

0. ABSTRACT

Most critics agree that there is a turning point in the career of Le Corbusier, where his most celebrated vocabulary and the syntax regulating it, become replaced by others that are in direct opposition. Some, however, claim that the period from 1928-1929 to 1945 does not show a replacement in his architecture but rather a reinterpretation of his own work throughout the 1920s. This group rejects the existence of two successive Le Corbusiers and maintains that there is a dialogue between two opposed but simultaneous Le Corbusiers. Accordingly, the opposition –they state-, both at formal and implantation levels, between two prototypes of housing to be built in series that were designed in the 1920s, the Maison Citrohan (1922) and the Maison Monol (1919), brings about two family trees, which include the Petite Maison the Week-End (1935) and Villa Savoye (1928), and continue up to his last two single-family houses: Villa Shodhan (1951) and Maisons Jaoul (1951). These critics establish a connection by comparing both of these types to a paragraph written by Le Corbusier in *Le Modulor*, where he defines two opposed groups of architectural thought: *architecture mâle* and *architecture femelle*. Thus, the Citrohan type, described as *angular and firm, standing erected on the ground*, is associated to the male architecture defined by Le Corbusier as “strong objectivity of forms under the bright light of the Mediterranean sun”, whereas the Monol type, *undulating and soft, resting on the ground and absorbing the setting*, is associated to the female architecture described by Le Corbusier as “limitless subjectivity rising against a cloudy sky¹”.

The two above-mentioned theories on the evolution of Le Corbusier’s work share the view that there is an opposition between modernity and tradition, although they differ from each other with regard to the development of this opposition from a timeframe perspective. The incompatibility between the two theories, coupled with the fact that renowned authors on this topic endorse them both at the same time, is unsettling. A revision of the bibliography, aimed at solving this conflict, will reveal that there are few references of detailed comparative studies between the alleged two types, or between two equivalent works from the periods prior to, and following the alleged turning point. In addition, none of the prototypes have been subject to an in-depth study. Furthermore, whereas most attention has been drawn to the so-called Citrohan-type legacy work, though it has been done on a separate basis, a critical gap still remains with regard to the vaulted housing type known as

1 Le Corbusier, *Le Modulor. Essai sur une mesure harmonique à l'échelle humaine applicable universellement à l'architecture et à la mécanique* (Paris: Éditions de l'Architecture d'Aujourd'hui, 1983), 224.

Monol.

The main purpose of this research is not to create controversy over the accuracy of the different critics' references (even if the comparison will be unavoidable) but to clear up the existing contradictions from some sources and shed light on the critical gaps. This research focuses on the following: 1) an analysis of the documents and housing architecture of Le Corbusier to ascertain whether the development of his work over time takes place by replacing or including concepts and forms; 2) a closer look both at the meaning and the role behind the concepts of *architecture mâle* and *architecture femelle* in Le Corbusier's writings over time to determine whether they materialized or not in his architectural work.