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Las Historias Generales de Alojamiento y las Clases en la Literatura

The Housing General Histories and Classes in Literature

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Resumen

El artículo se enfoca en la inestabilidad theorica como uno de los rasgos del asunto de los orígenes modernos del tema a la condición contemporánea. El alojamiento en la arquitectura y urbanismo relacionado con la interpretación disciplinaria del tema residencial no componen una coleccion unívoca. Esta declaración se remite a la condición moderna, que viene establecida con la segunda mitad del siglo XIX y durando hasta el dia de hoy. La clave específica para investigar el campo es buscada en las historias y teorias generales de la casa. L condición para conseguir una clasificación de la evolución de la casa es obtenida por la escritura de una historia de evolucionista lineal, directamente inspirada por la biología y por el pensamiento sientifico. Esta estructura del texto tiene que ser analizada en sí mismo, y también en cuanto a otras explicaciones generales del asunto, mencionando la estructura del discurso que permite hablar sobre "la casa", para conceptuar y diseñar.

Palabras clave: Alojamiento, Historia de ideas, Evolución, Biología

Bloque temático: 4. La casa: mitos, arquetipos, modos de habitar

Abstract

The paper focuses on the theoretical instability as one of the steady features of the topic. Housing in architecture and urbanism related to the disciplinary interpretation of the residential theme do not compose a univoque set. This statement is referred to the modern condition, established with the second half of the XIX century and lasting until the present time. The specific key by which to investigate the field is searched in the general histories and theories of the house. The condition by which to get a classification of the evolution of the house is obtained through the writing of a linear evolutionist history, directly inspired by the biology and by the scientific thought. This structure of the text has to be analyzed in itself and regarding the other general explanations of the topic, discussing the structure of the argument that allows to speak about the "house" in order to conceptualize and design it.

Keywords: Housing, History of Ideas, Evolution, Biology

Topic: The House: Myths, Archetipes, Forms of Inhabitation

1. Vital Function: The Residency

Living and residing lay a field of reflection, along with evident research and simultaneously become characterized by a theoretical intractability that extends over time. This paper tries to reflect on the reasons that have led to this condition. These observations, conducted on this field of interest and formation, are those of an urban architect, an intrigued scholar on the history of ideas.

The focus of introduction for this subject is within a twentieth-century setting: the dwelling as one of the four fundamental functions (dwelling, work, transportation, recreation). They all take shape through a main author, Cornelis van Eesteren, and through a main document, the AUP (Algemeen Utibreidingsplan) of Amsterdam, and with decisive collective events that are dedicated to the "functional city" from 1931 to 1933. The functions create fundamental variables that influence each other and with this, determine variations of all the other urban elements. This conception through the drafting of the logical, graphic, scalar and conceptual synthesis of the elaborations proposed to the national delegations of the CIAM III (1933) establishes a transferable model of the synthetic analysis of the modernity of the city, the architecture, and the living. It expresses the aspiration to "code" living for architects and urban planners, making analytical capacity become more towards propositonal imagination.

Through the conceptualization of the "functional city", ones residency is taken in as a repeated action that can not be eliminated, a leading factor of the transformation of the urban form.

The relationship with what constitutes concrete living in a defined context in space and time remains open. To link the act of living to the historical or local configuration assumed by the living space (joint, homogeneous, or multiform, typical or innovative, identitarian or globalized...) a logical transition that is not contained in the fuction, occurs. The directions in which modern architecture and urban planning have sought this link, are consistent in particular in the Existenzminimum¹, in linking domestic architecture to a redistributive and egalitarian social horizon. Beyond that, in the search for the solutions of a language not yet developed and in marking an irreversible break towards the domestic habitants of the past.

This frame of mind of interpretation of living, has attracted adhesion, criticism, oppositions, revisions, and partial assumptions. The detachment or oblivion to the fuction of dwelling had crossed the twentieth century and the beginning of the twenty-first century producing influential consequences, seen as long-term stability in ways in which the matter is treated.

¹ See the opening role of the collective documents: Internationale Kongresse fur Neues Bauen und Stadtischen Hochbauamt in Frankfurt am Mein (ed.), *Die Wohnung fur das Existenzminimum* (Frankfurt am Mein: Englert & Schlosser, 1930); Internationale Kongresse fur Neues Bauen und Stadtischen Hochbauamt in Frankfurt am Mein (ed.), *Rationelle Bebauungsweisen* (Stuttgart: Julius Hoffmann Verlag, 1931. About the minimum dwelling: Karol Teige, *Nejmensi byt* (Praha: Vaclov Petr, 1932, engl. trans. *The Minimum Dwelling: the housing crisis, housing reform, the dwelling for the subsistence minimum, single family, rental and collective houses, regulatory plans for residental quarters, new forms of houses and apartments, the popular housing movement (Cambridge (Ma): MIT Press, 2002). About the criticism of the theme: George Teyssot, <i>L'invention de la maison minimum*, in: Philippe Ariès, Georges Duby (direction), *Histoire de la vie privée*, vol.V, *De la Première Guerre mondiale à nos jours*, edited by Antoine Prost e Gérard Vincent (Paris: Editions de Seuil,1987, italian trans. *L'invenzione della casa minima*, in: *La vita privata. Il Novecento*, (Roma-Bari: Laterza 1988), 175-220.

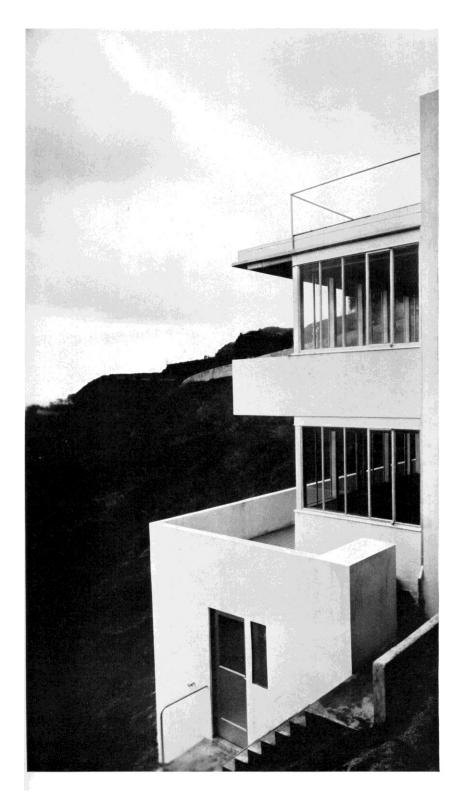




Figure 1: R.Neutra, House for Joseph and Gertrud Kun, Hollywood, California Source: The Architectural Forum n.2, april 1936, The Five Thousand Dollar House, 337

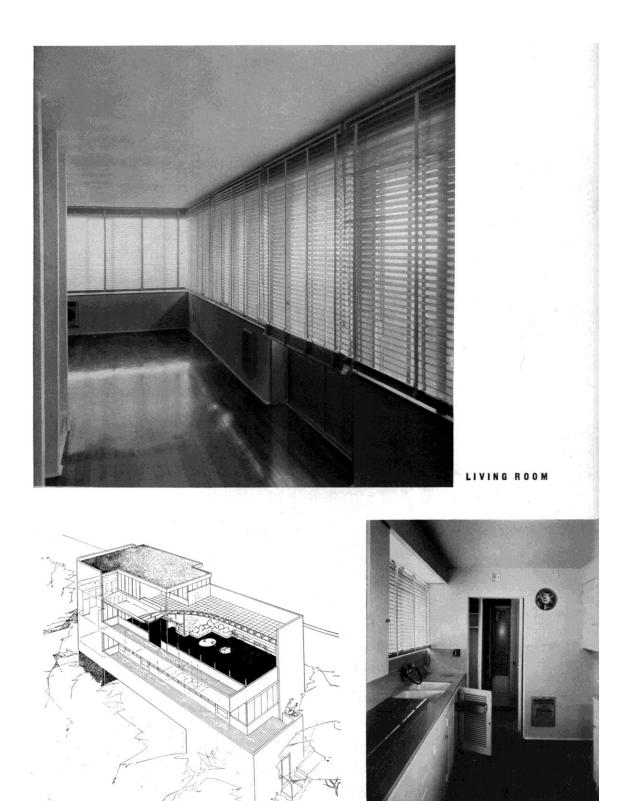


Figure 2: R.Neutra, House for Joseph and Gertrud Kun, Hollywood, California Source: The Architectural Forum n.2, april 1936, The Five Thousand Dollar House, 338

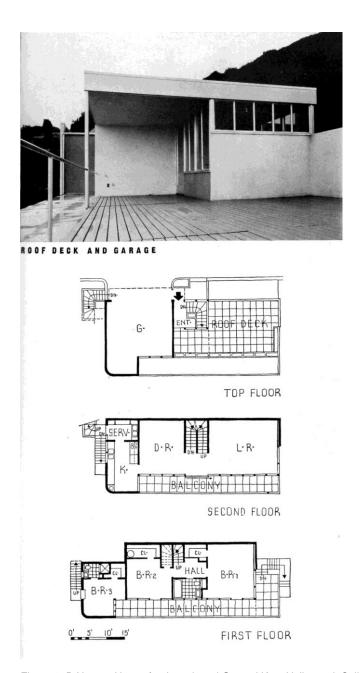


Figure 3: R.Neutra, House for Joseph and Gertrud Kun, Hollywood, California Source: The Architectural Forum n.2, april 1936, The Five Thousand Dollar House, 339

Along with all this, a problematic cluster has been formed and is destined to last, to know the diversity of highlights rather than solutions. A clear anti-storicism is confirmed: general treatise of dwelling is what identifies the structural characters and the relevance of action in the present time. The theory is structured on the solidity of the internal relationships between the conceptual operators, and not on the empirical verification of its thesis. Living in the functional city becomes associated with several parameters: density (territorial, estate, settlement), statistical results (censuses, surveys, and the parameters needed), quantitative consistency (number, surfaces, volumes, heights), building types, aesthetic and symbolic values. A definitive codification of what should be analyzed graphically, numerically, or as to what are the essential descriptive

parameters of living, are not produced. The character that is generated in the configuration, historically ascribable to the funtionalism, consists in a divergence of meaning between dwelling, taken as an act, and houses, seen as a repertoire, a patrimony and material object that provides answers to research operations.

2. Formation of the boundary of the word

The urban studies undertaken between the twenties and the fifties of the twentieth century, hinged on the concept of "functional city", establish a connection between topics of architecture and urban planning. They simultaniously work together to draw one single research. At the same time, these studies, through the main investigation of dwelling and housing, have not produced a reduced and shared codification of analytic operations, nor a particular shared language. A new cognitive theory of the city, and development of social legitimacy of design choices are revealed as the most important objectives for a necessary disciplinary advancement. At the same time the two objectives are not achieved and tend to taint each other in an unclear way, falling into a unique or authorial research.

In all likelihood it would not make much sense to turn to literature, to look for a story or a general dissertation of work, or transportation, or services, loisirs and recreational activities. However, this constitutes a theory of work, leaving the general treatment of habitat, open.

The openness of ones living space, its non-linear connection with home, with the material and objects dispositions, the relevance for individuals of a complete inhabitance, seems to revive the role of this notion. More than the other three independent variables of human settlements, dwelling seems to be intertwined with the rhetoric of belonging, and of the achievement of a happy life, perfectly layed out. This idea goes on into the collective and groups imaginary. This constitutes a projection plan for the individual and for the person, and as such also a political and economic action plan by the decision-makers towards the recipients of dwelling and housing.

The term "habitation" appears at the surface of discourse in Europe around the mid-nineteenth century, intensifying itself exponentially in the decades that followed.² The terms "urban planning" and "census" are emerging in a contemporary manner. A collective research for the organization of the living environment takes shape through the national state. It constituted the first subject held to the theoretical, technical and legislative elaboration, to the translation in practice. Preceding function, the need to recover relations between acknowledged development, such as the scientific method and the regulated use of quantitative data and numerical and arithmetic laws in professional fields, is affirmed. The technique intervenes as a translation into productive and progressive processes of scientific knowledge, lowering the former into "real" societies established into cities and territories, which are perceived as a non-transparent field in comparison.

The usefulness of the use of statistics emerges, which enquire the practices of population and housing censuses, which become mandatory and regular in main European states starting from the mid-nineteenth century. What emerges is the need for the systematic understanding of the living-space, as Friedrich Engels' texts on the "housing question" affirm in its most clear-cut and

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² Fabrizio Paone, *Teorie e storie dell'abitazione*, in: M. Bellomo et al. (ed.), *Abitare il nuovo/ Abitare di nuovo ai tempi della crisi* (Napoli: CLEAN Edizioni, 2012), 1123-1135.

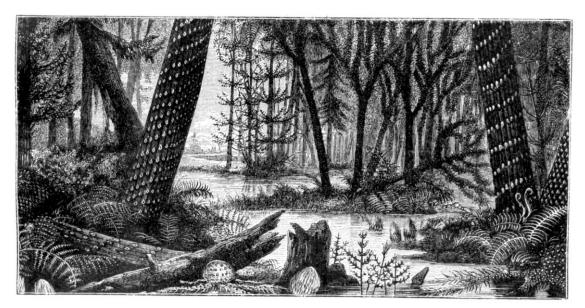


Figure 4: C.Garnier, A.Ammann, no name (the world before dwelling?) Source: Charles Garnier, Auguste Ammann, L'habitation humaine, Hachette, Paris 1892, italian trans. L'abitazione umana, Corriere della Sera, Milano 1893, VIII

controversial way.³ It is possible to intervene and understand effectively on a habitable space only through survey in a way that describes, measures, and re-elaborates, the entirety of housing (of a neighborhood, of a city, or a state). Housing can acquire meaning only within a general theory,

which is mainly economical, while interpreting social relationships and those developed during the process, for what is fundamental. In this context the housing question can take shape, in a general way and removed from the peculiarity for the search of the local exemplar solutions, which cannot affect the state of things.

In fact, inhabitation disappears, or rather it does not appear, and housing emerges as a commodity and as a factor for the production of capital. The solution of the housing question can only belong to the resurgence of a new social order, achieved through a radical renewal of a violent and indistinct necessity, to be specified subsequently.

There is still material on habitations to be registered and turned towards changes in terms of hygiene, space, health and morality.

3. Demands of action

While we wait for the legitimate theoretical solution, the renewal of the housing field is nourished by "technical" or local solutions. Consisting primarily on design manuals that communicate examples and solutions to be transferred to professional, building and business practices. Starting from mid-century, the reform of housing became technical and polytechnical, as attested by some works, including that of Henry Robert.⁴ As well as the note worthy systematic work of Èmile

³ Friedrich Engels, "Zur Wohnungsfrage", Volksstaat, 1872, italian trans. *La questione delle abitazioni*, (Roma: Rinascita, 1950); three essays published on Volksstaat magazine, jointed edition Leipzig 1887; italian trans. Roma: Luigi Mongini Editore, 1901).

⁴ Henry Roberts, *The Dwellings of the Labouring Classes, Their Arrangement and Construction* (London The Society For Improving The Condition Of The Labouring Classes by Seeleys; Misbet & Co.; J.W.Parker; And Hatchard, 1850), french trans. *Des Habitations des classes ouvrières* (Paris:Gide et J. Baudry, 1850).

Cacheaux and Èmile Müller, which unfolds over three decades with wide diffusion in Europe. ⁵ From this point of view, rational and functional research of modern architecture, even with all its iconoclastic and antihistoricist purposes, constitutes the accomplishment of the nineteenth-century collective research on residence.

The texts that propose general treatments have access to pragmatic and/or professional discussions, lacking in manuals, repertoires and solutions. As evidence of this kind of literary sense we can bring up the texts by Bruno Schwan from 1935⁶, born within the Berlin Exposition of 1931, and by Enrico Griffini, much more expanded and updated since 1931.⁷

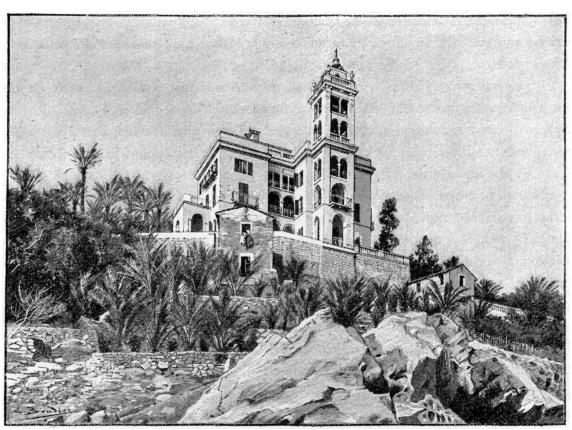


Figure 5: C.Garnier, villa Garnier a Bordighera. Source: Charles Garnier, Auguste Ammann, *L'habitation humaine*, Hachette, Paris 1892, italian trans. *L'abitazione umana*, Corriere della Sera, Milano 1893, 524

The reform of dwelling takes on the most modest (at a glance) appearance of new design principles and spatial organization, or the insertment of massive doses of new domestic

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⁵ See: Èmile Müller, *Habitations ouvrières et agricoles, cités, bains et lavoirs, sociétés alimentaires, détails de construction, statuts, règlements et contrats, conseils hygiéniques...* (Paris: Dalmont, 1855-1856); Èmile Cacheaux, Èmile Müller, *Habitations ouvrières en tous pays, situation en 1878, avenir,* (Paris: Baudry, 1878).

⁶ Bruno Schwan, *Städtebau und Wohnunggswesen der Welt, Town Planning and Housing through the World, L'urbanisme et l'habitation dans tout les pays* (Berlin: Wasmuth 1935).

⁷ Enrico A. Griffini, Costruzione razionale della casa. I nuovi materiali. Orientamenti attuali nella costruzione, la distribuzione, la organizzazione della casa (Milano: Hoepli,1931), new edition Costruzione razionale della casa. La teoria dell'abitazione. Nuovi sistemi costruttivi. Orientamenti attuali nella costruzione, la distribuzione, la organizzazione della casa (Milano: Hoepli, 1933); new enlarged edition in two volumes Costruzione razionale della casa. Parte prima, Distribuzione. Organizzazione. Unificazione dela casa. Nuovi orientamenti (Milano: Hoepli, 1946); Costruzione razionale della casa. Parte seconda, Nuovi sistemi costruttivi. Nuovi materiali. Opere di finitura, (Milano: Hoepli,1947).

technologies into existing homes. The gap between re-established instances of modern architecture and urbanism with social and economic values, and the assumption of innovation in linguistic and purist element, acts immediately. Sometimes crossing itself through the work of the main authors, like Le Corbusier.⁸ A distinguishing event is established at the first exhibition of architecture set up by the MoMA, "The International Style", curated by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock.⁹ Showcasing modern architecture and urban planning with the Savoye villa by Le Corbusier and Tugendhat villa by Mies van der Rohe are presented as systems of signs, as linguistic and syntactic elements.

The social aspects and the theories that the elaborations have lead, must be abraded in the presentation to the public. The collectivism shown by the residencial research done on social-democratic Germany could be recieved badly by the American public, more attracted by the topics of individualism and the colonization of the land through the movement to the borders allowed by individualistic mobilization. Moreover, the architects who have traced the disciplinary international and universalistical renewal are almost all German, with the addition of Le Corbusier. This seperation was furthered confirmed by subsequent political events, with the rise of totalitarianism, with war conflicts and the dispersal of the modern architects. The modern house becomes international, acquiring a kind of ideological and doctrinal neutrality.

Homes are simply homes. Residing is not explicitly involved, or mentioned. No resident can appear, or disturb the spatial layout. Nor are the real patrons of the famous homes, who are completely unrelated to the experiments allowed by their construction sites. The inhabitant is an ideal-typical resident.

4. The general histories

In this training framework, the house has disappeared twice.

The first one by Engels, subordinated to the total decomposition of economic relations, and to the potential assembly in a new order. So the "new house" is far beyond the present time, and of the type that we may have experienced at an earlier time. The architecture must still arrive. The extraordinary explorations carried out in the Soviet sphere in the 1920s, particularly regarding communal-houses¹⁰, therefore giving them a radical characteristic, a solitary anticipation which produces a sort of aesthetic hallucination towards the real condition of life and production of housing in the Soviet Union during the twenties and thirties of the twentieth century.

The second disappearance is linked to the functionalist operation: the new spatial order of architecture must be subtracted to aesthetic arguments (as seen with the approaches linked to eclecticism and to the art of urban composition, continued from the nineteenth century into the

⁸ Tim Benton, *Les villas de Le Corbusier et Pierre Jeanneret 1920-1930* (Paris: Editions de la Villette, 2007), italian trans. *Le ville di Le Corbusier e Pierre Jeanneret 1920-1930* (Milano: Electa, 2008).

⁹ The book following the exhibition will be a mile-stone: Henry-Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, *The International Style. Architecture since 1922* (New York: Norton, 1932).

¹⁰ Anatole Kopp, *Ville et Révolution. Architecture et urbanisme sovietique des années ving*t (Paris: Anthropos,1967), engl.transl. *Town and Revolution. Soviet Architecture and City Planning 1917-1935* (London: Thames & Hudson, 1970), italian trans. *Città e rivoluzione* (Milano: Feltrinelli,1973); IUAV, Gruppo Architettura, *Documenti, La questione delle abitazioni: ricerche e progetti sperimentali nell'Unione Sovietica 1925-1930*, academic year 1970-1971 (Venezia: Cluva,1970).

twentieth century) and brought back to fundamental considerations of a social, logical and ethical nature. From the very beginning, the circulation of modern architecture on the international scene, necessary for the universalist vision of new ideas, seems to refract the plans of this association. The new architecture, as shown by the study of Tim Benton on the housing experiments of Le Corbusier in the twenties¹¹, conducts its own elaborations on the economic, on average and normal houses, as well as on high-cost houses commissioned by intellectual élites close to eponymous creators in large international cities.



Figure 6: C.Garnier, A.Ammann, main fronf of the Nonnen Palace, Chichen Iza, Central America. Source: Charles Garnier, Auguste Ammann, *L'habitation humaine*, Hachette, Paris 1892, italian trans. *L'abitazione umana*, Corriere della Sera, Milano 1893, 541

The double disappearance of the house is combined with the indistinction of the function of dwelling, established in its generative importance, but without a final algebra that puts it in an unambiguous relationship with the heritage of existing houses.

The functionalist theory of dwelling leaves the history untouched.

The texts and events of the history of the dwelling remain linked to the nineteenth-century, to the beginning of the modern condition. The first of these is written by Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc in 1875.¹² The cut is deliberately informative and accademic. The history of the dwelling is placed into a general story of civilization. The narrator has the form of the double character of Epergos, the man-builder, and of Doxi, his interrogating counterpart. The path over time must be

¹¹ Benton (2007).

¹² Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire de l'habitation humaine: depuis les temps préhistoriques jusqu'à nos jours* (Paris: Hetzel, s.d. (1875), engl. trans. *The Habitations of Man in All Ages* (Boston: Osgood and co., 1876), reprint (Paris, Liège-Bruxelles: Berger-Levrault, Mardaga, 1978), italian trans. *Storia dell'abitazione umana: dai tempi preistorici fino ai nostri giorni* (Milano: Tipografia Editrice Lombarda, 1877).

explained through an clear path in space. The history of house must therefore be an evolutionary story. The evolution in this bookpresents itself as a linear succession of stages that lead humanity towards progressive improvement, proceeding from the rudimentary to the perfected, from the counter-indicative to the functioning, from the unspoke to the spoken, from the animal to the human. The main narrative problem consists in having a consecutive linear order. The world seems wild, with no order: the Chinese house, Scandinavian, Toltec, Proto-American, Buddhist Indian, and others, can not be arranged with the same trajectory. In order to obtain a unifying result, the text of Viollet-le-Duc introduces, besides the dialogic narrator, a basic notion, that of "race", and mythical people, the Arya, vectors of supremacy and of conflict, of the selection.

The arguments supporting the idea are described in scientific language and the results from the field of biology to that of civilization and housing. The idea of evolution passes through the following popular and educational narrative event, the exhibition of the dwelling inside the 1889 Paris Universal Exposition¹³, and in the following text, written by Auguste Ammann and Charles Garnier in 1892¹⁴ with the intent of the highest classified solution. The Aryans migrate and introduce the path of history and time. Historically describable structures are instilled. At the same time, a part of civilizations and housing remains outside the evolutionary mainstream.¹⁵

Dwelling conceived as history transforms residency into an apparent necessity, capable of altering the public and, perhaps, the masses. The past seems to project a clear shadow on the present (the text of Viollet-le-Duc, declaring to treat the matter "all throughtout our days" ends with the chapter towards the Renaissance; the ample and inclusive text of Ammann and Garnier includes a small section dedicated to the nineteenth century, which almost vanishes with the grandeur and the graphical precision that reconstructs the rest of the periods). ¹⁶

Inferences about the theoretical difficulties in the field of dwelling

The ongoing difficulty on understanding the subject is constantly raised by the texts that propose to undertake rigorous observation with consequences for possible policies and projects. It is the remark mentioned in the 1920 text by Luigi Einaudi¹⁷, the future president of the Italian republic, and by Giuseppe Samonà in 1936¹⁸. The first take is by presenting the house as a commodity, an economic asset to be regulated in one of the recurring situations of reconstruction. The second contribution regulates design culture in relation to the theory of society, therefore the difficulty of conceptualizing a house in a democratic and secular society. The difficulty of the elaboration is also found in the variation of the adjectives associated with the house: popular, economic, working,...

¹³ See the Exhibition guide: Auguste Ammann, *Guide historique à travers les habitations humaines reconstituées par Charles Garnier* (Paris: Hachette, 1889).

¹⁴ Charles Garnier, Auguste Ammann, *L'habitation humaine* (Paris: Hachette, 1892), italian trans. *L'abitazione umana* (Milano Corriere della Sera, 1893).

¹⁵ Garnier, Ammann 1892, chapters XIX, XX: italian ed. 532-567.

¹⁶ Garnier, Ammann 1892, chapter XVIII: italian ed. 511-531.

¹⁷ Luigi Einaudi, *Il problema delle abitazioni* (Milano: Treves,1920).

¹⁸ Giuseppe Samonà, *La casa popolare negli anni trenta* (Napoli EPSA Politecnica, 1935), new edition Padova: Marsilio, 1973.

The internal aporias os the general histories of the house can be placed next to the imperfection of the theory, to the impossible conjunction between the cognitive theory of the city and the normative translation of the design principles. Special research is perfected, further research fronts are opened, but stable and functioning meanings of habitat and ones residence have yet to be established.

This is where one can turn to literature complementary to the previous texts: the stories of a single house, a material document that expresses a particular path between sources. Often the authors are the same as they are most ambitious theorirists, Viollet-le.Duc¹⁹ for example, Bruno Taut²⁰, Le Corbusier²¹. Stories become micro-stories, where the world of objects is redefined, along with the subjects' capacity for reflection. Expressing a search for the "unity of a place" as a law of coherence for ones habitat and living. The house opens to further dimensions, potentially to any other dimension, and any kind of treatment, of presence.

The dissertations that follow will therefore have to be satisfied with being simple scholastic and didactic syntheses, or they will have to work towards reviewing literary genres and very different meanings, superimposed, incapable of being a meaningful synthesis.

Housing seems to fall into a systematic and inclusive look, and to refract itself into particular themes. It remains in a state of functionalism suspension. It is in this scenario that we imagine intervening the famous conference held by Martin Heidegger²², in which the houses disappear again, and the concept of dwelling is subtracted from the functionalist context to be immersed in a new form of circulation with the imaginary, symbols, and language. A re-inscribed functionalism is, therefore, begun in a broader context, or by repeating the same thing but with different terms, and to not adhere to its hypothesis of extreme reduction. At the same time it shows how one can open up an idea of durability from historicism, ideally opening the way to the ideas on residence expressed by "The Architecture of the City" by Aldo Rossi.²³

¹⁹ Eugène Emmanuel Viollet-le-Duc, *Histoire d'une maison*, (Paris: Hetzel, s.d. (1873), reprint (Paris: Berger-Levrault, 1978); (Bruxelles Mardaga, 1979), italian trans. *Storia di una casa*, (Milano, Carlo Simonetti, s.d.).

²⁰ Bruno Taut, *Ein Wohnhaus* (Stuttgart: Franckhische Verlags, Handlung W.Keller & Co, 1927).

²¹ Le Corbusier, *Une petite maison*, Les Carnets de la Recherche Patiente n.1, August 1954, (Zurich: Éditions Ginsberger, 1954), italian trans. *Una piccola casa* (Milano Biblioteca del Cenide, 2004).

²² Martin Heidegger, *Bauen, Wohnen, Denken*, in: Otto Bartning, *Mensch und Raum*, Herausgegeben im Auftrag des Magistrats der Stadt Darmstadt und des Komitees Darmstädter Gespräch 1951 (Darmstadt: Neue Darstädter Verlagsanstalt, 1952), 72-84, M.H., *Vörtrage und Aufsätze*, Verlag Günther Neske, Pfullingen 1954, italian trans. "*Costruire, abitare, pensare*", Lotus n°9, February 1975, 38-43, M.H., *Saggi e discorsi*, (Milano: Mursia, 1990), 96-108.

²³ Aldo Rossi, *L'architettura della città* (Padova: Marsilio, 1966).



Figure 7: Neolitic village in the county of Foggia, Italy, revealed by aerial photography Source: G.Astengo, *Urbanistica*, Enciclopedia Universale dell'Arte, Istituto per la collaborazione culturale Venezia - Roma, vol.XIV, 1966, table168.

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7. Autobiographic Note

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