitive Culture I* (London: John Murray, Albemarle Street , 1903.), 29.

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