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ANÁLISIS Y PROYECTOS
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ANALYSIS AND ADVANCED PROJECTS / ANÁLISIS Y PROYECTOS AVANZADOS

DISASSEMBLING DOMESTICITY. HABITING HETEROTOPIAS
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Summary: This research explores domesticity outside the home; the domus; the house, via the analysis of the heterotopias, where individuals within non-family groups have lived and developed their lives. In order to do this, we start (dis)assembling this condition by separating the various items of its configuration and analysing the different meanings that are associated with it. These must be re-thought as something foreign, by looking outside the common, the ordinary and the habitual. To carry out this operation certain terms appear such as: intimacy, privacy, public, proximity, habit and family, amongst others, that contain contradictory and even sinister meanings, for example: domination, patriarchy and private property. Next, various Heterotopic constructions are studied and the living conditions are analysed to identify the progressive or regressive transformations of domesticity. Justifiably added to the group of institutions that gave rise to this term, the hospitals and prisons, are the monasteries and convents. They all clearly reveal the radical issues of habitation and demonstrate how transformations of domesticity are directly connected to the relationship between architecture and power. This dissertation uses the case of the medieval beguines to illustrate this article.

Key words: Inhabit, Domesticity, Town, Beguinage, Middle Ages.

1. Introduction

The relationship between architecture and power can be approached by studying domestic transformations, and for that, this research analyses it by means of a process of (dis)assembly:

On the one hand, from the estrangement effect, looking from a distance at the common or habitual domesticity, this study explores and analyses the etymology of domesticity and the associated terms such as: intimacy, privacy, proximity and habit, amongst others. This allows us to discover the diverse meanings, sometimes hidden and contradictory, which this term conceals from us.

According to Sigmund Freud studies in 'Das Unheimliche' (Freud 1972), from the beginning, we can suspect that domesticity becomes sinister when it manifests itself or reveals its true nature, its genealogy. The origin of the term domesticity shows that it is linked to male domination, patriarchy and private property. The etymology indicates that it comes from the Latin word domus, a type of dwelling from the Roman Empire that housed the family household; and, according to Roman law, the famulus were the relatives and slaves belonging to the master, who did not belong to this group, but owned it.

It is in this sense that Michel Foucault examines in 'Surveiller et Punir Naissance de la prison', where he defines domesticity as a disciplinary procedure, a relationship of constant domination, global, massive, unlimited, and established under the singular will of the master: the owner (Foucault 2012).

The present analysis through individual situations such as independence and the dependency of the elderly at home, violence against women, the increase in single-person households and extended families, amongst other themes, helps to visualise the cracks and fractures that underline the difficulty of tackling domesticity. They are the symptoms that reveal underlying issues and they are required to be studied although some may seem ugly, harsh and repugnant, as Michel Foucault's master, Friedrich Nietzsche suggested in his 'Genealogie der Moral' (Nietzsche 2005).

Nowadays, we can say that domesticity has been disassociated from the traditional family and, possibly, also from the home. Due to this, the research studies the transformations of domesticity outside the dwelling; the domus; the house, via the analysis of the heterotopias, where individuals within non-family groups have inhabited and developed their lives.

This work is intended to help write a genealogy of domesticity that incorporates the lesser-known past, the history which goes against the grain (Benjamin 2013). Michel Foucault grouped prisons, psychiatric clinics and hospitals under the term of heterotopias in 'Espaces autres' (Foucault 2009),

justifiably also included are the monasteries and convents, and this article presents another medieval architectural community that can also be considered as a precedent: the beguinages.

2. Objectives and structure

This research aims to understand the condition of domesticity from space and over time, and to be able to redefine it in the contemporary world and in order to anticipate distinctive domestic situations from the everyday ones and from those included in the regulations.
For this reason, the research has two distinct parts, with two goals and different processes:
   A. To build a solid theoretical framework around the condition of domesticity, analysing all the associated terms such as: intimacy, privacy, public, proximity, habit and family amongst others, from its origin and to its evolution.
   B. To analyse a selection of heterotopic constructions - monasteries, convents, prisons, hospitals and psychiatric clinics- and to draw up complex maps, creating categories and assigning the variables needed to cross-reference the information in order to obtain the significant results that allows one to establish the current domestic condition.

3. Methodology

This prospective investigation's objective, which is a combination of analysis and studies, is intended to explore or predict the future. As described previously, it sets out from a hypothesis linked to the situations in today's society that requires an answer and from there its pertinence.
The research process is developed by means of consulting and studying from various sources, applying active learning methodologies, identifying exploration routes, producing hypotheses, and developing pertinent and justified conclusions.

3.1. *(Dis)Assembling domesticity*

To build a sound theoretical framework around the domestic condition..
   A. To carry out an etymological research for each one of the terms, delving into the past to see what they mean. In that same way, Sigmund Freud studied the term sinister, revealing hidden meanings and contradictions (Freud 1972).
      - intimacy, privacy, proximity and habit
      - family, domination, patriarchy and private property
   B. To study the evolution of the common patterns of domesticity. "The impossible fight against the logic of the established" said Baudelaire, who decided to be an eternal bohemian (Benjamin 2013).

3.2. *The domesticity in the heterotopias*

On the basis of what Michel Foucault said about heterotopias (Foucault 2009), one deals with examining each one of them to find out how domesticity is produced, trying to find the common points and the existing relationships.
   A. To analyse a selection of heterotopic constructions: monasteries, convents, prisons, hospitals and psychiatric clinics.
   B. To draw up some complex maps, creating categories and assigning the variables required to cross-reference the information in order to obtain the significant results that allows one to establish the domestic condition today. As Walter Benjamin said, it's all about "read what was never written" (Benjamin 2013).
Robert Evans has been chosen as a reference due to his method of investigation as a historian of domestic architecture or as a detective. He advances by searching for evidence, selecting and relating the traces from a particular era and place, "testimonies of a way of life" (Evans 2005), as in the representations of the floor layouts in houses and the human figures in the world of painting or literature.
Evans analyses the plans that show - walls, doors, windows and stairs - elements that were used to "separate" and "re-unite" selectively the "inhabited space", and contrast them with that which is absent, the erased footprints of the human figures that reveal how this space was occupied, the nature of the inherent human relationships in the layouts of the plans which are no longer visible.
The analysis that Evans proposes looks for "links between everyday behavior and architectural organisation", a "new type of connection" which avoids treating buildings as if they were paintings or writings. He explains that "they have inspected the floor layouts looking for features that could help explain the previous conditions of how people occupied the space, on the assumption that the

buildings house that which the paintings represented and the texts described in the field of human relationships" (Evans 2005).

That is to say, this way of approaching the past allows one to venture on contradictions or mismatches. Therefore, his methodology or manner of research constitutes an important reference in the development of this work.

4. Theoretical framework

There are a great number of investigations that analyse domestic space from multiple viewpoints and from different disciplines, there also abound studies that deal with heterotopic spaces from architectural, anthropological and sociological approaches amongst other fields of knowledge. However, to use these to talk about domesticity is a convoluted and unusual strategy, although the intention is that it is productive and justified.

Therefore, a series of references from some authors are included that support this research from the various concepts associated with the terms that define the title.

4.1. *(Dis)Assemble*

This term joins, with the use of the parenthesis, the two senses of the action, as an operation which is taken from the methodological reflection by Walter Benjamin that deals with the semantics of the fragment. Benjamin did not expound a theory of knowledge, but through this, he interprets the most characteristic transformations of his time (Benjamin 2010). Assembly is "read what was never written" (Benjamin 2013), establishes certain relationships with autonomous materials from which a meaning arises.

Another essential reference about the assembly which is based on images, is 'Bilderatlas Mnemoysne' by Aby Warburg. An Atlas that, as noted by Georges Didi-Huberman, "displays during the assemblage its capability of producing a dialectical understanding of Western culture through encounters with images" (Didi-Huberman 2010). The Atlas is an activation mechanism of ideas and relations. To assemble quotations from texts, literature, paintings, engravings, photographs, moving images, a myriad of documents likely to be related, or, vice versa, disassemblig the meaning.

4.2. *Domesticity*

In order to analyse domesticity, a parallel study is required on a series of associated concepts as indicated before. Here is a draft of the process, collected from etymology and philosophy.

4.2.1. *The family, the domination, the patriarchy*

Domesticity, as defined by Michel Foucault, is "a relationship of constant domination, global, massive, unlimited, and established by the singular will of the master: the owner (Foucault 2012)." In this sense, to inquire into the etymology of the word domesticity, or domination, it is verified that it comes from the Latin word dominare, domus (house), meaning "to have under their power". The origin of its meaning is constituted in a patriarchal society where the famulus (mother, children and slaves) is the asset of the dominus (master).

4.2.2. *The private, the intimate, the proximate*

The intimate, from the latin intra - (inside) and-mus (superlative, innermost), is not the private: an image of intimacy is not a shelter, a house, your own room. According to José Luis Pardo "intimacy is not to be inside, in an interior, it is to be outside of oneself, it is to be in absolute exposure" (Pardo 2013). Intimacy is an "effect of the language", that which is implied in the communication, a resonance which has no refuge, just as we do not have an ultimate house in which we can find an insurmountable protection when facing the adversary.

In this sense, the notion of intimacy is complemented with that of proximity. Josep María Esquirol retrieves this term and with it values the daily life and the relation with the most familiar: the people, the specific things, the landscapes (Esquirol 2015). One can continue with terms such as habit and others.

4.2.3. *The heterotopies*

The first time that Michel Foucault wrote about the heterotopias was in the preface of 'Les mots et choses' (Foucault 1999), and in relation to this term he explains that the origin of the book is from a text by Borges: 'The analytical language of John Wilkins' (Borges 2002). In particular, he mentions a classification of animals that Borges retrieved from a "certain Chinese Encyclopaedia". From this taxonomy he was astounded by the rules or laws that dictated its order, "it shows us the exotic enchantment of another way of thinking, taking ours to the limit: the impossibility to think that", "it is not about the extravagance of unusual encounters", "inconceivable space" impossible to find them a "common place" (Foucault 1999).

Foucault discovers in the surprising juxtaposition of the terms, in the "heteroclite and incongruous nature" these inappropriate collocations, the key to the difference between the comforting order of the utopia and the disquieting or disturbing nature of the heterotopia. He writes, "The utopias console: because even though they do not have a real place, they unfold into a wonderful and even space '(...)' The heterotopias are disturbing, no doubt because they secretly undermine the language, because they prevent naming this and that, because they break down the common names or they entangle them, because the 'syntax' is broken up beforehand and not only that which constructs the phrase - but also that which is less obvious which makes words and things 'stay together'(some on the other side or others facing them).That is why utopias admit fables and speeches: they find themselves on the cutting edge of language, in the fundamental dimension of the fable; the heterotopias (such as those often found in Borges) they drain the purpose, they detain words in themselves, they defy at its root any possibility of grammar; they unleash the myths and envelop the lyricism of the phrases with sterility"(Foucault 1999).

The same year, on the radio programme France-Culture for children, Foucault transferred the concept of heterotopy into spatial terms (Foucault 2009), in 'Le corps utopique' he evokes the idea of 'espaces autres', and, months later, he gave a conference at the 'Centre d' études architecturales de Paris', which was entitled 'Espaces autres: Utopies et heterotopias', where he defined the ways in which societies, historical and contemporary, invent specific heterotopias and, based on his previous studies about the institutions, he listed them. At this conference, he defined heterotopias as "real places, effective places, highlighted places in the same institution as that of society, which are a kind of counter-site of utopias effectively carried out in which the real sites, and all the other actual sites which can be found inside culture, are at the same time represented, answered and turned upside down". He added, "there is probably not a single culture in the world that is not made up of heterotopias. They are a constant of all human groups"(Foucault 2009).

5. The approach of a case. The results

5.1. *Introduction*

It is possible to find in the past, the emergence of new individuals that break with the way of life based on the nuclear family and that have the will to transform the spatial conditions they inhabit, the house and the city that they have inherited.

From this point of view, it is interesting to study how the Beguines of the medieval European cities emerged and began to develop their communities since the thirteenth century.

Firstly, the work carried out by different researchers specialised in the subject such as Sarah Joan Moran and Walter P. Simons (Dept. of History, University of Utrecht, and Ghent, respectively), or Daphne Spain (sociologist at the Dept. of Urbanism), amongst others, was reviewed in order to incorporate a more global approach.

Secondly, other projectual methodological considerations about typical and topological questions, aside from dogmatism and reductive visions were considered, to offer a more disciplinary contribution. In order to do this, two representative beguinages were chosen: Amsterdam and Brussels

To study the beguinages can be useful, as the underlying objective is to look again with the past in mind, so that we can better understand the shortcomings of current domesticity, the past does not enlighten the present o viceversa (Benjamin 2013), but one cannot exist without the other.

5.2. *Historical panorama*

From the thirteenth century, beguinage communities began to develop in numerous cities in the Netherlands. This region, Lage Landen or Le Pays-Bas, is now occupied by the following countries: Belgium, Holland, Luxembourg, areas in the North of France and West Germany.
Amongst the first testimonies that refer to these women according to Jacques de Vitry (1170-1240) (Moran, 2010), is from the clerics' 'Second Sermon of the Virgins' written between 1229-40); and that from the judge in 1274, "there are women that we do not know what to call, they are not ordinary women or nuns, because they do not live in this world nor outside it" (Neel 1989; Spain 2006).
There still exist controversial opinions about the origin of the term, some of which are worlds apart. The beguine communities from the beginning, were formed by women who could choose between a devout or secular living, in both cases without taking monastic vows (Moran 2010).
In 'Cities of Ladies: Beguine Communities in the Medieval Low Countries', 1200-1560, Walter P. Simons noted that, in the first decades of its existence, between 1230-60, the number of inhabitants of these communities rose to hundreds, in some cases, reached a thousand, a contrasting figure compared to the monasteries and nunneries of the time, which was much lower (Simons 2001).

Fig. 1 Cornelis Anthonisz Vogelvuluchtkaart. Plan of Ámsterdam, 1572

In the engraving of the city of Amsterdam (Fig. 1, enlarged) you can see the architectural complex of the beguinage in relation to the city, it was founded in 1345. Interestingly, there is another engraving of the beguinage without a surrounding area (Fig. 2), as if with this representation we are informed about the perception of the beguine from the outside, as if this were a city inside another.

Fig.2 Part of figure 1
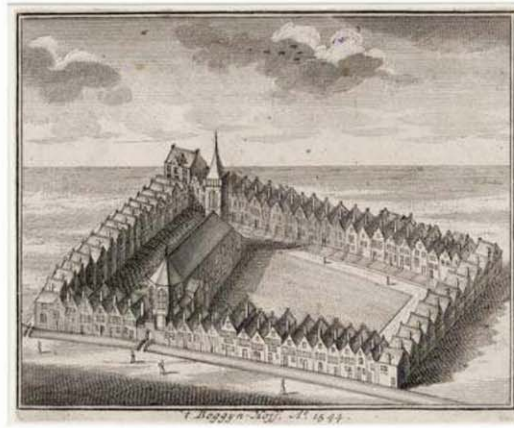
Fig. 3 Anonymous. Beguinage in Amsterdam, 1544

5.2.1. Causes of the emergence and the rapid expansión

The main cause of the rise of the beguine communities is attributed to the development of the cities in the High Middle Ages which meant that many women migrated towards them in search of work. In this context, they were made accessible to many more women since they admitted ownership and the right to own property (Simons 2001; Moran 2010), which led to its rapid expansion.

Unlike the individual funding that the beguines fostered, in convents and monasteries the inhabitants made a vow of poverty to be able to participate in the common and spiritual life, characterised by the freedom from the distractions of the world that ownership implies. The passive communities were for the elite, those few who could guarantee an annual payment with assets that they could impoverish (Moran 2017).

5.3. *The beguinages: other medieval hybrid types*

The beguinage, begijnhof or béguinage, in Dutch and French, is the architectural complex which is inhabited by communities of beguines. These, along with the monasteries and convents, can be considered as different medieval hybrid types.

Moreover, the beguinages are like cities within cities. Although the first beguinages were built outside of the cities and within their own walls for protection, shortly after, they settled inside or as the city expanded they ended up being within the city walls (Olijslager 1973). While these communities disappeared by the end of the twentieth century, from the three hundred beguinages that were accounted for in 1566, many still remain. They were formed without central coordination or a sole founder and many are inter-connected through medieval pathways (McDonnell 1969; Simons 2001).

Although the beguinages were very heterogeneous in their formal configuration, what they had in common was the way the diverse individuals, women, girls, the sick and the elderly, could develop other ways of living. In doing so they redefined the existing domesticity in their inherited city. This heterogeneity can be seen when comparing the beguinage of Amsterdam (Fig.1, enlarged) and Brussels (Fig. 3, enlarged). These two examples serve to illustrate the two main configurations that were adopted:

A. Organised houses around a large central square or garden. The beguinage of Amsterdam is an example of this configuration (fig. 1).
B. Houses arranged along streets within a separate walled area. The beguinage of Brussels is an example (fig. 3).

Fig. 4 Lodovico Guiccardinl. Plan of Brussels, 1572
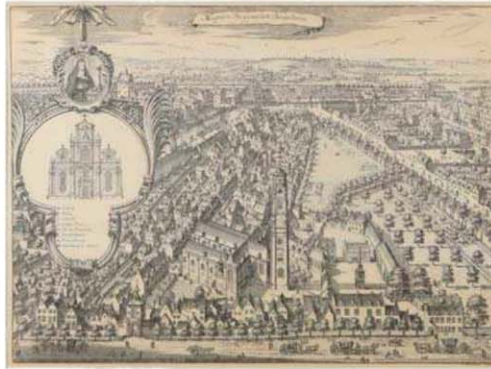

Fig. 5 Part of figure 4 enlarged

At the beginning, the opening of the beguinages to the public was justified by the need to provide services to the citizens in order to get an income. This made them vulnerable in the anti-heretical campaigns carried out in later centuries (Harline 1995). Architecture was used for allying themselves symbolically with the Church: the most relevant buildings of the beguinages were the church, the infirmary and the asylum (Moran 2010) and, therefore, their main uses were: prayer and the care of the elderly and the sick.

Some of the works carried out by the beguines to support themselves economically were: washing, cooking, grinding, making beer and laundering, amongst others. In addition, in some beguinages they had fields for bleaching cotton, area to grow food and keep livestock, bakeries, breweries and even shops (Moran 2010). While there were numerous services offered to the city, the beguinages achieved public importance by caring for the sick, the elderly and the poor, and they contributed to the education of the women which increased the rate of female literacy (Simons 2001; Spain 2006).

For this reason, the beguinages can be considered as a precedent of the institutions that Michel Foucault groups together with the term heterotopias in 'Espaces Autres' (Foucault 2009) and which he analyses from the 18th century, such as: hospitals, psychiatric clinics and prisons. One could deduce that the beguinage represents the inverted culture from which it arises.

In the perspective engraving of Brussels from 1720 you can see the beguinage located in the foreground (Fig. 4).

Fig. 6 Jacques Harrewyn. Beguinage in Brussels, 1720
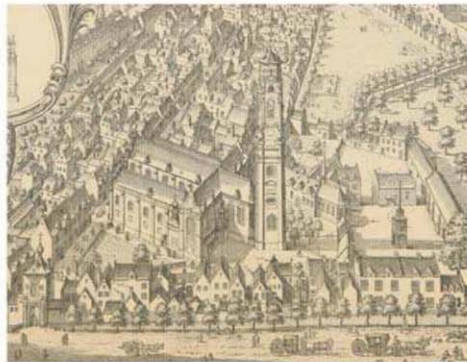
Fig. 7 Foreground of figure 5 enlarged

A closer look over a part of the engraving shows that the access door to the beguinage is open and it is possible to see who is inside (Moran 2010) (Fig. 5, enlarged). A laywoman crosses the threshold; within the beguinage, in front of her, six figures walk, possibly towards the church: two men, a woman and two children holding hands; joining them are the beguines dressed with their long habits, they come from the houses on the left and from the access door.

By connecting themselves to the Church the beguinages guaranteed their survival. In that way, they could maintain the opening to the exterior, which was their characteristic since their origin, and the possibility that every woman could develop her life with autonomy by belonging to these communities.

5.4. *The domesticity within the beguinages*

The beguinages can be considered as cities within cities. According to what has been written, one deduces that these architectural complexes constituted a controversial and distinct representation from the culture and society from which they were raised.

From the inside of these cities, the beguinages transformed the established conditions and advanced against the inherent domination of domesticity.

Some of the architectural strategies that appear in them are recaptured and described here since it may be helpful to identify the progressive or regressive transformations of domesticity. These will enable us to better understand the complex genealogy of the historiography of the house and the cities in the western world.

5.4.1. Mechanisms of mutation. The updating of existing domesticity

The beguines established their habitat based on their inherited city and the traditional house type is the basis or structure from which the beguinage is defined, thereby maintaining the city's traditional relationship between house and city. With the capacity to combine the potential house types within the architectural complex, the beguinages were able to form multiple developments from topological considerations, hence its particular mutability and heterogeneity.

'Notion of type' which has been so used and abused, regains its definition as "structure of the form which is capable of multiple developments, not only as a mere mechanism of reproduction" (Moneo 1978). This definition is closer to that which Quatremère de Quincy gave in the second half of the eighteenth century in the 'Historical dictionary of architecture' (Quincy 1788) than the redefinitions that are the abusive result made from research and residential production of the modern culture.

The meaning and origin of the 'notion of type' has been a subject of numerous studies; figures such as Anthony Vidler look to the Enlightenment to analyse it (Vidler 1977); Rafael Moneo traces the evolution from 'Enlightenment to Postmodernism' (Moneo 1978); or a more extensive work as that of Carles Martí in 'Variaciones de la identidad', which started in a more distant past but reaches only to take on the modern culture (Martí, 1993).

Other more recent studies review its redefinition in the second half of the 20th century and at the present time such as: 'Typical Plan' (Rem Koolhaas 1995); 'The Structure of the Ordinary' (Habraken 1998), amongst others. Even today, leading figures like Andrés Jaque not only redefine this notion from the praxis but he also mentions it in his writings, thereby contributing to their reactivation and actualisation (Jaque 2017).

This article shows two configuration modes of the beguinages, amongst many, Amsterdam and Brussels; with these, you can see the variety of compositions within their perimeters.

Faced with the various interpretations that can be found about the 'notion of type', this discourse focuses on that which makes it possible and that it is possible to verify (Moran 2010):

The houses that made up the beguinages go from beguines to secular and vice versa with apparent ease. The beguines bought adjacent houses or sold them according to their funds. The location of the majority of the elements is circumstantial, versatile and flexible, which is very far from following a strict pattern of functional organisation. They also took into account other topological variables.

Traditional houses were grouped around large courtyards with access from the perimeter of the block, from the outside, leaving the courtyard as a private, hidden space. In the beguinages, with the houses that the beguines bought, the access was changed and situated on the opposite façade so that access was obtained from the inside of the large courtyard. This inverted access transformed the conditions of use of the courtyards and created an interiority meaning, the space of intimacy extended from the house to the city, the space to which all other inhabitants had access to.

All these aspects give rise to the radical uniqueness of the domesticity of the beguinages: they were described as being unfinished architectural complexes and therefore they were always able to change, grow and reduce in size.

6. The summary of the conclusions

With the case analysed in this article, it has been possible to dismantle some of the common prejudices about the gender issue in that women had not developed their lives with autonomy until the last century; also, it has dealt with other projectural methodological issues about type and topological questions aside from dogmatism and reductionist visions.

Some of the architectural strategies employed in the beguinages that are recaptured and described here, contribute to enable us to better understand the complex genealogy of domesticity and must be incorporated in the historiography of the house and the western world.

The beguinages can be considered as those other places that from inside the city, transformed the established conditions and updated the existing domesticity. The documentation about the beguinages is rather piecemeal and dispersed, making it difficult to deal with an analysis of its architecture and its mode of inhabition. However, by means of some drawings and illustrations it is possible to understand how they settled and inhabited these complexes.

This work intends to value its usefulness by perceiving the past as it is, an immense ocean of knowledge weighed against the illusion of progress that ignores that which preceded it.

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