Design Precedents and Identity

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Abstract

Last spring I revisited Beijing, a city that I had not seen for 16 years. I was told of the changes that have occurred in there, but even though the city is still overwhelming, Beijing is drastically transformed. I kept asking myself where were those million bicycles tinkling around and where all those highways, cars and high-rise buildings were coming from. Not much seems to remain of the Hutong residential area except neon sights advertising restaurants and bars, and some courtyard houses at the back of it. In fact, the monuments were the remains of a city in radical transformation. On the one hand, millions of Chinese might, like me, experience this radical transformation as overwhelming; but on the other hand, they know that in many respects their quality of life is improving with the modernization of their industry and technology, and the modernization of their city.

This view of a mere visitor facing this great phenomenon of growth that is China today is the departure point of this exploratory paper where we deal with the notion of Identity and subsequently the notions of Change and Time.

However, it is not in the scope of this paper to cover all determinant aspects involving identity. We would be satisfied if we succeed in opening the discussion about identity in the context of Generative Art and focusing on some aspects such as on morphology and society. We suggest two strategies to investigate the question; i.e. the use of design precedents (configuration and structure) as suggested by the author (Moraes Zarzar 2003) and the modernist technique of defamiliarization as suggested by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in their article "Why Critical Regionalism Today?" (1990). With the first strategy we bring forth the idea that precedents can be the basis of creative design, and with the second strategy, the proposal of a critical evaluation of local culture, employing modernist strategies, which could be used to create the feeling of identity above a parochial regionalism. An identity as exposed by the notion of Critical Regionalism that "should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory to trends towards higher technology and a more global economy and culture" (Tzonis, and Lefaivre 2001, p.9).

1. Introduction

During my latest visit to Beijing, China, last April, the phenomenon of change in the city struck my mind. During the seminar "Identity and Design" that I attended days later in the same city, we were asked to brainstorm on the notion of Identity, when it occurred to me that "Identity" could be understood as a complex system, or as John Holland in his *Hidden Order, How Adaptation Builds Complexity* (1995) call it: a complex adaptive system (cas).

Numerous things crossed my mind, such as:

- How could we understand this complex system while working isolated within one of its multi-facet parts?
- On the one hand, with the notion of identity, we might think that we are giving a feeling of community to the inhabitants. On the other hand, identity seems to imprison people in an unchangeable chauvinistic environment or in a parochial picturesque regionalism. How could we deal with the dual character of Identity?
- In "Critical Regionalism", Alexander Tzonis discusses the notion of Identity and the modernist technique of defamiliarization as a mechanism to arrive at an idea of Identity in design that was critically open to the import of worldwide elements. Would this kind of technique help us to achieve a variety of high standard worldviews against the homogenization that globalization is bringing to us?
- Would these worldviews incite a dialog between the consumer and the buildings making them aware of their gains and losses in this constantly changing society?
- How can defamiliarization be used as a technique to promote identity?

This paper does not intend to cover everything that has been written about identity. It is an explorative article that tries to model Identity from a different angle, putting together complex adaptive systems with theoretical approaches that take into consideration the processes of globalization and the phenomenon of change of modern societies.

This article discusses the notion of Identity not as a static system or closed system, but as impregnated by the local culture, changing over time and allowing critically evaluated influences from outside. The first part discusses some approaches towards the notion of Identity and the second part tries to give some insights into how a creative use of design precedents and the modernist strategy of defamiliarization could favor the creation of places that reflect and give continuation of people's local culture without alienating them from the world processes of modernization. However, one might ask why we should bother to write about architecture and identity since so much has already written about it. My reason to write about it and to present it during a conference on Generative Art is to provide a means of analysis of design products created by generative systems.

2. The Concept of Identity

What is Identity? Next we briefly consider the notion of Identity according Manuel Castells and the theoretical approach to regionalism according to Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis. But before we go further in the exploration of this notion, two things should be considered. On the one hand, the notion of "Identity" involves numerous determinants such as those of political and social order. As such, it seems to be a complex system, a kind of network that stretches each time one variable changes until it either collapses or continues to adapt as a complex adaptive system does (Holland 1995).

On the other hand, it seems interesting to note that the notion of identity seems to be directly opposed to the notions of change and time. However, this is not strictly true. If a city loses its current identity, it simultaneously creates a new one. Therefore, change in the direct environment over time is also part of the creation of a new identity. Thus, change is part of the process of what Manuel Castells in *The Power of Identity* calls "Project Identity", as explained below. In the case of Beijing and its inhabitants, however, one could say that substituting the

identity of their built environment that reflects their ancient culture for a Western identity, which actually does not mean anything to them, is anything but inspiring. The influence of the West is unavoidable, even advantageous sometimes, but the uncritical use of Western precedents is devoid of meaning. In *Critical Regionalism*, Lefaivre and Tzonis give examples of a critical attitude toward identity that tries to synthesize the local and global forces in architecture. But is "Identity" in modern societies something that we should still be seeking in design?

Identity according to Manuel Castells

In *The Power of Identity*, Manuel Castells names three approaches toward Identity: "legitimizing identity", "resistance identity" and "project identity".

If, on the one hand, "legitimizing identity" is an approach "introduced by the dominant institutions of society to extend and rationalize their domination vis à vis social actors", then on the other hand, "resistance identity" is "generated by those actors who are in positions/conditions devalued and/or stigmatized by the logic of domination, thus building trenches of resistance and survival on the basis of principles different from, or opposed to, those permeating the institutions of society" (Castells 1997, p. 8).

Legitimizing identity seems to be the kind of identity that Rem Koolhaas rejects, when making his plea for the generic city in his article "The Generic City", because it is a kind of identity bounded to chauvinistic ideas and nationalism.

The third approach is that of developing a new identity. According to Castells, a "project identity" becomes real "when social actors, on the basis of whatever cultural materials are available to them, build a new identity that redefines their position in society and, by so doing, seek the transformation of overall social structure" (Castells 1997, p. 8).

Identity seems to be not easy to categorize in a society in constant transformation. Recognizing this dynamics, Castells argues: "identities that start as resistance may induce projects, and may also, along the course of history, become dominant in institutions of society, thus becoming legitimizing identities to rationalize their domination" (Castells 1997, p. 8).

This dynamics of identity refers to the phenomenon of change in society over the years. Contrary to the provocative style of Koolhaas, Castells argues that no identity has, per se, progressive or regressive value outside its historical context and shows that it is more important to know which kinds of benefits each identity brings for a specific society than to argue about the positive or negative value that each kind of identity may have.

The role of Identity in Critical Regionalism

The notion of Critical Regionalism was introduced 25 years ago by Alexander Tzonis to draw attention to the approach taken by a group of young German architects in Europe. This group was working on an alternative to the postmodernism that, with few exceptions, had not really taken architecture, as it meant to do, out of a state of stagnation and disrepute by the reintroduction of historical knowledge and cultural issues in design (Tzonis, Lefaivre 2003, p. 10).

The main task of critical regionalism was, according to Lefaivre and Tzonis, "to rethink architecture through the concept of region." The concept of place/region in critical regionalism is indeed fundamental to understanding the new approach. Critical Regionalism differs from Regionalism [1] because it "does not support the emancipation of a regional group nor does it set up one group against another" (Tzonis, Lefaivre 1990, p. 31).

Region/place does not coincide with a nation or a territory of an ethnic group. In addition, in *Critical Regionalism, Architecture and Identity in a Globalized World*, Tzonis argues, "Whether this involves complex human ties or balance of the ecosystem it is opposed to mindlessly adopting the narcissistic dogmas in the name of universality, leading to environments that are economically costly and ecologically destructive to the human community" (Tzonis, Lefaivre 2003, p. 20). In *Tropical Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization*, an earlier publication, Tzonis and Lefaivre also maintain, "Critical regionalism should be seen as complementary rather than contradictory to trends toward higher technology and a more global economy and culture. It opposes only their undesirable, contingent by-products due to private interests and public mindlessness" (Tzonis and Lefaivre 2001, pp. 8-9). They do not provide a checklist or a method to design a "proper" architecture in this mode, but they give a hint by naming the modernist technique of defamiliarization. In summary, Critical Regionalism does not support political or ethnical issues; it refers to a balance of the ecosystem and opposes to the destruction of the local creative potential due to misuse of technological advances and private interests from dominant societies in a globalization process.

As another prominent writer on Critical Regionalism, Kenneth Frampton clearly takes his inspiration for a critical regionalism from issues such as climate, topography of the given site and tectonics. Frampton, argues, "Critical Regionalism depends upon maintaining a high level of critical self-consciousness. It may find its governing inspiration in such things as the range and quality of the local light, or in a tectonic derived from a peculiar structural mode, or in the topography of a given site" (Frampton 1983, p. 21).

Seeing through both ways, the designer would provide an architecture that would reflect the local creative potential at the same moment that it would be critically open to trends toward higher technology and a more global economy and culture.

Next, we are going to take a closer look at this technique of defamiliarization and the use of precedents.

3. Design Strategies

The built environment is the theatre where all the determinants are influencing each other and creating new identities over the years. In this sense, in order to understand the dynamics of identity it would be necessary to analyze this environment as form and structure. Second, as suggested by Aldo Rossi in *The Architecture of the City*, it would be necessary to describe the relationships between local factors and the construction of the urban artefacts and to identify the principal forces at play in the specific location (Rossi 1966). And third, it would be necessary to apply all the methods of analysis at hand from the social to the political, from the historical to geographic. But as we have already mentioned, it is not in the scope of this paper to cover all determinant aspects involving identity. We discuss the notion of identity of buildings and their environment in relation to culture and in relation to architects in practice. In this context, we describe two projects.

The Modernist Technique of Defamiliarization

According to Lefaivre and Tzonis, "Defamiliarization, a concept closely related to Brecht's Verfremdung but also to Aristotle's xenikon was coined by the Russian critic Victor

Shklovsky [2]. It was initially applied to literature. But it proved to be easily applied in architecture, where it helps architecture to carry out its critical function."

In *Tropical Architecture: Critical Regionalism in the Age of Globalization*, Lefaivre and Tzonis argue, "Defamiliarization is at the heart of what distinguishes critical regionalism from other forms of regionalism and its capability to create a renewed versus an atavistic, sense of place in our time" … "The critical approach of contemporary regionalist architecture reacts against this explosion of regionalist counterfeit setting [as used in Romantic regionalism] by employing defamiliarization. Critical regionalism is interested in specific elements from the region, those that have acted as agents of contact and community, the place-defining elements, and incorporates them 'strangely', rather than familiarly, it makes them appear strange, distant, difficult even disturbing. It disrupts the sentimental 'embracing' between buildings and their consumers and instead makes an attempt at 'pricking the conscience'. To put it in more traditional terms the critical approach reintroduces 'meaning' in addition to 'feeling' in people's view of the world" (Tzonis and Lefaivre 2001, pp. 8-9).

Via defamiliarization architects can differentiate their work, and prick the consciousness of the dweller by provoking a dialog with him/her via a reflection that the dweller is invited to identify the known from the unknown. The dweller remains alert to the changes, to the disadvantages and advantages of the modern society.

To speak about defamiliarization [3], one must first speak about the way architects recollect precedents, and in *Classical Architecture, The Poetics of Order*, Tzonis and Lefaivre show three kinds of approach: citationism, syncretism; and the use of fragments in architectural metastatement (Tzonis and Lefaivre 1986, p. 281). They use these approaches in combination with classical architecture, but I will generalize them here for the recollection of any (fragment of) precedent.

In their analysis of these approaches, they argue that citationism is the approach mostly taken in Kitsch architecture as well as Post-Modern architecture. With this approach, the architect gives the viewer the sense of familiarity or over-familiarity. It is an approach that, accordingly, alienates the dweller from the reality of living in current modern societies, in particular in the metropolis. A citationist approach alienates because it does not prick the conscience of the dweller. It avoids confrontation and tries to promote a sentimental embracing between the building and the consumer, a relation that is broken in modernity.

The syncretism and metastatement refer to the defamiliarization. In these approaches, fragments of physical precedents or conceptual precedents are brought to the new design. By defamiliarization, the fragment may mutate and be recombined with different elements or in a different domain producing a sense of estrangement. The intention is to provoke in the viewer [4] a kind of dialog: what is familiar and what is strange in this new composition?

In fact, defamiliarization is not an Identity-making device. Next, we are going to see an example from Le Corbusier, the Unité d'Habitation of Marseilles, which shows what one may call a process of defamiliarization with elements far remote from the dweller. Defamiliarization, in the sense it is used in Critical Regionalism, may be seen as contributing to a "critical" identity that brings together for the dweller his local cultural values and the world-wide process of modernization. In other words, defamiliarization may be a device that helps you to evaluate the local potentials and create new worldviews without giving that alienated, over-familiarized feeling to the viewer that results in a nostalgic and parochial regionalism.

Design Precedents: Innovations vs. Continuation

Next, we briefly describe two projects in which defamiliarization played a role: Le Corbusier's Unité d'Habitation in Marseille, France, and MGA's Santosh Benjamin House in Bangalore, India. The objective is to show how both used the defamiliarization device.

Le Corbusier used it to come to the creation of a new housing type which reflected the architect's ideals for a new life-style: healthier and more enjoyable – an innovation in the production of housing for the working class. But how was it achieved? The author suggested in her paper "Breaking the type" (Moraes Zarzar 2003) that it was created by purposely "breaking" earlier types and taking the fragments that would help him in creating this house for the modern man. Mathew & Ghosh's Benjamin House is thoroughly described and analyzed as a main case in Shaji K. Panicker's Master's thesis. It is also a house composed of fragments applied as metastatements. Their proposal seems closer to a view grounded in the practice of a critical regionalism than to Le Corbusier's utopian view.

The Unité d'Habitation

Le Corbusier's inventions, such as Maison Dom-Ino and Maison Citrohan, combined numerous concepts within a fascinating network that involved different levels and domains. Concepts were carefully translated into architectural elements and vice-versa, often evolving a (re)combination with others, such as the elements that compose the "five points for modern architecture" or the elements of his "architectural promenade". Le Corbusier had a very peculiar way of looking at the object of design: on the one hand he proceeded from extremely general concepts trying to provide solutions for the primary needs of lodging, work, cultivation of body and mind, and traffic; on the other hand, he claimed to have proceeded from the concept of the kitchen as a modern hearth, from which the rest followed naturally. This "naturally" developed design used the technique of defamiliarization over the years using syncretism and metastatements to come to his material.

Proceeding from the earlier examples of transferences of the precedent features, this section will present aspects of a possible "ontogeny" of the Unité d'Habitation of Marseilles.

The Grand Plan or the Ontogeny of the Unité d'Habitation

Le Corbusier claimed that the Unité d'Habitation was the result of "40 years gestation". We suggest that this "gestation" was not a question of development (ontogeny) but of lineage (phylogeny). The creation of the Unité seems to have been the result of the use and modification of specific elements, often in small chains of linkages over the years such as the "five points for a modern architecture", or Le Corbusier's bottle, bin and bottle rack (linked features).

Le Corbusier's task was to provide a housing scheme for workers in the bad economic situation after the Second World War in France. His solution grouped 330 units to house a community of roughly 1600 inhabitants in an 18-storey building providing extensive services to the community. This was a unique opportunity to put all his ideas concerning multi-family housing schemes into practice. He had already developed the Maison Dom-Ino, the Maison Citrohan and the Immeubles Village as well as concepts at city planning level such as the concept of the "vertical garden city". The Unité d'Habitation for the workers of Marseilles was the result of all these studies. In designing the Unité, he had certainly recalled many of those concepts; some of a general order (light, sun, greenery) but also others that could be more straightforwardly translated into architectural elements (the piloti, the roof garden, the free façades, and so forth).

In fact, many parts of this building block were already developed in detail through experiments in other designs. However, before he could use these precedent features, he needed to have an overall framework. Le Corbusier had to assemble the right features into a whole to match the new desired configuration. In his world full of metaphors, he then placed bottles (dwellings) into the bins (neutralizing walls) and the bins into the bottle rack (structural framework); a collective roof garden on top of the structure with activities for all inhabitants, and a piloti freeing the whole block from the humid ground, providing the whole community with parks, schools and other extensions of the home and freeing the landscape/ horizon of obstacles at ground level.

It was not only a question of assembling the existent elements, i.e. recalling them and putting them together. They needed to be adapted to the new constraints and available technology. Due to these constraints and possibilities, "mutations" occurred.

The roof garden, the bottle rack and piloti gave the primary or general structure of the Unité (Figure 1). This primary framework enabled Le Corbusier to use many of his precedents, some of them with further "mutations".

Some features changed their physical expression, i.e. their pattern or structural configuration changed as, for example, the slender piloti of the houses of the 1920s changed into the gargantuan piloti of the Unité. Other features changed from domain level, meaning that the resultant element acquired uses different to the original one. For example, the roof garden was originally a family garden, but it changed into a community garden after its recombination with the deck of the ocean liner (a precedent of a later date than the vernacular houses of Istanbul). It became the square, the club, and the gymnasium of the building block community. In other words, some of the linked "five points of a modern architecture" from 1927 were used in a "mutated" form. The initial linkage was broken; some features "mutated", and were recombined and re-used in the Unité. This is also the act of defamiliarization.

The free façade concepts also changed their domain level: from the private (the dwelling) to the collective (the building). The free façade concept was initially tried out at the level of a (Citrohan) house as well as at the level of the apartment unit of his theoretical multi-family building, and then to a free façade at the level of the building block, where the façades of the apartment units are standard and its freedom resides in the combination of the parts to make the whole.

Through our observation, we may say that Le Corbusier made ample use of the technique of defamiliarization, but his purpose was to provide a new lifestyle. The fragments of the past were "collected" all over the world, from the savage hut, the vernacular houses of Istanbul, to the ocean liner; but also from things that people do not quite relate to a dwelling, such as the bottle and the bottle rack.

We have shown that Le Corbusier used the process of defamiliarization in such a way that one could speak of a lineage or phylogeny of precedents which were continuously changing and recombining.

We have also shown that in the development of a specific project, the Unité d'Habitation of Marseille, that Le Corbusier took his five points for a modern architecture out of its linkage, mutated some of them and afterwards recombined it. In a form of syncretism he used a bottle rack, the roof garden and the piloti to provide an overall frame. He invented a new type, a building to fulfill his utopian view of a new lifestyle for modern man. In other words, he was in a process of creating a new identity and his precedents were not based on material collected in the region but from all over the world.
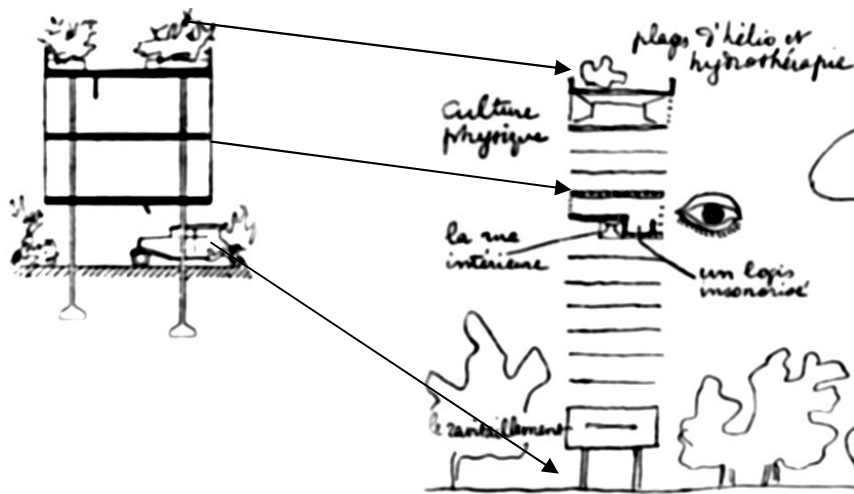
Fig. 1: Citrohan house vs. the unité d'habitation, decomposing and recombining the 5 points for a modern architecture

MGA's Benjamin House

According to Shaji K. Panicker, Nisha Mathew-Ghosh and Soumitro Ghosh completed Dr. Santosh Benjamin House in 2000-2001 to be built in Bangalore, India. They used fragments of design precedents and used the technique of defamiliarization.

With Dr. Santosh Benjamin House, we study one isolated project and not the oeuvre of Nisha Mathew-Ghosh and Soumitro Ghosh (from the firm MGA). What interests us here is the difference in approach. Mathew and Ghosh were not constructing a house for a "utopian modern man" but for a real person of Bangalore. Mathew and Ghosh seem to bring together tradition, but through a critical analysis that as a mechanism could be compared with defamiliarization, as well as all modern techniques and materials available. Mathew and Ghosh seem to work in a continuous dialectical manner. They used traditional configurational precedents that embedded a nostalgic life style and tried to fit them in the lifestyle of a particular family living in Bangalore.

Mathew and Ghosh seem to come to their material by fragmenting traditional and vernacular houses from India, in particular from the region. Panicker claims that "fragmenting and transforming the elements effectively springs from MGA's understanding of the shift, taking place in contemporary society away from the traditional, resulting in the feeling of losing not only one's identity but also identity constructions occurring in architecture." By analyzing traditional houses in such a way, they come with fragments that, after a confrontation with life in contemporary society, can be introduced in their designs in a totally novel relation to other elements. Based on the analysis that Shaji K. Panicker made of Benjamin House for his Master's thesis, I will describe the main points concerning the verandah.

The verandah of the post-colonial society had a relation to the street, was one of the elements. Due to the confrontation to life in the city in Bangalore, this element is replaced to face a more private garden. In the place where the verandah would traditionally be placed, one may find a stark wall that makes clear the boundary between public and private. There, behind this stark wall, begins the private life, away from the busy street life, a stark wall that work as Adolf Loos' concept of the mask.

In the same fashion, and according to Panicker, "the form of the canopy, above the re-located veranda or sit-out, is reminiscent of the pitched roofs of south Indian vernacular architecture.

The idea behind lifting the canopy above the solid masonry of the rest of the building is to give the building a sense of lightness. This sense belies the pressures of globalization by allowing such pressures to flow through, like local air and weather patterns sometimes supporting them, sometimes resisting them".

According to Panicker, "The canopy roof is suggestive of a regional tradition [vernacular houses of Bangalore] but resembles it in a way that is not at all traditional; neither in its materiality, nor in its connection with the rest of the house." He argues, "the canopy reflects globalization in an implicit manner, and questions regionalism per se. The regional element is seen to be incorporated strangely, rather than familiarly, obeying one of the precepts of Tzonis and Lefaivre's Critical Regionalism. Formally the roof lifts away from the sit-out below, floating in the space between the garden and the house." In summary, the canopy is a precedent recollected in its configuration but not in its tectonics.
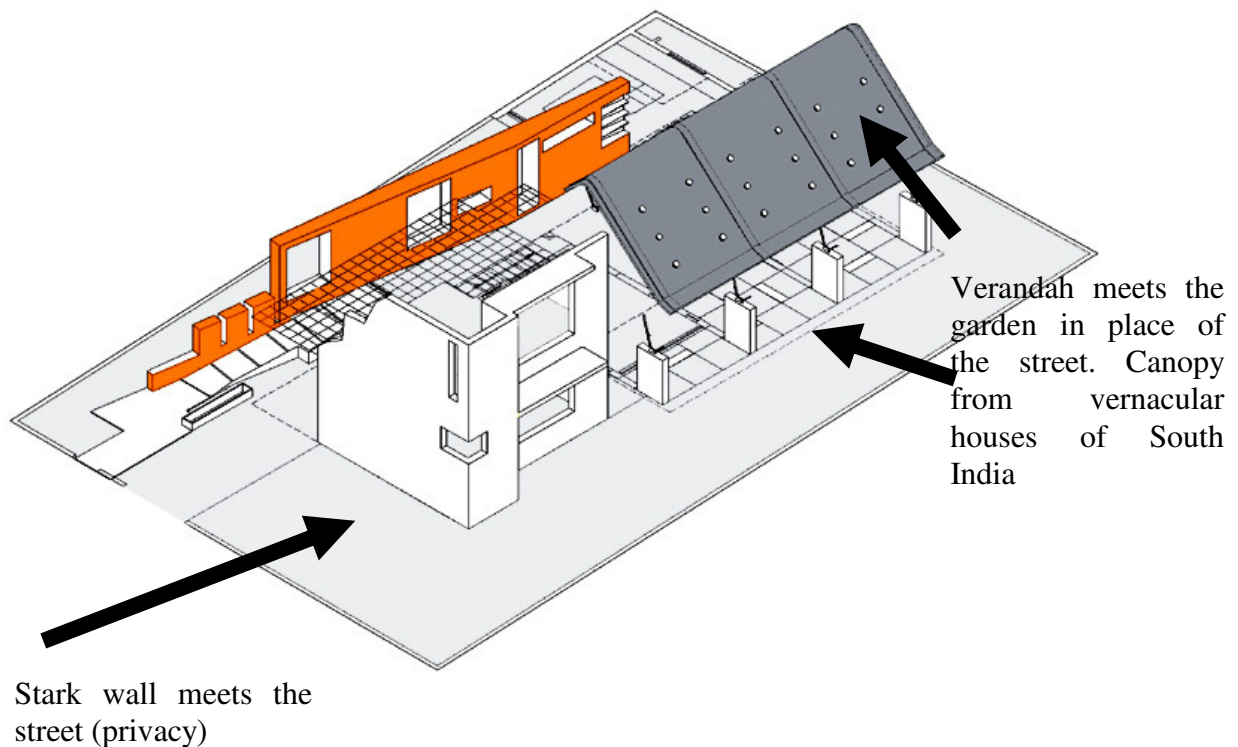

Verandah meets the garden in place of the street. Canopy from vernacular houses of South India

Stark wall meets the street (privacy)

Fig. 2: Benjamin House, recombination of elements from traditional India and the modern cities

Conclusions

After Castells' definitions of identity and Lefaivre and Tzonis' arguments towards a Critical Regionalism, we focused on the use of precedents and on the notion of defamiliarization to explore the notion of identity in a society facing globalization and international interventions.
At the beginning of this article, I posed five questions concerning: how we could understand Identity as a complex system while working isolated within one of its multi-facet parts; how we could deal with the dual character of Identity; whether defamiliarization was a technique to

help us to achieve a variety of high standard worldviews against the homogenization that globalization is bringing to us; whether these worldviews would incite a dialog between the consumer and the buildings, making them aware of the potential alienation that they could be living in; and finally, how defamiliarization could be used as a technique to endorse a kind of critical identity which would take into consideration creative local potential.

Defamiliarization seems to play an important role in creating worldviews such as in the case of Le Corbusier's Unité and MGA's Dr. Santosh Benjamin House. In both cases, the defamiliarization is far from citationism and closer to syncretism and metastatements. Their projects carry meaning and feeling in their expression. However, it seems that the recollection of MGA's precedents, in particular the verandah, carries more meaning and feelings for the dweller than Le Corbusier's precedents used in the Unité would ever do for the dwellers of the Unité. In the case of Benjamin House, one can speak about a critical regionalism and subsequently about the creation of an identity of resistance against the homogenization of design and of our cultures; an identity that has a dialectical relation with processes of modernization.

How could we understand Identity as a complex system while working isolated in one of its multi-facet parts? It is not in the scope of this paper to develop a system to analyze which role identity plays in society. But returning to our statement that identity is a complex adaptive system, we could have a quick look into my initial assumption that Identity is a complex system. In *Hidden Order, How Adaptation Builds Complexity,* John Holland explores the characteristics of complex adaptive systems (cas) to "carry out thought experiments relevant to all cas" (Holland 1995, pp. 37-38). John Holland's most renowned discovery is Genetic Algorithms; GAs that theoretically allow computer modeling of "complex adaptive systems" (cas) via an array of "agents" in learning systems, despite the fact that important learning in the real world is neither narrowly sequential nor short-looped. Therefore, we open here the discussion of whether there could be a possibility of developing a GA or GP system that could provide us with a deeper insight into the relation between identity, architecture and the city or at least to allow architects in practice to work within this context.

Holland argues that all complex systems, that he called complex adaptive systems (cas), share seven basic (modelable) characteristics, which are crucial elements of real-life learning systems. He named four properties and three mechanisms, namely: Aggregation (property), Tagging (mechanism), Non-Linearity (property), Flows (property), Diversity (property), Internal Models (mechanism), and Building Block (mechanism). Holland maintains that the selection of those characteristics were, in part, a matter of taste, but he says that all the other candidates could be 'derived' from an appropriate combination of these seven basics. Turning to Identity, one may observe that it refers to the notion of place, to people (group or individual), to culture, to a man-made environment. People speak about the identity of a particular city, of a building, of a religious group or of an institution, and so forth. They together form a network that, we assume, can represent a cas system.

Using Aldo Rossi's method as set out in *The Architecture of the City,* one could describe issues concerning a city and its individuality. A more detailed analysis of this method would show whether one could match Rossi's concepts with the aforementioned complex adaptive system and see whether Holland's basic terms could be useful for the analysis of the effectiveness of real-world systems involving the notion of Identity. Would Rossi's method help us to grasp the cultural issues that pervade the architecture of a specific place? What we have now are "empty boxes" of Holland's and Rossi's method and only by carrying out case studies could one determine whether the notion of identity could be modelable or not in a

sense to help architects in practice in using design precedents in a kind of "project identity". Identity also seems to have a dual character. On the one hand, it has the potential for legitimization of the ideas of dominant classes, and on the other hand, it has the potential for creating resistance of the classes that are stigmatized or in a devalued position by the logic of domination. This article maintains that only by understanding its complexity and its dual character can one create worldviews that prick the consciousness of the dwellers and above all do not discard the local creative potentials in favor of a shallow, homogenized world.

Notes

[1] In Lefaivre and Tzonis' "Critical Regionalism", Tzonis presents a history of Regionalism applied to architecture. He argues, "it was the Greeks that in the context of the politics of control and competition [Castells' "legitimising identity"] between their polis and their colonies used architectural elements to represent identity of a group occupying a piece of land". Tzonis draws the development of Regionalism in history passing through Vitruvius to the "narcissist Heimatarchitektur" until its shift in the beginning of the 20th century by Mumford.

About this shift Tzonis argues, "It was by reframing the notion of regionalism with his notion of ecology as well as his association with humanist, universalist and rationalist ideas of the physiocrats and the Enlightenment that he [Mumford] reinvented regionalism, identifying in relation to it technocracy and bureaucracy as the new imperial forces and defining the emancipated state for independence as one governed by economic rationality, ecological sustainability and community. Therefore, his notion of regionalism was detached from its nationalist bias" (Tzonis, Lefaivre 2001, pp. 6-7)." Mumford, according to Tzonis, "succeeded in savaging the concept of regionalism from commercial and chauvinistic abuse and in reframing it in a new context relevant to new realities of the time, relating it to economic and environmental costs of the misuse of resources" (Tzonis, Lefaivre 2001, p. 19). Mumford's reference to Regionalism involving ecological sustainability and community seems to impose equilibrium between a "legitimising identity" as well as a "resistance identity".

[2] According to Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis, "The purpose of art, according to Shklovsky, is to force us to notice. Since perception is usually automatic, art develops a variety of techniques to impede perception or, at least, to call attention to themselves. Thus Art is a way of experiencing the artfulness of an object; the object is not important."… "To the extent that a work of art can be experienced, to the extent that it is, it is like any other object. It may 'mean' in the same way that any object means; it has, however, one advantage - it is designed especially for perception, for attracting and holding attention. Thus it not only bears meaning, it forces an awareness of its meaning upon the reader. Although Shkolvsky did not follow this line, it does widen the range of his theory without inconsistency. He prefers to argue, as does I. A. Richards, that perception is an end in itself, that the good life is the life of a man fully aware of the world." … "According to Shklovksy, the chief technique for promoting such perception is defamiliarization. It is not so much a device as a result obtainable by any number of devices. A novel point of view, as Shklovsky points out, can make a reader perceive by making the familiar seem strange." - Lee T. Lemon and Marion J. Reis. 1965. "Introduction". In: *Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays.* Edited by: A. Olson. Lincoln and London: University of Nebraska Press, pp. 4-5.

[3] The use of fragments of design precedents or conceptual precedents takes me to the use of

mimesis in Hilda Heynen's Architecture and Critique. The meaning of Mimesis changed over the centuries from pure imitation (Mimesis means imitation in Greek) to a device in Adorno's Aesthetical theory that has a dialectical relation with his notion of negativity to endorse the critical character of art. For Adorno, mimesis "is a kind of affinity between things and persons that is not based on rational knowledge and which goes beyond the mere antithesis between subject and object." In other words, mimesis means analogy and is based on analogical reasoning. As analogy it is based on similarities, structure and purpose, however, Adorno seems to be more interested in making room for "the nonidentical and the opaque". According to Heynen, Adorno is convinced that "the mimetical potential of art, if it is rightly applied – 'right' not in political but in disciplinary, artistic-autonomous terms - vouches for its critical character, even apart from the personal intention of the artist. Works of art yield a kind of knowledge of reality. This knowledge is critical because the mimetical moment is capable of highlighting aspects of reality that were not perceivable before. Through mimesis, art establishes a critical relation with social reality." (Heynen 1999, pp. 183-188) Would mimesis mean defamiliarization in the sense proposed in Critical Regionalism, which by syncretism and metastatement creates "meaning in addition to feeling in people's view of the world" (Tzonis and Lefaivre 2001, p. 9)?

[4] "If the whole complex lives of many people go on unconsciously, then such lives are as if they had never been." Tolstoy quoted by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre. 1986. *Classical Architecture, The Poetics of Order*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press.

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