



**THE PORTRAY OF AN ARCHITECT THROUGH THE LIFE, ARCHITECTURE,
CONTRIBUTIONS AND PHYSIOLOGY OF BRUNO TAUT (1880-1938)**

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ABSTRACT

This study is to investigate Bruno Taut's contributions and philosophy as one of the leading lights and father of modern/architecture. It also x-ray who an architect, his role and struggle in natural development. Studies and investigations carried out revealed his immeasurable and un-quantified contributions to the modern Architecture in the use of glass and color in architecture as manifested in his work – The Glass Pavilion (1914) and House 19 in his exhibition; and also in urban planning and housing Estate development (Box Paint Estate).His contributions as an architect, author, educator,(Professor of Architecture), a public servant have in no small measure accorded him a place of pride among the few architects with wide experience in all spheres of life. His foreign trips also contributed to his exposure in architecture in other domains with cultural differences as noted in the designs of his own house with Japanese and Turkish influence. He will be remembered as an apostle of color and glass, although he was criticized for his work as well as his involvement in art décor which made many portray him as an artist. However, this has come to portray that architects as jack of all trades and master of design has much relevance in this contemporary time.

Keywords: - architect, architecture, history, philosophy, contributions,

INTRODUCTION

Architecture over the years has gone through one era or the other with a lot of transformations. The modern era witnessed a turning point in architecture with a lot of flavour and innovations.

We have men who have contributed immensely to the evolution of modern architecture and one of such important figures was Bruno Taut (1880-1938) also called Julius Florian Taut, a Jewish German.

Bruno Julius Florian Taut was born on May 4, 1880 in the town of Königsberg, Germany. He was a prolific German Architect, Urban Planner, and author, active in the Weimar period.

He had his training in Königsberg and Berlin-Charlottenburg. He joined Theodor Fischer's office in Stuttgart; and later opened his own office in Berlin in 1910 where he practiced until the advent of the first civil war in 1915.

After the war, Taut's theory and design marked him a great leader in Architectural innovations.

In 1918, he accepted the Chairmanship of the Arbeitstrakt für Kunst. A year later (1919) he saw the publication of drawings prepared during the war depicting a visionary Utopia under the title Alpine Architecture.

He issued his Expressionist Supplement *Frühlicht* as part of a planning magazine in Berlin (1920-1921) and as a "Glass Chain" publication in his right from Magdeburg (1921-1922) after he had become the city Architect.

In 1923, he returned to Berlin where he worked with Hoffman and his junior brother Max Taut (1887-1967).

He produced his book *Modern Architecture* in English in 1930 for studio press. By the end of the 1920s Taut has become well known as a leader and propagandist of the *Neue Sachlichkeit* or the "New Objective" architecture.

He built many estates in Berlin, including "Onkel Tom's Estate, subsequently often used Marxist colours for the exterior faces.

He left Germany for USSR in 1932 and a year later went to Japan, where he stayed until 1936.

He later left Japan for Turkey to be a Professor of Architecture in 1936.

He died on December 24, 1938 at Istanbul, the very year in which he had entered the competition for a new parliament building in Ankara.

Aim and Objectives of Study

Aim

The aim of the study is to appraise the life, architecture, contributions and philosophy of Bruno Taut to modern Architecture.

Objectives

- To examine the life and activities of Bruno Taut as a contemporary architect
- To identify his philosophy as it affects Architecture
- To Identify his contributions to the cause of Architectural profession and the society.

METHOD OF RESEARCH

The research was carried out with books, library, and internet consultation. This involves going through relevant books and publications as well browsing internet services. All these provided bases for proper analysis and evaluation of data collected for the purpose of presenting this paper.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Man Bruno Taut (1880-1938)



Fig. 1: Picture of Bruno Taut (1880-1934) adopted from Wikipedia February,2022

Bruno Julius Taut was born in Königsberg Germany on May 4, 1880, a prolific German Architect and Urban Planner, author activist in Weimar period.

His Family Life

Nothing is written about his family of marital life or children but from study, he had a joint partnership with Max Taut his brother after the First World War.

His Education and Training/Tutelage

Bruno Taut trained in Königsberg and Berlin – Charlottenburg. He worked in Theodor Fischer's office in Stuttgart (1904-1908) before opening his own office. He was advised by Elder Architect Hermann Muthesius to visit United Kingdom for garden Estate, this helped him to have a turn-around in his profession practice in respect of Estate design.

His Professional Practice and Engagement

Taut started his own firm in Berlin in 1910. His first major commission came in 1912 and that was Falkenberg housing Estate in Berlin which became known as the "**Paint Box Estate**".

He applied lively and clashing colors.

- (i) The Glass Pavilion Building was designed by Taut for Werkbund Exhibition held in Cologne in 1914.
- (ii) The Reform Estate was designed by Taut and built between 1912-1915 in the South West of Magdeburg.

- (iii) In 1912 and 1923 Taut served as city architect in Magdeburg. At that time few residential development were built, that is, Hermann Beirrs estate 1925-1928 with 2100 flats. Taut design the exhibition.
- (iv) In 1924, he was made Chief Architect of GEHAG, a housing co-operation in Berlin and was led designers of several successful large residential developments (**C. Siedlyger**) in Berlin. He built many estates in Berlin including Onkel Tom's Estate, subsequently often used Marxist color for exterior faces.

HIS FOREIGN TRIPS AND ENGAGEMENT ENGLAND

Bruno Taut's first foreign trip was made in 1910 when the Elder Architect Hermann Muthesius suggested that he should visit England to understand Garden City Movement. He was also introduced to some of the figures of the Deutcher Werkbund including Walter Gropius. Taut has socialist learning and before World War I, this hindered his advancement.

SOVIET UNION

Bruno Taut was forced out of Germany with the rise of the Nazis. Taut left for Soviet Union in 1932 and in 1933 was promised work in Russia. In Feb. 1933, he back to a hostile political environment in Germany. As a Jew with social democratic learning he fled to Switzerland then to Taakasaki in Japan.

JAPAN

Bruno Taut was offered a job as an adviser for the National Industrial Arts Research Institute attached to the Ministry of Industry and Commerce between November 1933 and March 1934.

He also produced three influential book length of appreciations of Japanese culture and architecture, comparing the historical simplicity of Japanese architecture with modern discipline. He was also involved in furniture and interior design work. He left Japan for Turkey in 1936.

TURKEY

Bruno Taut was offered a job as Professor of Architecture at State Academy of Fine Arts in Istanbul (currently Mimar Sinan University of Fine Arts), in 1936. Taut was moved to Turkey and in Ankara. He joined other German war times exiles including Martin Wagner.

While in Turkey he designed a number of educational buildings in Ankara and Trabzon after being commissioned by the Turkish Ministry of Education. The most significant of these buildings were the Faculty of Languages, History and Geography at Ankara Ataturk High School and Trabzon High School. His final work one month before his death was the

Catafalque used for the official state funeral of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk on 21st November 1938 in Ankara.

He died untimely on the 24th December 1938 and was laid to rest at Edirnekapa Martyr's Cemetery in Istanbul as the first and Non-Muslim which is a rare honor for Bruno Taut probably because of his contributions to the Architecture in Turkey and its great work within a short period of his stay in the country.

HIS WORKS AND CONTRIBUTIONS TO ARCHITECTURE

Bruno Taut has displayed mastery in most of his works designed and executed bringing about dramatic change in course of Architecture.

The Glass Pavilion Building



Fig. 2: Bruno Taut, Glass House (1914)

Source:<http:bpo.blogger.com>

The glass house pavilion building (fig 2) was designed by Bruno Taut in 1913 and for the Werkbund Exhibition held in Cologne in 1914 for Leipzig Fair. Its polygonal dome-like a roof constructed of a space frame with diamond-shaped glass panels employed glass of various forms, color, and water cascades as well. It caused something of sensation, this was his most celebrated work.

This work of Bruno Taut brought about a change and a departure from brick and a concrete box design to the use of Glass in Architecture.

The Cologne Werkbund Exhibition in 1914 gave expression to an ideological sport within the Werkbund between the collective acceptance of normative form (Typisierung) expressive "will to form (Kunstwollen) on the other. The opposition reflected in the contrast between Brethren's neo-classical Fethalie and the organic form of Van de Velde's theatre, was comparable in many respects to the difference between the Gropius and Meyer model factory and Bruno Taut's fantasmagoric pavilion for the glass industry a parallelism which confirms that the split affected more than one generation of

Werkbund designers. Where Brethren and Gropius tends towards the normative mode that is classical, Van de Velde and Taut in the buildings manifested a freely expressed Kunstwallen form.

The aphoristic text of Scheerbert's Glass Architecture was dedicated to Taut, whose Glass Pavilion was inscribed with Scheerbert's aphorisms "Lights wants Crystal", 'Glass brings a new era'. We feel sorry for bricks culture; without a glass palace, life becomes burden. Building in bricks only does us harm. Color glass destroys hatred. These are the word dedicated Taut's Pavilion to the light that filtered through its faceted cupia and glass block wall to illuminate an axial seven-tiered chamber, lined with glass mosaic.

According to Taut this crystalline structure modeled after his Leipzig Steel Pavilion of 1913, has been designed in the spirit of Gothic Cathedral. It was in effect a Stadthron of "City Crown" that pyramidal form postulated by Taut as the universal paradigm of all religious building which together with the faith it would inspire an essential urban element for the restructuring of the society.

The socio cultural implication of Scheerbart's vision were enlarged in 1918 by architect Adolf Behne. 'It is no so crazy caprice of a poet that Glass architecture will bring a new culture it is a fact'.

HOUSING ESTATES PROJECTS

Taut completed two housing projects in Magdeburg from 1912 through 1915, directly influenced by the humane functionalism and urban design solutions of the garden city movement. The estate comprises of one storey terrace houses for a housing trust. It was the first project where Taut used color as a design principle. The construction of the Estate was continued by Carl Krayl. Taut served as city architect in Magdeburg from 1921 to 1923. During his time as city architect, a few residential developments were built I.E Hermann Beims Estate (1925-1928) with 2100 flats. Taut designed the exhibition hall 'City and Countryside' in 1921 with concrete trusses and a centre sky light



Fig. 3 : The red house the near middle is a design synthesis of a Japanese and traditional Turkish house.

The owner and the architect of the house is Bruno Taut.

Source: Dennis Sharp(1991) the illustrated encyclopedia of architects and architecture

A lifelong painter, Taut is unique among his European modernist contemporaries in his devotion to color. As in Magdeburg he applied lively, chasing color to his first major commission, the 1912, Falkenberg housing estate in Berlin, which became known as “The Paint Box Estates”. The 1914 Glass Pavilion, as essay in the new possibilities of glass, and familiar from black and white reproduction, was actually also brightly colored. Taut’s distinction from his Modernist contemporaries was never clearer than at the 1927 Weissenhofseidlung housing exhibition in Stuttgart. As opposed to pure-white entries from Mies Van der Rohe, Le Corbusier, and Walter Gropius, Taut’s house (Number 19) was painted in primary colours.

In 1924, Taut was appointed Chief Architect of GEHAG, a housing cooperative in Berlin, and was the lead designer of several successful large residential developments (“Gross-Siedlungen”) in Berlin, notably the 1925 Horseshoe Development (“Hufeisensiedlung”), named for its configuration around a pond, and the 1926 Uncle Tom’s cabin Development(‘Onkei-Toms Hutte”) in Zehlendorf, qddly named for a local restuarat and set in a thick groove of trees. Taut worked under the city architect of Berlin, Martin Wagner on some Berlin’s modernist Housing Estates, now recognized as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

The design featured controversially modern flat roofs, humane access to sun, air and gardens and generous amenities like gas ,electric light, and bathrooms. Critics on the political right complained that these developments were too opulent for simple people. The progressive Berlin Mayor, Gustav Boss defended them saying we wanted to bring the lower levels of the society higher.



Fig. 4 :Horseshoe Development or Hufeisensiedlung estate built in 1925 in Berlin (Wikipedia 2022)

Taut’s team completed over 12,000 dwelling units between 1924 and 1931. GEHANG is still in business and has a horseshoe as its logo in honour and tribute to Taut.

APOSTLE OF COLOUR AND GLASS

Bruno Taut is known as an apostle of color and glass. He used color for environmental, energy saving, aesthetic and spatial effect. His approach to design was based on a belief that architecture included more than a strictly functional role but could change and enhance the



Fig. 5: Taut's project house 19 with colour rendition.

Quality of life to quote Winfried Brene who rediscovered colors of Taut's Berlin apartments. *"Taut always use color to enhance architecture and give it extra dimension. He knew that color developed plastic effect and conferred a specific character on urban space, which help settle it into the surrounding landscape in everything, he strove to use color to broaden notion of function in architecture in view of creating a harmonious building enhance by human and artistic dimension"*.

Taut's contribution to the 1927 Weissenhofsiedlung housing exhibition in Stuttgart differed greatly from the pure-white Mies Van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and Walter Gropius entries. Taut, house Number 19 was painted in primary colors. Mies Van der Rohe hated it. These are some of the contradiction he faced yet he stuck to his ideas, no wonder he was called the Apostle of Color. Taut himself said "Before the war I was denounced a glass architect, in Magdeburg they called me Apostle of Color, the only one a consequences of the other, for delight in the same as delight in color.

HIS BOOK/PUBLICATIONS

Bruno Taut wrote many books and published many articles, while some still remain in Germany un translated.

Some of the books/publications are:

- (i) Die Stadtkrone, Jena, 1919
- (ii) Alpine Architecture, Hagen, 1919
- (iii) Die Auffosung der Stadte (The Dissolution of Cities) 1920
- (iv) Friihlicht, 1920-1921 (Early Light) magazine
- (v) Die neue Wohnung, Leipzig, 1924
- (vi) Bauen, Leipzig, 1929
- (vii) Modern Architecture, London, 1930
- (viii) Fundamentals of Japanese, 1937
- (ix) Houses and people of Japan 1937

- (x) Glass Architecture/Alpine Architecture 1927

LIST OF HIS MAJOR BUILDINGS/WORK

- (i) Steel Industries Pavilion, Leipzig, 1913
- (ii) Garden City "Am Falkenberg", Berlin, 1913-1914
- (iii) Glass Pavilion, Werkbund Exhibition, Cologne, 1914
- (iv) General Plan for Magdberg, 1921
- (v) Housing Estate: Berlin-Tergel, 1924-1932
- (vi) Berlin-Britz, 1925-1930
- (vii) Berlin-Zehlendorf (Onkel Tom's Estete), 1926-1931
- (viii) Catafage (for the funeral of Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, in Ankara) 1938

PARTICIPATION IN MOVEMENTS

Taut participated in garden city movement as a result of his early visit to England when working in Theodor Fischer office in Stuttgart. He was advised by an elder architect Hermann Muthesius to visit England to understand garden city movement and this helped him in housing estate and urban planning as he met other architect like Walter Gropius.

He participated actively in architectural expression movement from 1910 to 1935. These were the group of Architects, artists, painters and sculptors. The aim of the group alliance of the art under the wing of a great architecture, led by Behrens, Gropius and Taut and affiliated to the painters of Die Brücke.

Bruno Taut also brought about the commencement of Utopian Correspondence which began in 1919 after he suggested that everyone will draw or write down at brief interval of time, informally as the spirit moves him..., those ideals which he would like to share with our circle.

- Bruno Taut called himself Glass
- Gropius (mass)
- Finsterlin (prometh)

Bruno Taut's brother Max was also involved, he wrote under his own name. Taut also run a magazine called Frühlicht (Early Light), the Utopian correspondence served to expose and develop attitude represented by his circle.

Taut maintained the Scheerbathian view first expressed in books such as Alpine Architecture and Die Stadtkrone of 1919 publishing his famous Die Auflösung der Städte (The dissolution of cities) in 1920. In common with the socialist planners of the Russian Revolution, he recommended the break-up of cities and the return of the urbanized population to the land. At his most practical, he attempted to formulate models for agrarian and handicraft based communities.

DADAISM MOVEMENT (HIS CONCEPT OF URBAN PLANING)

The only architects that seem to have in touch with Dada movement are Bruno Taut and Loos. Loos knew Georges Benson and Paul Dermée, both active in Dada and avant garde movements. Benson and Dermée both translated some of Loos writings. The first was responsible for the French edition of *Ornamental and Verbrüchen* in Les Dermée both translated Loos' writings. Dada is essentially urban art or better destructive criticism of urban art, Dada revolved itself into search for a new way of action within logical spaces, empty of things, empty, also of Architectural things. With this we have not confirmed the coincidence of death of history and crisis of the project, but we have also found thing that joined the most anti-constructive to the most constructive movement in the contemporary act.

Dada and DeStijl. They fully coincide in their negation of any validity of the object and their prophecy of the coming of collective actions that result in the new city.

ART DÉCOR

The art known as art décor combined the exuberance of expressionism with the clean, functional lines of rationalism. Named after an exposition of decorative art held in Paris in 1925, art décor rapidly spread through Europe and the United States. As architects in the art and craft movement, art décor architects produced lamps, tableware, household appliances, and jewelry. Streamlined art décor architecture mimicked the sleek design of ocean liners, but it also drew on the decorative qualities of art nouveau and the flowing forms of expressionism. Bruno Taut and Peter Behrens in Germany and Rob Mallet-Stevens in France were among the most prominent art décor or designers.

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND PHYLOSOPHY OF BRUNO TAUT

The followings can be deduced having outlined Bruno Taut's array of his activities and contributions to the development of modern architecture as outlined below:-

THE USE OF GLASS IN ARCITECTURE

The glass pavilion, Werkbund exhibition cologne in 1914 and his continuous promotion of the use of glass has helped in the development and open up of the use of glass. Mies Van der Rohe and other popular architects used glass immediately on their skyscrapers as curtain walls.

The design according to Taut was in the spirit of Gothic Cathedral. It was in effect a Standtkrome city crown in pyramidal form prostrated Taut as a universal paradigm of all religious building which is to inspire our essential urban elements from the restructuring of the society both the design and the use of glass are inspiration to the contemporary architects. This is a sharp departure from the old design aimed at making a statement that the new era has arrived.

THE USE OF COLOUR

Bruno Taut always use colour for environmental energy saving, and aesthetics and spatial effect. He also use colour to enhance architecture given it and extra dimension. Today colour has gain much prominence in architecture as it enhance the quality of architectural presentation of works and projects as against the use of black and white use by Mies Van der Rohe and Walter Gropius then. Colour helps to work in relationship and marriage to the real life and environment.

The vision of Bruno Taut is brought to bear in our contemporary world even with the use of computer aided design and the use of colour has enhanced greatly the quality of architecture though some architects hated this concept .

ART DECOR

Bruno Taut along with others believed that architecture must be a collective package involving the design of the utensils, jewelry, furniture, and interior decorations of the building. The vision of Bruno Taut allows the client to have a clear understanding of the totality of his expectation . This has become a vital aspect of architect's work during the preliminary stage of project as earlier envisaged by Taut. This also helps to develop the entrepreneurial spirit of architect in this contemporary time.

INVOLVEMENT IN MOVEMENT

Bruno Taut involved in movements that have positive impact as well helped to promote his vision and ideals. These were passed across through the movements. Architects are advised to actively participating in professional associations, and organizations or forums that will promote the cause of architecture.

FOREIGN TRIPS

Bruno Taut's foreign trips exposed him to the architecture of other nations and environments, and culture which had positive impact on his architecture .His visit to England in 1910 where he met with the Garden city movement on the advice of an elder architect helped him greatly. His visit to Japan opened new opportunities for him in art décor and also afford him the opportunity to study to study Japanese culture and traditional architecture. He later left for Turkey to take an appointment as a professor of architecture and also getting involve with the practice of architectural design works there.

Architects are to avail themselves the opportunities to travel outside their domains and countries for the purpose of excursions and appointments as these will in no small measure contribute to the improvement of their practice and open new opportunities for them in the profession.

BRUNO TAUT AS AUTHOR

Bruno Taut wrote many books among them are :- Japanese Culture and Architecture and many publications (see 3.4).

Architects are to learn from Bruno Taut's efforts and be encouraged to be involved in research and publication of books and documentation of their experiences through writing of books for younger generation as this is the only way they can learn from the pass.

BRUNO TAUT AS EDUCATOR

Bruno Taut was willing to impact knowledge on the younger generation by his decision to take up a job of a professor at the State Academy of Fine Arts in 1936 in Istanbul, Turkey.

Qualified architect must be willing to take up the teaching of architectural profession and impact the younger generation as this is the way the qualities of the profession can be preserved.

There is no doubt that Taut has positively impacted a lot on the contemporary world of architecture and arts, and can be adjudged as one of the leading light, and founding fathers of modern architecture. His contributions will continue to receive commendation in this and subsequent generations.

CONCLUSION

Bruno Taut has made his indelible mark on the sand of time and history. He had contributed immensely to improve and change the face of architecture in his time and the records are stirring on our face at this contemporary time. The younger generation of ours is encouraged and challenged to as well contribute in their small measures to the profession of architecture so that the oncoming generation will as well take the baton with courage and pride to the next level when it is their turn to do so.

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