ARCHITECTURE, A PHANTASMATIC EXPRESSION OF DESIRE
Lúcia LEITÃO
Department of Architecture, Federal University of Pernambuco, Recife, Brazil.
E-mail leitao.lucia@uol.com.br
ORCID: 0000-0003-4935-2077

Abstract
Eminently theoretical and speculative, the objective of these notes is to investigate the immaterial dimension of architecture. To this end, the text of Joseph Rykwert, On Adam’s House in Paradise, in which the author postulates a house for the soul in Paradise, seen by him as both a promise and a memory, has been chosen as a starting point. What is Rikwert talking about? How and to what extent does the hut become a memory and how does the memory establish a promise? What demands does this promise have to answer? This is the focus of this paper.

In the light of Architectural Theory (Zevi) and Psychoanalysis (Freud), the hypothesis chosen to work with is that architecture, beyond its tangibility, would be a substitutive element for something definitively lost, a phantasmatic expression of desire, as it is defined by psychoanalysis. In this perspective, two conceptual notions guide the investigation: the Freudian assertion that “the dwelling-house was a substitute for the mother’s womb” and the Zevian premise that “internal space, that space which […] cannot be completely represented in any form, which can be grasped and felt only through direct experience, is the protagonist of architecture”. It is concluded that these ideas, when associated, permit us to comprehend under which psychic traits architecture constitutes itself as a fantasised creation, produced by the illusion of restoring something impossible to find.

Keywords: architecture, house, desire, fantasy, psychoanalysis.