

Research article

ตำนาน จุดกำเนิด และความเป็นสมัยใหม่: มรดกทางความคิดของกระท่อมปฐมกาล

ในหนังสือ On Adam's House in Paradise ของ โจเซฟ ริคเวิร์ต

Myth, Origin, and Modernity: Joseph Rykwert's

On Adam's House in Paradise and the Legacy of the Primitive Hut

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บทคัดย่อ

งานวิจัยนี้มุ่งศึกษาบทบาทของ “ตำนาน” “จุดกำเนิด” และแนวคิดเรื่อง “กระท่อมปฐมกาล” (Primitive Hut) ผ่านงานเขียนอันทรงอิทธิพลของโจเซฟ ริคเวิร์ต (Joseph Rykwert) เรื่อง *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (ค.ศ. 1972) ซึ่งถือเป็นหมุดหมายสำคัญในการวิพากษ์ทฤษฎีสถาปัตยกรรมสมัยใหม่ ริคเวิร์ตได้อธิบายจุดกำเนิดของสถาปัตยกรรมในฐานะประเด็นทางโบราณคดีหรือข้อเท็จจริงเชิงประจักษ์ หากแต่เสนอว่า “ที่อยู่อาศัยหลังแรกของมนุษย์” เป็นโครงสร้างทางความคิดเชิงสัญลักษณ์ที่ถูกนำมาใช้ซ้ำแล้วซ้ำเล่าเพื่อกำหนดความหมายของสถาปัตยกรรมในบริบททางประวัติศาสตร์ที่แตกต่างกัน งานวิจัยนี้ต่อยอดจากการเขียนเชิงประวัติศาสตร์ของริคเวิร์ต โดยเสนอข้อโต้แย้งเชิงวิพากษ์เพิ่มเติมว่า แนวคิดกระท่อมปฐมกาลมิใช่เพียงมโนทัศน์ที่ปรากฏซ้ำ หากแต่เป็น “เครื่องมือเชิงวาทกรรม” ที่สถาปนิกและนักทฤษฎีใช้เพื่อสร้างความชอบธรรมให้กับจุดเริ่มต้นใหม่ทางวัฒนธรรม การเมือง และเทคโนโลยีในห้วงเวลาที่สังคมกำลังเปลี่ยนผ่าน

ในแวดวงทฤษฎีสถาปัตยกรรม คำถามเกี่ยวกับ “จุดกำเนิด” มีบทบาทสำคัญอย่างยิ่งต่อการกำหนดสถานะความชอบธรรม และคุณค่าของสถาปัตยกรรม การตั้งคำถามว่าที่อยู่อาศัยแรกสุดมีลักษณะเช่นใด มิใช่การสืบค้นข้อเท็จจริงทางประวัติศาสตร์เท่านั้น แต่เป็นกระบวนการสร้างตำนานทางปัญญาที่สะท้อนความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างมนุษย์กับธรรมชาติ วัฒนธรรม และสังคม งานวิจัยนี้วิเคราะห์งานเขียนของริคเวิร์ตไว้ภายในกรอบความคิดดังกล่าว และชี้ให้เห็นว่าตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดยังคงดำรงอยู่ เพราะมันเปิดโอกาสให้สถาปัตยกรรมสามารถเล่าเรื่องและนิยามตัวเองใหม่ได้อย่างต่อเนื่อง อย่างไรก็ตาม งานวิจัยนี้ยังแยกจุดยืนการวิเคราะห์ของผู้เขียนออกจากริคเวิร์ตอย่างชัดเจน โดยเน้นว่าตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดถูกนำมาใช้เชิงกลยุทธ์เพื่อรองรับการเปลี่ยนแปลงทางสถาปัตยกรรมในแต่ละยุค

แก่นหลักของการศึกษานี้คือการวิเคราะห์การตีความแนวคิดกระท่อมปฐมกาลในสี่ช่วงเวลาสำคัญของประวัติศาสตร์สถาปัตยกรรมตะวันตก ได้แก่ วิทรูเวียส (Vitruvius) ในสมัยโรมันโบราณ มาร์ก-อ็องตวน โลเชร์ (Marc-Antoine Laugier) ใน

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คริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 18 ก๊อตฟรีด เซ็มเปอร์ (Gottfried Semper) ในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 19 และเลอ คอร์บูซีเยร์ (Le Corbusier) ในคริสต์ศตวรรษที่ 20 บุคคลเหล่านี้มีได้ถูกนำเสนอในฐานะสายอิทธิพลที่สืบทอดกันโดยตรง หากแต่ในฐานะนักคิดที่ทวนกลับไปตั้งคำถามเรื่อง “จุดเริ่มต้น” เพื่อรับมือกับวิกฤตทางปัญญาและสังคมของยุคสมัยตนเอง การตีความแต่ละแบบจึงถูกพิจารณาควบคู่กับบริบททางสังคม วัฒนธรรม และการเมืองที่หล่อหลอมแนวคิดเหล่านั้น

ในด้านระเบียบวิธีวิจัย งานศึกษานี้ใช้แนวทางเชิงประวัติศาสตร์และการวิเคราะห์เชิงวิพากษ์ โดยผสมผสานการอ่านตัวบทเชิงลึกของงานทฤษฎีหลักเข้ากับการอธิบายบริบททางสังคมและวัฒนธรรมที่ร่ายล้อมการผลิตองค์ความรู้เหล่านั้น กรอบการเขียนประวัติศาสตร์ของริคเวิร์ดทำหน้าที่เป็นแกนกลางของการตีความ ขณะที่แนวคิดของวิททูเวียส โลเชร์ เซ็มเปอร์ และเลอ คอร์บูซีเยร์ ถูกนำมาเปรียบเทียบเพื่อแสดงให้เห็นวิธีที่ตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดถูกใช้เพื่อสร้างบรรทัดฐานทางสถาปัตยกรรม งานวิจัยนี้หลีกเลี่ยงการแสวงหาความจริงเชิงโบราณคดี แต่ให้ความสำคัญกับการทำความเข้าใจ “จุดกำเนิด” ในฐานะกลไกทางความคิด นอกจากนี้ การอ้างอิงงานวิชาการทฤษฎีถูกใช้เพื่อจัดวางข้อถกเถียงในสนามความรู้ที่กว้างขึ้น พร้อมทั้งรักษาความชัดเจนในการแยกเสียงของริคเวิร์ด นักวิชาการอื่น และข้อเสนอของผู้เขียน

ผลการศึกษาชี้ให้เห็นว่า การถกเถียงเรื่องกระท่อมปฐมภุมกาลได้มุงย้อนกลับไปหาอดีต หากแต่มีลักษณะมุ่งไปข้างหน้าอย่างเด่นชัด สำหรับวิททูเวียส ตำนานจุดกำเนิดของบ้านผูกโยงกับการเกิดของภาษา การอยู่ร่วมกัน และระเบียบทางการเมือง ซึ่งสะท้อนบริบทของโรมันในยุคออกุสตุส โลเชร์เปลี่ยนกระท่อมปฐมภุมกาลให้กลายเป็นอุดมคติทางศีลธรรมและสุนทรียะของยุคเรืองปัญญา โดยใช้ธรรมชาติและความเรียบง่ายเป็นเครื่องมือวิจารณ์สถาปัตยกรรมฟุ่มเฟือย เซ็มเปอร์ ซึ่งเผชิญกับการปฏิวัติอุตสาหกรรม ได้อธิบายจุดกำเนิดของสถาปัตยกรรมผ่านกิจกรรมทางวัฒนธรรมและเทคนิค โดยเฉพาะแนวคิดเรื่องการห่อหุ้มและสิ่งทอ ขณะที่เลอ คอร์บูซีเยร์ สร้างตำนานแห่งจุดเริ่มต้นใหม่ที่มุ่งสู่นาคต โดยนิยามบ้านในฐานะ “เครื่องจักรสำหรับการอยู่อาศัย” ภายใต้เหตุผล รูปทรงเรขาคณิต และเทคโนโลยีสมัยใหม่

จากการวิเคราะห์เชิงเปรียบเทียบ งานวิจัยสรุปได้ว่า กระท่อมปฐมภุมกาลมิใช่วัตถุทางประวัติศาสตร์ที่มีความหมายตายตัว หากแต่เป็นเครื่องมือทางความคิดที่ยืดหยุ่น ซึ่งถูกปรับเปลี่ยนความหมายไปตามความสัมพันธ์ระหว่างสถาปัตยกรรมกับสังคม เทคโนโลยี และวัฒนธรรม แม้อริคเวิร์ดจะชี้ให้เห็นความต่อเนื่องของตำนานนี้ งานวิจัยนี้เสนอเพิ่มเติมว่า ตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดทำหน้าที่เชิงวาทกรรมในการสร้างความชอบธรรมให้กับกระบวนทัศน์ใหม่ทางสถาปัตยกรรม ทำให้ “จุดเริ่มต้น” กลายเป็นพื้นที่ที่ประเพณีและความเป็นสมัยใหม่เผชิญหน้าและนิยามซึ่งกันและกัน

บทสรุปของงานวิจัยเสนอว่า กระท่อมปฐมภุมกาลควรถูกเข้าใจในฐานะกลไกทางปัญญาที่สถาปัตยกรรมใช้ในการสร้าง “จุดเริ่มต้นของตนเอง” ซ้ำแล้วซ้ำเล่า ตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดจึงมิใช่ภาพโรแมนติกของอดีตที่สูญหาย แต่เป็นเครื่องมือในการจัดการกับวิกฤต การเปลี่ยนแปลง และการฟื้นฟู เมื่อสถาปัตยกรรมอ้างถึงจุดเริ่มต้น มันมิได้ทวนกลับไปหาอดีต หากแต่กำลังสร้างภาพของปัจจุบันและอนาคตให้มีความชอบธรรม ในบริบทโลกปัจจุบันที่เผชิญความท้าทายด้านสิ่งแวดล้อม เทคโนโลยี และสังคม การทำความเข้าใจบทบาทเชิงวาทกรรมของตำนานแห่งจุดกำเนิดจึงช่วยเปิดมุมมองใหม่ต่อทฤษฎีและการปฏิบัติทางสถาปัตยกรรมร่วมสมัย และยืนยันถึงความร่วมสมัยอย่างต่อเนื่องของข้อเสนอของโจเซฟ ริคเวิร์ดในสนามวิชาการปัจจุบัน สามารถสร้างโลกของตนเองผ่านสถาปัตยกรรม กระท่อมปฐมภุมกาลจึงทำให้สถาปัตยกรรมมิใช่เพียงศิลปะแห่งการก่อสร้าง แต่เป็นศิลปะแห่งการสร้างสังคม วัฒนธรรม และความหมายในทุกยุคทุกสมัย

คำสำคัญ: กระท่อมปฐมภุมกาล วิททูเวียส ก๊อตฟรีด เซ็มเปอร์ มาร์ก-อ็องตวน โลเชร์ เลอ คอร์บูซีเยร์

Abstract

This research investigates the role of myth, origin, and the idea of the Primitive Hut through Joseph Rykwert's *On Adam's House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (1972), a

foundational work in the critique of modern architectural theory. Rather than treating architectural origins as an archaeological or empirical problem, Rykwert reframes the “first human dwelling” as a conceptual and symbolic construct that has repeatedly been mobilized to define architecture’s meaning in different historical contexts. Building on this historiographical insight, the present study advances a critical argument: that the Primitive Hut functions not merely as a recurring motif but as a strategic rhetorical instrument through which architects and theorists articulate new cultural, political, and technological beginnings during moments of historical transition.

Within architectural discourse, the question of origin has long played a decisive role in establishing architecture’s legitimacy, authority, and social value. Asking what the first dwelling might have looked like is less an inquiry into factual beginnings than an act of intellectual myth-making. Such myths of origin reveal how societies understand the relationship between nature and culture, necessity and artifice, tradition and innovation. This research situates Rykwert’s contribution within this broader theoretical terrain, arguing that his work demonstrates how origin myths persist precisely because they provide architecture with a narrative framework through which it can repeatedly redefine itself. At the same time, the study distinguishes its own analytical position from Rykwert’s by emphasizing the instrumental and rhetorical deployment of origin myths as tools for legitimizing architectural change.

The core of the investigation focuses on four influential interpretations of the Primitive Hut across Western architectural history: Vitruvius in ancient Rome, Marc-Antoine Laugier in the eighteenth century, Gottfried Semper in the nineteenth century, and Le Corbusier in the twentieth century. These figures are not treated as forming a continuous lineage of direct influence; rather, they are examined as historically situated thinkers who independently return to the question of origins in order to confront the intellectual crises of their own time. Each interpretation is analyzed in relation to its specific social, cultural, and political context, revealing how the myth of the “first house” is reshaped to support new architectural values.

The research adopts a historical-analytical methodology that combines close textual analysis of primary theoretical writings with contextual interpretation of the socio-cultural conditions in which those texts were produced. Rykwert’s historiographical framework serves as the primary interpretive lens, providing a coherent structure for understanding the persistence of origin myths. The writings of Vitruvius, Laugier, Semper, and Le Corbusier are examined comparatively, not to reconstruct a factual origin of architecture, but to trace how each thinker mobilizes the idea of origin to articulate a normative vision of architecture. Secondary scholarship is used selectively to situate these arguments within broader debates, while maintaining a clear distinction between Rykwert’s interpretations, the views of later scholars, and the author’s own analytical claims. This methodological clarity is intended to avoid conceptual overlap and to strengthen the critical coherence of the study.

The findings of the research demonstrate that debates surrounding the Primitive Hut are consistently forward-looking rather than retrospective. In Vitruvius’s account, the origin of the house is

intertwined with the emergence of language, social cooperation, and political order, reflecting the needs of Augustan Rome to legitimize a new imperial unity. Laugier transforms the Primitive Hut into a moral and aesthetic ideal grounded in Enlightenment notions of nature, reason, and simplicity, using the myth to critique the excesses of Baroque and Rococo architecture and to establish a new standard of architectural purity. Semper, responding to the industrial and technological upheavals of the nineteenth century, reinterprets the hut as a narrative of cultural production rooted in human techniques—particularly textile enclosure—thereby shifting the origin of architecture from natural imitation to cultural practice. Le Corbusier, confronting the demands of mechanized modernity and mass society, constructs a new origin myth oriented toward the future: the house as a “machine for living,” grounded in geometry, proportion, and industrial rationality rather than in nature or craft.

Across these cases, the study finds that the Primitive Hut operates as a flexible conceptual device rather than a fixed historical reference. Its meaning changes as architecture negotiates its relationship to society, technology, and culture. While Rykwert’s work powerfully reveals the persistence of this myth across time, the present research extends his argument by showing that each reinterpretation of the Primitive Hut functions rhetorically to legitimize a new architectural paradigm. The origin myth becomes a site of contestation where tradition and modernity confront one another, allowing architects to claim authority by appealing to a foundational moment—even when that moment is entirely reimagined.

The conclusion drawn from this comparative analysis is that the Primitive Hut should be understood as an intellectual mechanism through which architecture repeatedly constructs its own beginnings. Far from being a naïve or nostalgic image of a lost past, the myth of origin serves as a means of negotiating change, crisis, and renewal. By framing new architectural values as returns to an essential beginning, theorists are able to present innovation as necessity and transformation as continuity. In this sense, the Primitive Hut reveals architecture not simply as the art of building, but as a cultural practice deeply involved in the production of social meaning.

Ultimately, this study argues that recognizing the rhetorical function of origin myths has important implications for contemporary architectural theory and practice. As architecture today confronts global challenges—environmental crises, technological transformations, and shifting social conditions—the search for new beginnings continues. The enduring legacy of the Primitive Hut suggests that architecture will once again turn to narratives of origin, not to recover a factual past, but to imagine and legitimize new futures. By clarifying how such myths have operated historically, this research contributes to a deeper understanding of architecture’s capacity to construct meaning across time and underscores the continued relevance of Rykwert’s insights for contemporary theoretical reflection.

Keywords: The Primitive Hut, Vitruvius, Gottfried Semper, Marc Antoine Laugier, Le Corbusier

1. Introduction

In the world of architectural theory, the notion of “origin” plays an especially crucial role in defining the status and value of architecture. Asking what the first human dwelling looked like is not merely an archaeological inquiry, but an intellectual myth-making that signals how humans relate to nature, culture, and society. In this sense, the architectural historian Joseph Rykwert proposed a highly influential argument in his book *On Adam’s House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History*, first published in 1972 (Rykwert 1981).

Rykwert’s work is not merely a review of theoretical ideas; it is an intellectual excavation that links antiquity to modernity. Rykwert asks, “Why must architecture have a creation myth, and how should we read that myth?” He explains that the idea of the Primitive Hut surfaces in the literature and theories of thinkers across different eras: from Vitruvius, who ties the making of a house to the emergence of language and society; to Marc Antoine Laugier, who posits natural purity as the foundation of art; to Gottfried Semper, who sees the formation of architecture as an “art of cladding” (*Bekleidung*); and on to Le Corbusier, who, though working in the twentieth century, still relies on narratives of simplicity and purity in design.

The study of these narratives does not aim to reconstruct a nostalgic image of an original hut; rather, it shows how each historical moment has interpreted “origin” in order to respond to the challenges of its own present. This introduction therefore frames the Primitive Hut as both a theoretical symbol and a cultural ideal, deployed to define the meaning of architecture in the modern world.

This introduction emphasizes that the study is not merely a historical compilation of four theorists’ interpretations. Rather, it argues that the Primitive Hut operates as a **dynamic conceptual mechanism** repeatedly used to negotiate the relationship between architecture, society, and cultural identity. This position builds on Rykwert’s historiographical insights while critically extending them. Whereas Rykwert shows how myths persist across time, this study argues that the Primitive Hut becomes a **strategic discursive tool** mobilized differently in response to shifting intellectual conditions. By distinguishing between Rykwert’s framing and the author’s analysis, the introduction establishes a more academically rigorous foundation.

Because the title of this article positions Rykwert’s perspective at the center of the discussion, it is important to clarify that his historiographical framework forms the primary interpretive lens through which the other theorists are examined. While this study analyses Vitruvius, Laugier, Semper, and Le Corbusier in detail, their interpretations of the Primitive Hut are presented principally as cases that illuminate—or, in some instances, challenge—Rykwert’s broader argument about the role of origin myths in architectural thought. Establishing this hierarchy of interpretation helps prevent conceptual overlap and ensures that Rykwert’s contribution remains the guiding thread of the analysis.

2. Research Objectives

2.1 To analyse Joseph Rykwert’s important book *On Adam’s House in Paradise: The Idea of the Primitive Hut in Architectural History* (1972), in relation to architectural theory across different periods.

2.2 To study and compare the different ideas about the “first human dwelling” in architectural history and theory from Antiquity to the early twentieth century.

2.3 To find and conclude the continued relevance of the idea of the primitive hut in architectural practice from Antiquity until today.

This study seeks not only to compare historical interpretations but to develop an argument about how the Primitive Hut serves as a conceptual instrument that legitimizes architectural change. The objective therefore includes demonstrating how each theorist’s use of the origin myth aligns with—and responds to—the unique social, political, and cultural pressures of their era.

Although this study draws on multiple theorists who have shaped the architectural understanding of origins, Joseph Rykwert’s conceptualization of the Primitive Hut provides the primary theoretical framework for the analysis. The objectives of this research therefore extend beyond historical comparison; they aim to demonstrate how Rykwert’s historiographical method enables a more coherent understanding of how origin myths operate within architectural discourse. Other scholars are mobilized not to dilute Rykwert’s perspective, but to situate his argument within a broader intellectual field in which notions of origin have been continuously debated.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a clear distinction between Rykwert’s interpretive model and the auxiliary readings provided by later scholars. Rykwert’s writings form the methodological anchor because they approach the Primitive Hut as an enduring myth that shapes architectural meaning. In contrast, Vidler, Colquhoun, Mallgrave, and Rowe offer historically specific critiques that either reinforce or complicate Rykwert’s claims. By separating these layers of interpretation, the study ensures that each scholar’s contribution remains identifiable and analytically distinct.

3.1 This study adopts a historical and critical-analytical approach that studies texts alongside contexts. The method not only examines the writings of Vitruvius, Laugier, Semper, and Le Corbusier, but also takes seriously the social and cultural conditions surrounding the production of their ideas. Close readings of key texts are set next to contextual understandings such as the power of the Roman Empire in antiquity, the spirit of Enlightenment in the eighteenth century, the transition from art to technology in the nineteenth-century industrial age, and the pressures of war and modernity in the twentieth century.

3.2 Conceptual comparison is another core axis, making visible the continuities and differences in how the Primitive Hut has been interpreted across time. This methodology situates the research not in the search for archaeological truth, but in understanding the origin myth as an intellectual instrument by which architecture constructs its identity and defines its meaning.

This research does not argue that the four theorists form a continuous intellectual lineage in the sense of direct influence. Rather, it contends that their ideas exhibit **conceptual resonance**, arising from recurrent attempts to redefine architecture’s origins during moments of cultural transition. This clarification directly responds to the problem of overstated continuity: although Vitruvius, Laugier, Semper, and Le

Corbusier do not explicitly reference one another's Primitive Hut concepts, they each revive the origin myth to confront the dominant architectural paradigms of their own time. The comparison in this paper therefore focuses on structural parallels in their arguments rather than on claims of direct historical succession.

4. Literature Review

The literature on the "Primitive Hut" as architecture's creation myth has long been raised and debated across the current of Western thought. Numerous studies show that explaining the beginnings of architecture is not a matter of unearthing archaeological answers but of constructing a "narrative" that reflects the mental frameworks and needs of each period (Rykwert, 1981). As Joseph Rykwert makes clear, *On Adam's House in Paradise* is not merely historical inquiry; it reveals the power of "myth" to define the meaning of architecture.

Vitruvius's *De Architectura* is often taken as the starting point for a systematic account of architecture. Vitruvius links the birth of the house to the evolution of society, language, and learning from nature (Vitruvius, c.15 BCE/1960). Later scholars such as Rudolf Wittkower and Joseph Rykwert concur that this establishes architecture not only as the art of building but as part of a cultural structure. Some critics see Vitruvius's method as more compendious than philosophically synthetic; nonetheless, the work remains a landmark showing how the myth of house-building functions as a prologue to the making of civilization (Rykwert, 1981).

In the eighteenth century, Marc-Antoine Laugier reinterpreted the Primitive Hut in *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753), mounting a critique of Baroque and Rococo exuberance. Laugier's image of a natural hut composed of columns, roof, and entablature becomes an ideal of purity and simplicity (Laugier, 1753/1977). This work profoundly influenced neoclassical thinking and has been read by many recent scholars as a strategic use of a "creation myth" to critique the social order of the time. Anthony Vidler, for instance, argues that Laugier was not merely proposing a new form but crafting a moral ideal consonant with the Enlightenment (Vidler, 1992).

In the nineteenth century, Gottfried Semper reshaped the Primitive Hut through *The Four Elements of Architecture* (1851) and *Der Stil* (1860), arguing that architecture arises not merely by imitating nature but through "technique" and the "art of cladding," reflecting human culture (Semper, 1989). Semper emphasizes weaving, wrapping, and materials as the starting points of architecture. Contemporary scholars such as Harry Francis Mallgrave and Wolfgang Herrmann developed these insights, stressing that Semper's thought ties architecture to the social and technological dynamics of the industrial age (Mallgrave, 1996). With Le Corbusier in the twentieth century, the Primitive Hut is transformed again to serve a modern project (*Vers une architecture*, 1923). Le Corbusier defines simplicity and the purity of universal geometric form. Although he does not refer directly to the Primitive Hut, his idea of the house as a machine for living creates a new myth of modernity. Scholars like Colin Rowe and Alan Colquhoun point out that Le Corbusier sought to craft a contemporary myth as weighty as Laugier's original hut but retold it to fit the industrial and universalizing age (Rowe, 1976). Taken together, this literature shows the persistent use of a creation myth

as a powerful theoretical tool. Rykwert's study mediates among these conversations and makes it clear that the Primitive Hut's meaning is never fixed; rather, it is a site continually reinterpreted according to the context of each era (Rykwert, 1981).

To ensure clear attribution, it is important to differentiate explicitly between Rykwert's interpretations and those advanced by this study. Rykwert's work demonstrates how myths of origin appear in multiple theoretical traditions; however, this paper extends beyond Rykwert by arguing that the Primitive Hut is a **strategic rhetorical device** mobilized in response to socio-cultural pressures. This analytic distinction is maintained throughout the literature review and subsequent sections.

It is important to note that Rykwert's project differs fundamentally from those of later architectural theorists. Whereas Vidler and Colquhoun often critique modernity's psychological or ideological underpinnings, and Rowe's work foregrounds formalism and compositional logic, Rykwert constructs a historiographical narrative that seeks to understand how myths of origin evolve across different epochs. Highlighting this distinction reinforces his role as the central figure of the study and prevents confusion over the varying intentions and methodological approaches of subsequent scholars.

5. Research Findings and Discussion: Comparative Ideas from Vitruvius, Semper, Laugier and Le Corbusier

To avoid conflating Rykwert's arguments with those of more recent scholars such as Anthony Vidler, Alan Colquhoun, Harry Mallgrave, or Colin Rowe, this study adopts a clearer interpretive structure. Rykwert's perspective serves as the historical and theoretical anchor of the investigation, while later theorists' ideas are incorporated primarily to contextualize, reinforce, or interrogate his claims. Vidler's psychological reading, Colquhoun's critique of modernist rhetoric, Rowe's comparative formalism, and Mallgrave's material-cultural analysis each provide distinct scholarly viewpoints that support or contrast with Rykwert's thesis. Such differentiation ensures that the intellectual lineage of each idea remains transparent.

Before analysing the four theorists individually, it is essential to reiterate that their interpretations are examined through the interpretive framework established by Rykwert. The goal is not to present them as equal authorities within the same conceptual hierarchy, but rather to situate their ideas in relation to Rykwert's overarching thesis that architectural origins function as culturally constructed myths. This framing clarifies the analytical structure of the section and guides the reader toward understanding how each theorist supports, challenges, or illuminates Rykwert's historiographical argument.

5.1 Vitruvius and the Primitive Hut

To speak of the beginnings of architectural writing in the West is inevitable to return to Marcus Vitruvius Pollio, or Vitruvius, author of the surviving treatise *De Architectura*. This work is more than a technical manual describing materials, construction, and building elements; it is also a declaration of political and cultural intent at a moment when the Roman Empire was fashioning a new identity under Augustus (McEwen, 2003). Vitruvius's dedication to the emperor reflects an effort to make architecture part of the nation-building project and the reordering of power.

While Rykwert highlights the symbolic power of Vitruvius's narrative, this study emphasizes that Vitruvius's origin myth must be understood against the backdrop of Augustan nation-building. The Primitive Hut in Vitruvius's account is not simply an early shelter but a rhetorical construct through which the author legitimizes a new imperial order by linking architectural origins with social and political unity. This interpretation clarifies that the analysis presented here is distinct from Rykwert's. Whereas Rykwert focuses on the persistence of myth, this study stresses the **political intentionality** embedded in Vitruvius's narrative.

To understand the Primitive Hut within Vitruvius's framework, we must begin with the socio-political context of the late Roman Republic. Long civil wars had left Rome in need of symbols of unity and stability. The rise of Augustus was not merely a change in governance but a proclamation that the Empire would assume a new "form" and "order" unlike the past (McEwen, 2003). Architecture played a crucial role here: temples, basilicas, theatres, and public works did not simply meet urban needs but served symbolically to display the Empire's wealth, grandeur, and order (Vitruvius, 1960).

As an architect and engineer in imperial service, Vitruvius was no neutral technical writer, but a theorist directly engaged in legitimating the Augustan order. *De Architectura* thus operates on two levels: first, as a "manual" detailing building design, materials, structure, and urban planning; second, as "discourse," presenting architecture as an art of ordering intimately bound to social life (Rykwert, 1981). In Book II of *De Architectura*, Vitruvius recounts the "origin" of architecture—later a focal point for Rykwert's *On Adam's House in Paradise*. Early humans, he writes, learned to protect themselves from nature by using fire. Gathering around the fire, proximity and vocal utterances gave rise to language. Communication fostered mutual understanding, and this gathering inspired the creation of shelter (Vitruvius, 1960). Using branches, posts, and natural materials, humans built the first "house."

Vitruvius's narrative is significant in several ways. First, it shows that architecture did not arise from solitary individuals merely seeking survival, but from "society" itself (Rykwert, 1981). The house is a product of living together and of communication, the core of human culture. Second, the story ties architecture to language, making the house not only a physical structure but also a symbol of our capacity to create meaning and social order. Third, it frames architecture as the foundation for the arts as a whole because it binds humans to nature and society in an inseparable act. Read in a Roman context, Vitruvius's account carries a clear political resonance. The founding of the house alongside language and society mirrors the idea that the Empire's new order is much like building a human dwelling on a vast scale. Augustus can be linked to the Empire's "house-builder," enabling people to live together under one roof. Vitruvius's dedication to the emperor affirms architecture as a pillar upholding the new regime.

Rykwert sees this narrative as the starting point of the "primitive hut myth" that continues through architectural history. The importance of Vitruvius lies not in factual historiography but in crafting a "conceptual model" to define architecture's meaning. By pairing the birth of the house with that of language, the myth binds architecture tightly to culture and politics. For Rykwert, this sets the groundwork

for later debates about the Primitive Hut: Laugier, Semper, and even Le Corbusier all return to similar questions of what the first dwelling reveals about nature, culture, and society.

Later scholars have broadened this understanding. Rudolf Wittkower emphasizes that *De Architectura* is not simply a technical compendium; it frames architecture as a science linking nature and society. Indra Kagis McEwen, in *Vitruvius: Writing the Body of Architecture* (2003), reads Vitruvius as an author yoking the human body to the body of architecture—an alignment reflecting imperial control and the politics of the body. Colin Rowe, meanwhile, argues that Vitruvius established an intellectual structure that renders architecture both mathematical and social.

Notably, Vitruvius's Primitive Hut differs sharply from later readings such as Laugier's eighteenth-century focus on formal purity. For Vitruvius, the primitive hut is not merely a form but a process of living together, speaking, and founding society. The meaning here is relational rather than formal. This is why Rykwert begins with Vitruvius: he reveals that the origin of architecture coincides with the origin of human culture.

Broadly speaking, Vitruvius turns the Primitive Hut into a creation myth binding architecture to society, politics, and culture. The myth is then expanded and reinterpreted again and again, becoming Laugier's moral ideal, Semper's cladding theory, and Le Corbusier's modernist myth. Yet the core question remains: What does the first house signify, and how does architecture use this narrative to define itself? In short, Vitruvius's Primitive Hut is not just an image of branches, posts, and beams but a symbol of the birth of society, language, and culture. Its power lies not only in leading us back to a beginning; it also opens space for each era to use it in redefining architecture's meaning.

5.2. Marc Antoine Laugier and the Primitive Hut

If Vitruvius bequeathed a creation myth of architecture as humans gathering around the fire to form language and society, Marc-Antoine Laugier, the eighteenth-century French cleric and theorist, transformed the meaning of the "Primitive Hut" into an artistic and moral ideal reflecting Enlightenment worldviews. His *Essai sur l'architecture* (1753) not only shaped European architectural theory but also produced one of history's most potent images: the "natural hut" (*la cabane primitive*), with four columns supporting an entablature and a roof of branches—an emblem of simplicity and purity as the ground of architecture (Laugier, 1977).

To grasp Laugier, we must look to mid-eighteenth-century France. The court still ruled through the splendour of Baroque and Rococo architecture. Versailles and other courtly buildings stood as symbols of wealth and power. Yet the Enlightenment was challenging the old regime with the values of *raison*, *nature*, and *liberté*. The debate between courtly luxury and nature's simplicity emerges starkly in Laugier's theory.



Figure 1 Charles-Dominique-Joseph Eisen (1720–1778), Frontispiece from *Essai sur l'architecture*

In the *Essai*, Laugier opens by criticizing the architecture of his time: the excessive ornament of Corinthian capitals, mouldings, stucco, and Rococo scrolls, which he sees as corrupting architecture's essence. For him, building should return to its foundation that is nature. Thus, he fashions the image of the primitive hut as a symbol of true purity: four columns, an entablature, a roof of branches. This is both an archetypal construction and a universal canon of beauty. Crucially, Laugier treats the hut not merely as a myth but as a moral critique. Architecture attains greatness only when it adheres to simplicity and necessity, not excess. The Primitive Hut becomes both an architectural model and a moral proclamation aligned with Enlightenment ideals. Here nature and morality are linked as a return to nature is also a return to goodness and truth (Vidler, 1987).

Compared to Vitruvius, the difference is clear. Vitruvius stresses society, language, and politics; his first house is where society begins. For Laugier, the first house is a symbol of formal beauty and purity, stripped of disguise. If Vitruvius uses myth to explain social genesis, Laugier uses myth to critique contemporary art and to set a new design standard. Rykwert reads Laugier closely in *On Adam's House in Paradise*, arguing that Laugier's Primitive Hut constructs an "ideal" rather than a history. Its power lies in

serving as a benchmark by which any architecture may be judged. The image functions as an “ideal myth” repeatedly invoked in European theoretical debates (Rykwert, 1981). Anthony Vidler extends this, suggesting that Laugier’s hut reflects eighteenth-century anxieties about nature and civilization at a time of European colonial expansion and discovery of new worlds. The figure of a human in a natural hut is entwined with the making of tribal innocence outside Europe while policing Western aesthetic norms (Vidler, 1992). Laugier’s influence helped catalyse neoclassicism. The simple hut emphasizing four fundamental parts raised columns, entablature, and roof as architecture’s true basis, enabling designers like Etienne Louis Boullée and Claude Nicolas Ledoux to imagine grand utopian projects still grounded in geometric purity (Mallgrave, 1996). Historically, Laugier’s Primitive Hut is therefore not merely a rustic image; it is a rhetorical reform. Architecture is no longer just building; it is a search for truth and goodness. Rykwert stresses the significance of Charles Eisen’s famous frontispiece: the picture became a widely circulated cultural symbol. (Figure 1) Seeing the natural hut, with columns, entablature, and roof, communicates instantly: “This is architecture’s foundation.” Eisen’s engraving plate is not a mere illustration but a “visual myth” with power equal to the textual myth (Rykwert, 1981).

Subsequent scholars have read Laugier variously as crafting an ideal of purity to critique extravagance; as a colonial instrument defining “savage” and “civilized”; and as a symbol of modern form’s politics. Whatever the angle, Laugier’s Primitive Hut remains a milestone turning the origin myth into an enduring theoretical and moral ideal. Set against Le Corbusier, we see similar rhetoric repurposed for a new myth: the house as a machine for living—no longer a natural hut but a geometric box. The core strategy remains: the origin myth establishes a new architectural standard. Laugier’s Primitive Hut is therefore a pivotal turning point, transforming the origin myth from historical explanation into a powerful theoretical and moral ideal that persists today (Vidler, 1992).

To emphasize eighteenth-century context, this study also argues that Laugier’s critique of Rococo architecture parallels broader Enlightenment debates about morality, nature, and social reform. His Primitive Hut must therefore be read not only as an aesthetic reaction but also as a cultural metaphor aligning architectural purity with philosophical notions of natural law. This expanded interpretation differentiates the author’s argument from Rykwert’s by showing how Enlightenment intellectual politics shaped Laugier’s deployment of the origin myth.

5.3. Gottfried Semper and the Primitive Hut

No account of the Primitive Hut’s interpretation in modern architectural history can overlook Gottfried Semper. Architect, theorist, and thinker, Semper links architecture to nineteenth-century culture, art, and technology. If Vitruvius offered a gathering around the fire for language and society, and Laugier an eighteenth-century ideal of formal purity, Semper provides a wholly different frame: the hut arises not from imitating nature but because humans fashion a cultural world through practice and technique (Semper, 1989)

Born in Hamburg in 1803, Semper came of age amid Europe’s political and technological upheavals. The nineteenth century was the age of the Industrial Revolution: steam engines, factories, and mass-produced building materials transformed urban construction. European capitals—London, Paris, Vienna—

swelled rapidly, bringing problems of sanitation, poverty, and social unrest (Mallgrave, 1996). The revolutions of 1848 swept the continent in demands for liberty and rights. Semper participated in the Dresden uprising and consequently went into political exile to Paris, London, then Zurich. These experiences convinced him that art and architecture cannot be severed from politics and society.

Above all, the 1851 Great Exhibition in London and Joseph Paxton's Crystal Palace decisively shaped Semper's thought. This vast iron-and-glass building symbolized industrial power and technical prowess, yet it raised a question: what status architecture would, once linked to beauty, morality, and culture, retain under the immense forces of machinery and industry (Forty, 2000).

Spurred by the Crystal Palace's example and challenge, along with the image of a Caribbean Hut (Figure 2) he found there, Semper wrote *The Four Elements of Architecture* (1851), explaining architecture's origin anew, no longer answered to nature or to Laugier's ideal purity, but to human "activities" and "techniques."

He divides architecture's basic constituents into four elements:

- 1) Hearth: the center of family and cult, the seed of community and ritual.
- 2) Roof: protection from weather, symbol of stability and shelter.
- 3) Mound/Platform: the raised base distinguishing sacred precinct from the natural world.
- 4) Enclosure: initially textile, woven screens, rather than stone or brick (Semper, 1989).

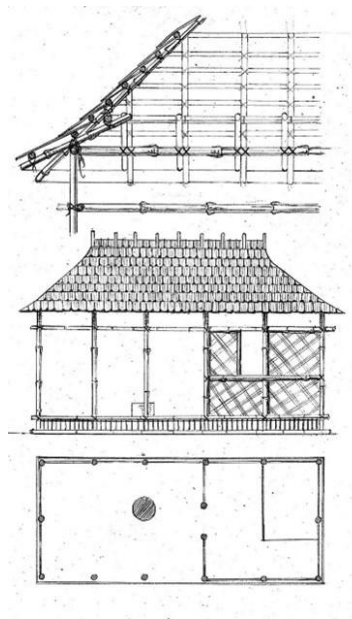


Figure 2 The Caribbean Hut, Gottfried Semper, *Der Stil* (2 nd ed.1879), vol. 2, p. 263

Semper's most striking idea is the emphasis on enclosure (German *Bekleidung* for cladding). Semper's *Bekleidung* concept originates explicitly in his important book *The Four Elements of Architecture* (1851), in which he identifies textile enclosure as the primordial architectural act. While *Der Stil* elaborates these ideas, it is in the earlier text that Semper formulates the foundational argument that cladding (*Bekleidung*) precedes structure. This clarification strengthens the theoretical accuracy of the paper and

situates Semper's hut within nineteenth-century debates on industrial production, material culture, and the transformation of traditional crafts.

For Semper, the wall did not begin with masonry; it began with textiles, woven fabrics that screened space or wrapped the body. Weaving, perhaps the oldest art, inaugurates boundaries and interiority. Stretched fabric becomes the membrane between "inside" and "outside," the architectural heart (Semper 1989). This is revolutionary: architecture originates not in "structure" but in "dress," in cladding. Semper thus diverges sharply from Vitruvius and Laugier's naturally simple structure. For Semper, architecture is a product of human culture and technique. Semper's distinctiveness lies in his cladding theory: ornament is not an add-on but architecture's very beginning. The sheathing of space descends directly from weaving. Weaving creates culture; from culture humans learn order, beauty, and meaning. This upends older understandings that located architecture's birth in arranging stones or timbers into stable structures. Semper says architecture starts with surface, not core—with visual and symbolic boundary-making before permanent structure. Meaning resides in communication and cultural expression more than in engineering stability (Semper, 1851/1989). Rykwert reads this as a major reversal for the Primitive Hut myth: it demonstrates that architecture's origin is not merely an idealized tale but a story of "work" and "production." The Primitive Hut becomes a myth about how humans create culture, not a pastoral hut in nature (Rykwert, 1981).

Semper extends these ideas in his magnum opus *Der Stil in den technischen und tektonischen Künsten* (1860–63), broadening his theory to all arts and ornament. Every culture, he argues, forms "style" through its techniques and materials. The Primitive Hut is thus not only a house's beginning; it is a symbol of cultural creativity across the arts (Semper, 1860-1863/2004). *Der Stil* shows that Semper was not seeking a myth to return to purity, but to explain ever-changing cultural dynamics. For him, the hut sums up human activities, weaving, modelling, carving, building, each generating meaning and beauty that distinguish humans from nature. Semper's most salient contribution is to recast the Primitive Hut as a myth of production, not of nature. If Vitruvius emphasizes language and society, and Laugier, formal purity, Semper stresses technique and culture. His hut is an image of humans remaking the world through work and art. Thus, the Primitive Hut is not fixed but open to reinterpretation. For the nineteenth century, Semper's hut answers industry and technology's challenges: architecture does not lose meaning in the machine age if we understand it as a cultural activity humans ceaselessly pursue (Semper, 2004).

5.4 Le Corbusier and the Primitive Hut

As the Primitive Hut is repeatedly reinterpreted—from Vitruvius in Antiquity to Laugier in the Enlightenment and Semper in the nineteenth century—the myth arrives in the twentieth century with Le Corbusier. He does not address the Primitive Hut directly like his predecessors, but his work crafts what might be called a "new origin myth" for his age, one reflecting not only technological and industrial change but also the hopes and anxieties of a century marked by war and social revolution (Rykwert, 1981).

Charles-Édouard Jeanneret (Le Corbusier) was born in 1887 in La Chaux-de-Fonds, Switzerland, a watchmaking center, an industrial town of skilled labor. Growing up there, he absorbed the finesse of craft

and an awareness of industrial production's power. Entering the twentieth century, Europe was undergoing profound change: steel and reinforced concrete were spreading; cities required new housing for burgeoning workers and the middle class; World War I shattered faith in old systems and prompted a desire to build a better world (Mallgrave, 1996). Le Corbusier entered architecture convinced that art could no longer be mere decoration or elite taste; it had to be a tool for organizing modern social life. "A house is a machine for living in," he declared, not a mere slogan, but a summary of a new origin myth. The house is no longer narrated as a hut in nature but as a technical object produced by science to meet industrial humanity's needs (Colquhoun, 1981). The Primitive Hut's meaning shifts from branches or textiles to a geometric box of concrete, steel, and glass.

In *Vers une architecture* (1923), he juxtaposes ocean liners, automobiles, and airplanes with buildings. Their beauty, he argues, springs from necessity and pure reason: every element is designed to serve its function, no excess, no frivolous ornament, so beauty emerges from operative logic. Architecture should follow the same path. Le Corbusier's Primitive Hut is thus born of reasoned organization rather than nature imitation or abstract ideal beauty (Le Corbusier, 1923/2007). He crystallizes this into the "Five Points" of the new architecture: pilotis, the roof-garden, the free plan, the free façade, and the ribbon window (Benton, 2009). In mythical terms, these constitute a "new primitive hut" aligned with industrial modernity. Pilotis reinterpret Laugier's natural columns; the flat roof returns ground to nature within the city; interior freedom echoes Semper's focus on cladding rather than load-bearing wall; abundant light and air retain Vitruvian concerns for health and human life (Rykwert, 1981).

Villa Savoye (1929–31) stages this new myth with clarity. The house assembles all five points: pilotis raise it above the ground as if lifting reason above raw nature; the roof-garden brings nature into modern life; the free plan allows adaptable space; the ribbon window opens vistas and light. The villa is more than a house; it is a symbol of modern life, a proclamation that humanity has begun anew (Rowe, 1976). Le Corbusier's Primitive Hut differs from earlier versions in that it does not look back; it looks forward. He does not ask what the first hut in the forest was like, but what the modern human dwelling should be. The myth is not of the past but of the future, an origin myth of "modernity" built on reason, simplicity, and order (Colquhoun, 1981).

Although Le Corbusier's conception of architectural origin is radically different from that of Vitruvius, Laugier, or Semper, the interpretation presented here is grounded in Rykwert's insight that origin myths persist because they offer architecture a narrative structure through which to define its identity. Le Corbusier's "new beginning," framed through technology and proportion, exemplifies this dynamic. By interpreting Le Corbusier through Rykwert's historiographical lens, the study maintains conceptual consistency and reinforces the primacy of Rykwert's argument.



Figure 3 Villa Savoye (1928-1931), Le Corbusier & Pierre Jeanneret

Rykwert reads Le Corbusier in this key: although Le Corbusier does not explicitly evoke the Primitive Hut, he constructs a “contemporary myth” functioning in the same way. The house-as-machine is a narrative of immense power, legitimating modern architecture as necessary and valuable, just as Vitruvius’s, Laugier’s, and Semper’s myths worked in their contexts. Le Corbusier synthesizes them all, society and language, formal purity, technique and practice, into a new twentieth-century myth (Rykwert, 1981).

Equally important is Le Corbusier’s urbanism. The *Ville Radieuse* expands the Primitive Hut to the scale of the city: a rational array of towers amid gardens and open space, traversed by roads for the automobile and modern transport. The city becomes a “house of modern society” (Tafuri, 1979). The Primitive Hut now names not a small dwelling but an entire city systematized by reason. Ultimately, Le Corbusier’s Primitive Hut proclaims that a new world has been born: the house as machine, the city as rational system, architecture as the power to order life. It is both myth and ideology of modernity, asserting that humans need not return to nature; we can establish a new beginning through science, technology, and industry (Tafuri, 1979).

To grasp Le Corbusier’s Primitive Hut fully, we must look beyond slogans or a single masterpiece. In truth he forged a cultural discourse making modern architecture itself a “creation myth” of the twentieth century. After the devastations of war and the convulsions of industry, society needed a narrative that made rebuilding believable. His Primitive Hut is not only a building; it is a story of humanity beginning again (Rykwert, 1981).

Le Corbusier writes in symbol-charged language, not like an engineer’s manual but like a philosopher sketching a future. *Vers une architecture* is more than a textbook: a “scripture” joining art, science, technology, and daily life. The images of ships, cars, and planes do not merely celebrate industrial beauty; they induce belief that a new beauty has already arrived, and architecture must align with it (Colquhoun, 1981). Compared to predecessors, Le Corbusier appears as a synthesizer of many huts: Vitruvius’s house of society and language; Laugier’s emblem of formal purity; Semper’s product of technique and practice. Le Corbusier’s first house of the new age is a mechanism for ordering life. The

Primitive Hut becomes a cultural machine, working simultaneously in physical and symbolic registers (Rykwert, 1981).

This is evident in his *Ville Radieuse*: rationally arrayed towers, green belts, broad thoroughfares, and precisely ordered infrastructure. The city answers not only functional demands but a “new myth” suggesting that postwar civilization can be reorganized through architecture and planning. If Vitruvius’s hut gathers speech around a fire, Le Corbusier’s radiant city gathers hope for a perfected society (Colquhoun, 1981). Though later heavily criticized—universalizing tendencies, neglect of local context, social impacts from mass concrete housing—his work remains, as myth, immensely powerful. The success or failure of particular buildings is not the point; the cultural force of the narrative is (Vidler, 1992).

Rykwert thus maintains that even in a world of science and technology, architects must still craft stories to give their work meaning. Le Corbusier’s myth declares that humans have built a new world: reason and technology as a new “nature.” The Primitive Hut is no return to forest and field; it is the assertion that humans can found a new origin themselves (Rykwert, 1981). Historically viewed, Le Corbusier’s Primitive Hut is both conclusion and beginning. It gathers debates from Vitruvius through Laugier and Semper—society and language, formal purity, technique and production—and transforms them into a contemporary myth for the twentieth century, while opening new conversations about architecture, technology, and society that continue in the twenty-first (Rowe, 1976).

Read across his life’s work, the new origin myth he crafted is not merely conceptual; it is embedded in buildings and urban schemes actually attempted. His life mirrors the century’s tensions: hope and failure, dreams of a better world and the brutalities of war and politics. To read his Primitive Hut as “myth” is to attend to the human ambition and contradiction running through both his projects and his life (Rykwert, 1981). Rykwert emphasizes that although Le Corbusier speaks the language of machines and science, he is in fact composing a “contemporary myth” with the same symbolic force as ancient ones. Comparing the house to a machine is a narrative that persuades people to accept and value modern architecture—just as Vitruvius’s myth made architecture the genesis of society. Le Corbusier’s myth makes it the genesis of a new twentieth-century world (Rykwert, 1981). Yet contradictions remain: even as he exalts reason and technology, his work is filled with artistic ideal and rhetoric. The machine-house is not only engineering calculus; it is a **dream** of an orderly, radiant world. Thus, his Primitive Hut is both truth and myth—technically real, culturally narrative (Vidler, 1992).

Le Corbusier’s Primitive Hut invites both praise and critique. Later scholars have probed why his “new origin myth” is so powerful and yet self-contradictory. Colin Rowe’s classic “The Mathematics of the Ideal Villa” (1947) compares Palladio and Le Corbusier, revealing that beneath modernity’s break, Le Corbusier inherits a Renaissance geometry of proportion. His machine-house is thus not a wholesale rejection of the past but a transformation of it—continuing the lineage of a geometric house tied to the origin myths of earlier epochs (Rowe, 1976). Alan Colquhoun argues that Le Corbusier uses technological language to legitimate modernism, yet behind it lies symbolic rhetoric akin to myth. The beauty of ships, cars, and planes is not just functional beauty; it is a **mythic construct** persuading people that a new century

begins in purity and grandeur (Colquhoun, 1981). Manfredo Tafuri, more critical in *Architecture and Utopia*, sees Le Corbusier's myth as an ideology serving capital and the modern state. The *Ville Radieuse* is not merely the dream of reason, but a utopia saturated with power and economic logic—myth as both hope and ideological trap (Tafuri, 1979). Anthony Vidler, in *The Architectural Uncanny*, connects Le Corbusier to dream and psychology: even in rational, geometric houses, unease and estrangement persist. The machine-house symbolizes progress yet also severance from nature and origins (Vidler, 1992). Thus, Le Corbusier's Primitive Hut is two-sided: it proclaims a hopeful new beginning through science and technology, while risking control and alienation. The myth is not one of simple purity but of modern society's complexities and contradictions. Overall, we can read his Primitive Hut as “closing and opening” at once: closing the door on ornamental pasts, opening to a world of reason and technology—yet also opening a space for critique of modernism's human impacts. It continues to resonate because it poses an enduring question for the twenty-first century: how should architecture begin anew in a perpetually changing world? In the end, Le Corbusier's Primitive Hut is not only a house; it is the cultural-social project of an epoch: a symbol of the ambition to found a new civilization after catastrophe, a reaffirmation that humans can still shape an orderly, rational world. His Primitive Hut is a declaration that the twentieth century is a new beginning for humanity. The origin myth here does not return to the past; it constructs the future. It persuades people that an orderly, rational world is possible and that architecture is central to that transformation.

In the end, although Le Corbusier does not explicitly invoke the Primitive Hut as a historical narrative, this study recognizes that he does engage with the notion of origin through his discussion of proportional systems in the chapter “Regulating Lines” in *Vers une architecture*. Here, Le Corbusier appeals to timeless geometrical principles as a foundational order underlying both ancient and modern buildings. This constitutes a form of origin myth rooted not in material primitivism but in abstract proportion, allowing the study to refine its earlier claim and achieve greater textual accuracy.

At any rate, it is necessary to note that Rykwert frames Le Corbusier as extending the logic of origin myths into the modern age, whereas this study argues that Le Corbusier deliberately constructs a **new myth of beginnings** that diverges fundamentally from earlier naturalistic or craft-centered origins. While Rykwert emphasizes structural continuity in the recurring nature of origin stories, this paper asserts that Le Corbusier develops an origin narrative grounded in industrial rationality and universal proportion. This reframing strengthens the analytical voice of the author and clarifies the methodological departure from a purely Rykwertian interpretation.

Additionally, the socio-cultural context surrounding Le Corbusier's work—particularly industrialization, post-war reconstruction, and shifting urban demographics—demands more explicit integration into the analysis. Le Corbusier's proposals emerged in a climate of acute housing shortages, labor migration, and technological fascination. His vision of the “machine for living” reflects not only theoretical aspiration but a pragmatic response to the pressures of early twentieth-century modernity. By embedding this contextual depth, the paper moves beyond descriptive commentary and advances a more

rigorous argument regarding the political and cultural motivations underlying Le Corbusier's reinterpretation of architectural origins.

6. Conclusion

Throughout this study, efforts have been made to clearly distinguish between Rykwert's historiographical position and the author's analytical extension of that position. While Rykwert emphasizes the endurance and adaptability of architectural creation myths, this paper argues further that such myths serve as deliberate rhetorical tools used by theorists to legitimize new design paradigms. By explicitly maintaining this distinction, the study ensures that the reader can readily differentiate among the voices of Rykwert, later scholars, and the author.

This study has argued that the Primitive Hut serves not simply as a recurring symbol or inherited motif but as a strategic theoretical instrument used across history to legitimize architectural transformations during moments of cultural, political, and technological change. By distinguishing more clearly between Joseph Rykwert's historiographical account and the analytical position developed in this research, the paper demonstrates that each theorist—Vitruvius, Laugier, Semper, and Le Corbusier—deploys the origin myth to articulate a new conception of architecture appropriate to the crises and aspirations of their time.

Vitruvius grounds the myth in the political consolidation of Augustan Rome, aligning the first dwelling with the emergence of society and imperial order. Laugier transforms the hut into a moral and aesthetic ideal shaped by Enlightenment values of nature, purity, and rationality. Semper, responding to industrial upheaval and material-technological change, redefines the hut as a narrative of cultural production originating in textile enclosure. Le Corbusier, confronting the demands of mechanized modernity, constructs a new origin myth rooted in proportion, geometry, and the machine aesthetic—an origin projected toward the future rather than recovered from the past.

Through this analysis, the paper clarifies that the Primitive Hut is not a fixed historical object but a flexible conceptual device carrying different meanings as architecture renegotiates its cultural role. While Rykwert illuminates the persistence and adaptability of this myth, this study argues further that the Primitive Hut functions as a discursive tool for ideological renewal, enabling each era to claim legitimacy by invoking a foundational moment. Thus, the myth is less about the past than about constructing a vision for the present and future. Understanding the Primitive Hut in this way reveals its continued relevance as architecture confronts contemporary global challenges and searches once again for new beginnings.

To strengthen conceptual clarity, this study also explicitly distinguishes its own analytical voice from that of the scholars cited. While Rykwert provides the foundational claim that origin myths persist because they help architecture articulate its meaning, the author extends this argument by proposing that each theorist strategically mobilizes the Primitive Hut as a rhetorical device to legitimize new architectural paradigms in response to social and cultural pressures. By explicitly positioning the author's interpretation as a critical extension—rather than a restatement—of Rykwert's ideas, the paper improves analytical coherence and avoids potential confusion over the ownership of specific arguments.

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