

CONFLICT AND MUTUAL CONTINUITY BETWEEN
LOCALITY AND MODERNISM: NORDIC ARCHITECTURE
AS A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

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This thesis focuses on the idea that modernism and locality are not the opposed ends, in fact they are compatible and inseparable concepts which survive within each other. According to this thought both preservation of local differences and progressive development is possible. This thesis is structured in three chapters in order to express the main idea in detail. First, despite the plurality of different expressions within modernism, the oversimplification of a broad concept to a single formalist style and the problems resulted from this reduction are examined. Then, regionalism is promoted as an alternative solution. Due to the fact that the term has the risk of formalist imitation of historical and traditional forms, the thesis focused on the concept of critical regionalism. It is practice of resistance against the homogenization of social and built environment, while seeking the dialectic interaction between civilization and culture. In the last chapter the interpretation of the modern movement in Nordic Architecture with regard to critical regionalism is evaluated. The themes: socially responsive, dialogue with surrounding context, the emphasis on tactile quality and sense of place are analyzed within the Nordic architecture.

Keywords: Locality, Modernism, Critical Regionalism, Nordic Architecture, International Style

ÖZ

YERELLİK VE MODERNİZMİN ÇATIŞMA VE UZLAŞMA ZEMİNİ OLARAK KUZEY AVRUPA MİMARLIĞI ÖRNEĞİ

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Bu tez modernizm ve yerelliğin karşıt uçlar değil, birbirine uyumlu ve birbirinden beslenerek varolabilen iki kavram olduğu düşüncesine odaklanır. Bu düşünceye göre hem yerel farklılıkları korumak hem de yenilikçi gelişmelerde bulunmak mümkündür. Bu amacı daha detaylı incelemek amacıyla bu tez üç ana başlığa bölünmüştür. Bunlardan ilkinde, modernizmin içinde çok sayıda farklı ifade yer aldığı halde, bu kapsamlı kavramın basitleştirilerek tek bir biçimsel sitle indirgenmesi ve bu basitleştirmeden kaynaklı ortaya çıkan problemler incelenmektedir. Diğer başlıkta bu duruma alternatif bir çözüm olarak bölgeselcilik öne çıkarılmaktadır. Fakat, bu kavramın içinde, bölgeselcilik adı altında tarihi ve geleneksel biçimlerin taklit edilmesi riski olduğundan dolayı, tez daha çok eleştirel bölgeselciliğe odaklanır. Eleştirel bölgeselcilik çağdaşlaşma ve kültürel süreklilik arasındaki diyalektik etkileşimi arar iken, sosyal ve yapısal çevrenin aynışmasına karşı da bir direnç pratiği önerir. Son bölümde ise, modern hareketin, kuzey avrupa mimarlığı içerisindeki yorumlanması, eleştirel bölgeselciliğe de referans verilerek değerlendirilir. Ayrıca sosyal duyarlılık, bağlam ile kurulan ilişki, dokümantasyon nitelik ve yer algısı gibi kavramların kuzey avrupa mimarlığı içindeki önemi de incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Yerellik, Modernizm, Eleştirel Bölgeselcilik, Kuzey Avrupa Mimarlığı, Uluslararası Üslup

To My Family

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	V
ÖZ	VI
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	VIII
TABLE OF CONTENTS	IX
LIST OF FIGURES	X
CHAPTERS	
1. INTRODUCTION	1
1.1. Problem Definition	1
1.2. Aims of Study	5
1.3. Methods of Study	6
2. ON THE PATH OF MODERN THOUGHT	9
2.1. The Concepts of Modern, Modernization, Modernity, and Modernism	9
2.2. Conceptualizing of Modern Architecture in Early 20 th century	12
2.3. Main Cultural Issues in Postwar Period	19
2.4. Mainstream Architectural Context in Postwar Period	21
2.5. Criticism of International Style	28
3. REGIONALISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE POSITION	35
3.1. Development of the Idea of Regionalism within the Modern Movement	35
3.2. The concept of Critical Regionalism	39
3.3. Critique of Regionalism through the Writings of Alan Colquhoun	46
4. NORDIC ARCHITECTURE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL STYLE	51
4.1. Alvar Aalto from Finland	59
4.2. Jørn Utzon from Denmark	66
4.3. Sverre Fehn from Norway	76
5. CONCLUSION	79
BIBLIOGRAPHY	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1. Aerial View of Pruitt-Igoe dated 1954.....	23
Figure 3.1. Stone House, Tavole, Italy, 1982. Herzog & de Meuron.....	49
Figure 4.1. Patients room section in Paimio Sanatorium	57
Figure 4.2. Patients' room washbasin section with inclined splash-back in Paimio Sanatorium	58
Figure 4.3. Exterior view of Villa Mairea from west. Wood volume serves as living room, while dark, curve one as Mairea's studio, and at the top master bedroom.....	59
Figure 4.4. Sculptured cast-bronze pull of main door. And sculpturally curved indentation on fireplace, "Aalto's Ear"	61
Figure 4.5. The entrance canopy of Villa Mairea.....	62
Figure 4.6. Main staircase in the living room.....	63
Figure 4.7. Sketch plan of the Villa Tvistbo	64
Figure 4.8. Kingo Housing general site plan, 1956, Helsingør, Denmark	67
Figure 4.9. Kingo Housing aerial view, 1956, Helsingør, Denmark.....	68
Figure 4.10. Fredensborg housing aerial view, 1963, Zealand, Denmark.....	69
Figure 4.11. Kingo Housing Open Areas, Helsingør, Denmark	70
Figure 4.12. Paustian Showroom in Copenhagen suggest a forest-in, 1985	73
Figure 4.13. The two sketches show the transformation from a gathering on the beach under the clouds to a congregation framed by an abstract landscape of tree-like columns and "cloud-vaults"	74
Figure 4.14. Bagsværd Church interior, Copenhagen, 1976	74
Figure 4.15. (a) Kuwait National Assembly entrance canopy, 1972. (b) Traditional Bedouin tent.....	76
Figure 4.16. Soft illumination of exhibition space, Nordic Pavilion, Venice, 1962	77
Figure 5.1. Aurora borealis, Luleå, Sweden.....	84
Figure 5.2. Sognefjord, Sogndal, Norway.....	84

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROBLEM DEFINITION

The culture of industrial society appeared after the industrial revolution has encountered with many developments and new approaches in the fields of technology, production, culture, economy, politics and society. Not surprisingly, these rapid developments have also greatly influenced the fields of art and design; hence several movements inspired by the experience of modernity, has emerged at the end of 19th century. These are generally introduced as modernism, and particularly in architecture as modern movement. Modern movement emphasizes the main principles of modernity – the demand for a progressive development and alteration, the exclusion of what is constant, and seeking an innovative way. Shortly, modernism is an enlightenment project, which liberated architecture from the fixed principles of the past.

According to Hubert-Jan Henket, “Modern Movement does not represent a coherent, identifiable unity but covers a wide variety of trends with different approaches, depending on individual opinions, political climates, social and cultural context and time”.¹ Especially in the early 20th century architecture, it is possible to notice this attitude that embraces diverse developments. Despite the plurality of different approaches, architectural circles have tendency to interpret developments from a single perspective, in which universalism and rationalism are dominant principles. Therefore, the broad term modern movement has been reduced to one constant style which has been very

¹ Henket, Hubert-Jan. Introduction. *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of Modern Movement*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002. 9.

influential in architecture in the 20th century. Actually this oversimplified view caused to falsely blame on modernism.

This style formulated by a monolithic and universal set of formal principles, was propagated by several writings, exhibitions and congresses especially conducted by CIAM. Within these circles the themes; universalism, rationalism, and standardization were adopted as an ideal principle for architecture. This normative understanding of architecture did not pay attention to the socially and culturally inherent patterns. Especially after the Second World War, due to economic constraints and limited resources, the systematic application of functional and rational design principles and greatly industrialized building production methods has highly increased. However, this mass production has taken no account of diverse layers of context such as natural environment, geography, cultural accumulation, and general human life. Due to architecture not establishing intimate relations with society, the built environment has become greatly abstract, homogenous and standardized. This problematic situation was not limited with architecture, because of the rapid urban renewal projects generated with functionalist principles, the inhabitants could not feel a sense of belonging. To sum up, during the postwar period, modern architecture lost its dialectic with its generative factors derived from the social, spatial, and physical demands of the human being. Consequently, the top-down, dogmatic, and very pragmatic architecture of International Style –with little regard for individual differences and demands, has begun to be questioned.

As a result of intense questioning of International Style, the rejections from different circles have risen against the exclusion of the human concern and socially and culturally inherited patterns. Regionally and locally formulated architectural approaches that were sensitive for particular social, cultural, and geographical situations were perceived as an alternative solution for the difficulties of postwar architecture. The attempts to preserve local and cultural

diversities revealed itself in two ways: firstly as formalist expressions of past forms, sentimental and nostalgic mimesis of vernacular architecture or as romanticism, secondly as a critical approach sensitive to physical, social and environmental characters of a particular region. Both are referred to as regionalism. However, the former puts the concept of regionalism and modernism into conflict rather than into continuity. Because of the formalist imitation of traditional and historical motifs and ornaments, this would rather be the stylistic definition of architectural regionalism. On the other hand, the latter proposes an alternative solution for Ricoeur's question: "How to become modern and to return to sources."² Moreover, the latter has a potential to create an alternative solutions for the failures and discontents falsely blamed on modernism. Additionally, it should be noted that within this thesis, what has been rejected is not modernism but its low quality "re-productions" applied all over the world under the name of internationalism. This rejection is parallel with the statement of Suha Özkan. For him "Modernism through its subtheme of internationalism proclaimed universality and worldwide applicability of certain values of architecture and over the past sixty years, almost totally discarded all the regional building activity."³

The approach of critical regionalism conceptualized by Alexander Tzonis, Liane Lefaivre and developed by Kenneth Frampton comes up with continuity on the path of modern thought. Since the concept proposes that architecture continues to follow the level of universal contemporary civilization; however at the same time it must provide the continuity of social and cultural identity of any region. Due to the fact that critical regionalism requires a high level of critical self-consciousness, it would not present a constant, or dogmatic architecture. In fact, well-defined regionalism is not a monolithic or stylistic subject, but a broad term that combines local architectural language with

² Ricoeur, Paul. "Universal Civilizations and National Cultures." *History and Truth*. Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1965. 276.

³ Özkan, Suha. "Regionalism within Modernism." Ed. Robert Powell. *Regionalism in Architecture*. Singapore: Concept Media, 1985. 12.

modernist principles and varies from region to region. In other words, critical regionalism is considered as a descriptive approach rather than as normative.

“In critical regionalism architecture is defined by a culture’s unique identity, manner of place-making, architectonic strategies, qualities of environment in dialogue with local means for coping with environment, and possible tactile experiences that may enrich one’s being there.”⁴ It emphasizes the significance of both rootedness to place and modern innovation at the same time. The statement from Michael Hays is very valid to define the position of the critical regionalism.

“In order to know all we can about architecture we must be able to understand each instance of architecture, not as a passive agent of culture in its dominant ideological, institutional, and historical forms, nor as a detached, disinfected object.”⁵

The cases that will be discussed within thesis will show that at the same time both being modern and being sensitive towards to local individual patterns is possible. The architecture in Nordic countries becomes a good example for creating a connection between the “civilization” and “culture”. It would be handled as a case here, as it achieves to remain faithful to the local patterns without being imitative, dogmatic and conservative. Moreover, Nordic architecture represents a remarkable example, in terms of integrating local architectural themes, traditional building techniques with contemporary understandings and methods to develop site-specific architecture. In order to clarify the main statement of this study –mutual continuity between locality and modernism- the following names are selected from each Nordic countries: Alvar Aalto from Finland, Jørn Utzon from Denmark, Sverre Fehn from

⁴ Canizaro, Vincent B. *Architectural Regionalism Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007. 19.

⁵ Hays, K. Michael. "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form." *Perspecta* 21 (1984): 15.

Norway. Moreover, it should be pointed out that Nordic Architects are given reference by Kenneth Frampton as well, while he discussed critical regionalism. This also makes the region a strong case that supports the theoretical framework of thesis.

1.2. AIMS OF THE STUDY

In the field of architecture, there is a tendency to present modernism and locality as two concepts in conflict with each other. It is possible to observe some examples that legitimize this tendency. However, unlike this common belief and sentimental revivalist examples, this thesis is structured on the argument that locality could be handled as a modern phenomenon. In fact, what the locality is in conflict with is not modernism, but its sub-theme universality. Due to the fact that modernism is interpreted in the wrong way, it was reduced to the monolithic formalist style whose destructive forces destroyed the local culture and individualities.

Aiming to preserve the diversities among the societies that have strong bonds with historical and cultural accumulations, various concepts and approaches emerged within the 20th century architectural discourse. This thesis primarily aims to review these approaches focusing on to the regionalism in the 20th century architectural theory. Furthermore the position of these approaches on the path of modern progress will be evaluated.

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the term locality from a rationalist state of mind with a critical approach. With this perspective, this study proposes that regionalist attitudes -being sensitive towards local culture, society, topography, climate, natural environment, appropriate technology, and locals' way of life- and modernist attitudes should not be seen as opposite poles conflicting with each other, but also they could be seen as inseparable concepts within a modernist dialectic.

Another objective of this study is to evaluate the architecture in the Nordic countries in order to display both being modern and being sensitive towards to local individual patterns is possible. As the Norwegian architect, Per Olaf Fjeld has noted, “Nordic architecture had a strong clear and specific architectural context based on three important factors, which were understood and accepted by the population of the region: climatic conditions, potential of place and a common definition of social consciousness”.⁶ The design philosophy of Nordic architects selected from this region will be analyzed through their works.

The proposed cases will show that a prejudicial restriction against the local context is not acceptable. In fact they will be an example of being a mediator between universal civilization and local culture. Beside the unique culture of this region, the most determinant factor of Nordic design philosophy is nature. The poetic relation between nature and human is highly reflected in Nordic culture and architecture as well.

1.3. METHODS OF THE STUDY

The main aim of this study is to evaluate the idea that modernism and locality not as opposed poles but as adaptable and inseparable notions which survive within each other. In order to achieve this goal this thesis first draws the theoretical framework of its main idea, then illustrate this idea with case studies. In this context, the outline of the thesis is organized in three sections.

In the second chapter, the diverse concepts associated with the term modern is handled to resolve possible conceptual confusion. Furthermore in this chapter a comprehensive survey which shows that in the early stage of modernism there is a plurality of expressions and different approaches. This was the liberating and decentralizing modernist origin of the 20th century modern architecture. Then the chapter discusses the reduction of this pluralistic movements to a

⁶ Fjeld, Per Olaf. *Sverre Fehn: The Pattern of Thoughts*. New York: Monacelli, 2009. 10.

monolithic formalist style. Shortly, the evolution of modernism in the 20th century is overviewed in this chapter.

After the intense questioning of orthodox modernism, the different rejections have risen against this dogmatic style. Within the third chapter regionalism is presented as an alternative solution for the failures and discontents of modernism. While discussing regionalism, the separation of critical approaches from the sentimental returns would be specially done. Therefore, the concept of critical regionalism has become the utmost essential theory that this study bases on. The theories of architecture critics; Alexander Tzonis, Liane Lefaivre and Kenneth Frampton who developed and spread the critical regionalism would be studied. The method of “defamiliarization” formulated by Tzonis and Lefaivre and five points for architectural resistance: space/place, typology/topography, architectonic/scenographic, artificial/natural, and visual/tactile generated by Frampton are comprehensively discussed. Because these themes are used as a reading method for the works of Nordic architects.

Finally, in the third chapter the significance of critical regionalism in the Nordic countries would be evaluated. The design philosophies of Nordic masters would be handled with reference to the principles derived from critical regionalism. And of course, the main claim of this thesis that modernism and locality not as antithetical points but as compatible notions which survive within each other, is tried to be testified through the cases.

CHAPTER 2

ON THE PATH OF MODERN THOUGHT

2.1. THE CONCEPTS OF MODERN, MODERNIZATION, MODERNITY, MODERNISM

The aim of this section is to examine the relationship between the concept of modernity and architectural profession, theory and practice. For this, one should begin with the basic question, what is modernity? According to Hilde Heynen, one can identify three basic levels of meaning accorded to the word modern.

“In the first and oldest sense it means present, or current, implying as its opposite the notion of earlier, of what is past. ... A second meaning of the word is the new, as opposed to the old. During the course of the nineteenth century yet a third level of meaning became important. The notion of modern then acquired the connotation of what is momentary, of the transient, with its opposite no longer being a clearly defined past but rather an intermediate eternity.”⁷

According to Heynen, “the current, the new and the transient: all three of these levels of meaning refer to the peculiar importance that is ascribed to present in the concept of modernity”.⁸ Modernity makes the present different from past and points it the way towards the future. And it has penetrated into the contemporary societies intensely thus it is not possible any more to find a place where its impact does not occur. Thus, one cannot simply get rid of modernity. Moreover, the view considering modernity as a monolithic whole that deserve to be censured is conservative and reactionary attitude. The statement of Heynen is crucial for one would approach to modernity. For him, “the tension

⁷ Heynen, Hilde. *Architecture and Modernity: A Critique*. Cambridge, MA: MIT, 2001. 8

⁸ Ibid. 9

between criticism and commitment remains essential if one is to relate in a meaningful way to the modern”.⁹ And high level of self-consciousness is needed to stay on this way.

Modernity is generally portrayed as being disengagement with tradition, and as a denial of the legacy of the past. However, within this thesis the total rejection of the inheritance of the past is evaluated as a kind of standardization which does not offer continuity on the path of modern rationalist thought. Because re-handling of history in architecture could be possible if it achieves to stay on the path of modern rationalist thought. Jurgen Habermas, in his influential essay, “Modernity- An Incomplete Project” evaluated the position of “modern” between the past and current. He states:

“With varying content, the term "modern" again and again expresses the consciousness of an epoch that relates itself to the past of antiquity, in order to view itself as the result of a transition from the old to the new”.¹⁰

“This transition from the old to the new, being quite essential for the concept of modernity, it is re-introduced.”¹¹ according to Habermas, “each time the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients - whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation.”¹²

As it is mentioned before, in contemporary societies the term “modern” appears frequently on very different levels. Thus, the distinction between the terms modernization, modernity, and modernism should be drawn. According to Marshall Berman, “the term modernization is used to describe the process of social development, the main features of which are technological advances and

⁹ Ibid. 14

¹⁰ Habermas, Jürgen. "Modernity - An Incomplete Project." *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays On Post-Modern Culture*. Ed. Hal Foster. Washington: Bay, 1983. 3.

¹¹ Ibid. 4.

¹² Ibid. 4.

industrialization, urbanization and population explosions, the rise of bureaucracy and increasingly powerful national states, an enormous expansion of mass communication systems, democratization, and an expanding capitalist world market”.¹³ In other words modernization refers to all set of progressive social transformations from a pre-modern to a modern society.

“Modernity refers to the typical features of modern times and to the way that these features are experienced by the individual: modernity stands for the attitude toward life that is associated with a continuous process of evolution and transformation, with an orientation toward a future that will be different from the past and from the present.”¹⁴ Modernity in general sense means the state of being new and modern. New modes of transportations, new materials, new source of power and energy, shortly all these technologies brought forth new modes of vital experiences –experience of space time, of the self and others, of life’s possibilities and perils– that is shared by men and women all over the world today. According to Berman, this body of experience is called “modernity”.¹⁵

The experience of modernity stimulates some reactions in the modes of cultural tendencies and artistic movements. “Some of these that proclaim themselves as being in sympathy with the orientation toward the future and desire for progress are specifically given the name modernism.”¹⁶ In other words, all kinds of initiatives based on the modern way of thinking and practice, in every sphere of social activity and cultural production is called modernism. In fact, the term modernism has a more particular explanation for each individual field of study. Within this thesis the relationship between modernism and the architectural profession, theory and practice is examined. Especially the

¹³ Berman, Marshall. *All That Is Solid Melts Into Air: The Experience of Modernity*. New York: Penguin Books, 1988. 16. cited in Ibid. 10.

¹⁴ Op. cit. Heynen. 10.

¹⁵ Op. cit. Berman. 15.

¹⁶ Op. cit. Heynen. 10

concepts; universality and standardization formulated within modernism and their threat on cultural and local diversities in architecture is evaluated.

2.2. CONCEPTUALIZING OF MODERN ARCHITECTURE IN EARLY 20TH CENTURY

After the industrial revolution, the new culture of industrial society has been introduced with many changes and new approaches in the fields of technology, production, culture, economy, politics, and society. “As a response to this accelerating development several movements in the arts emerged at the end of the 19th century that were inspired by the experience of modernity, by the new and the present, rather than by tradition.”¹⁷ They are generally called as modernism and in architecture as the modern movement. “It emphasizes the basic principles of modernity –the urge toward continual change and development, the rejection of everything that is constant and the longing for what is new.”¹⁸ By doing so, modern movement has come up with a consistent response to the challenge of modernity in the field of architecture.

Although modern movement is a broad term that embraces diverse developments of the 20th century, at first glance it would appear that “Modern Movement is some all-embracing theory, one or two lines of architectural development, something called ‘true style of our century’, and a single melodrama with heroes and villains who perform their expected roles according to the loaded script.”¹⁹ Unfortunately, it has often been presented in this way, as one tradition of development at the expense of a live plurality. For example, architecture historian Nikolaus Pevsner states:

“To me what had been achieved in 1914 was the style of the century. It never occurred to me to look beyond. Here was the

¹⁷ Henket, Hubert-Jan. Introduction. *Back from Utopia: The Challenge of Modern Movement*. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002. 11.

¹⁸ Ibid. 9.

¹⁹ Jencks, Charles. *Modern Movements in Architecture*. Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1986. 11

one and only style which fitted all those aspects which mattered, aspects of economics and sociology, of materials and function. It seemed folly to think that anybody would wish to abandon it”.²⁰

However, the reduction of modern movement to one and only style of the century is an oversimplified view. Because, “Modern Movement does not represent a coherent, identifiable unity but covers a wide variety of trends with different approaches, depending on individual opinions, political climate, social and cultural context and time.”²¹ In other words modern movement is a set of various consecutive approaches which are complementary or contradictory to each other. Actually, that manner enhances the diversity in architecture and reveals the complexity of it.

Diversity in architecture is best witnessed within the 20th century avant-garde circles in Germany. “On the one hand the promotion of rationalism, universalism; on the other hand a recurrent enthusiasm for nominalism, empiricism, intuition, and difference.”²² This separation of approaches showed itself during the famous debate between Hermann Muthesius and Henry Van de Valde at the Deutsche Werkbund Conference at Cologne in 1914. Muthesius promoted bringing highest standards of design to mass production, on the contrary Van de Valde evaluated the standardization as a threat to creativeness and individuality. “German architects were torn between these two trends shifting from one to the other; those like Bruno Taut, Ludwig Hilberseimer, Hans Poelzig and even Eric Mendelsohn, involved in Expressionism, moved to the rational side after the war; while Walter Gropius and Mies van der Rohe, leaders and among the founders of strict principles of *Neu Sachlichkeit* –New

²⁰ Pevsner, Nikolaus. “Architecture in Our Time, the Anti-Pioneers.” *Listener*. 1966. 953

²¹ Op. cit. Henket. 9.

²² Colquhoun, Alan. "The Concept of Regionalism." *Postcolonial Space(s)*. By Wong Chong Thai and Gülsüm Baydar Nalbantoğlu. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1997. 13.

Objectivity–, for a short while surrendered to the powerful attraction of the expressionist Glass Chain Group.”²³

The Werkbund was an influential event in the development of modern architecture, particularly later in the establishment of the Bauhaus. There is a general common belief that Bauhaus has been seen as the symbol of Modernism by those who tend to view modern architecture within limited frame. However According to İnci Aslanoğlu, “In the foundation principles of the Bauhaus one can find the remnants of the past: the acceptance of William Morris’ ideal to revitalize the medieval guild tradition and the unity of arts and crafts.”²⁴ Walter Gropius called architects to unite forces with artists and craftsmen in order to realize the creative idea of the Cathedral of the Future, – *Zukunftskathedrale*– which will once more encompass everything in one form –architecture and sculpture and painting. “Even the word *Bauhaus*, which Gropius persuaded the reluctant state government to adopt as the official title of the new institution, intentionally recalled the medieval *Bauhütte* or masons’ lodge in the Middle Ages.”²⁵ Furthermore, Julius Posener claims that “Expressionism was the most powerful agent in the founding of the Weimar Bauhaus.”²⁶ Moreover he states that until 1923 Bauhaus called for the upholding of the principles: the individual creativity, and “one should build in one’s imagination without concerned about technical difficulties”, and “the boon of imagination is always more important than all technique”.

Later with the emphasis given to the collaboration with industry and the idea of mass production, Bauhaus moved towards functionalism and objective thinking

²³ Aslanoğlu, İnci. "Definitions and Boundaries of Modernism Diverse Architectural Attitudes in Early 20th Century Architecture." *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 8.1 (1988): 64.

²⁴ Op. cit. Aslanoğlu. 64.

²⁵ Frampton, Kenneth. "The Bauhaus: The Evolution of an Idea 1919-32." *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992. 124.

²⁶ Posener, Julius. *From Schinkel to the Bauhaus: Five Lectures on the Growth of Modern German Architecture*. London: Lund Humphries for the Architectural Association, 1972. 47.

and away from individuality. While Walter Gropius was the chair of Department of Architecture in Harvard Graduate School of Design, he even proudly said that the works of his students were almost similar. Thenceforth, there were two key principles in his “New Architecture” namely, standardization and rationalization. He has defended that “the systematic application of standardization to housing would effect enormous economics, and rationalization would lead to superior economy and an enhanced standard of living.”²⁷ The fundamental philosophy of Bauhaus which Walter Gropius states clearly, in his influential book “The New Architecture and Bauhaus”:

“The object of the *Bauhaus* was not to propagate any “style,” system, dogma, formula, or vogue, but simply to exert a revitalizing influence on design. We did not base our teaching on any preconceived ideas of form, but sought the vital spark of life behind life’s ever-changing forms. A “Bauhaus Style” would have been a confession of failure and a return to that very stagnation and devitalizing inertia which I had called it into being to combat.”²⁸

has for the time being receded into the background. Moreover, the growing of standardization and rationalization brought about by economic constraints, have crushed out the individuality and diversity. The objective and rational principles of Bauhaus were highly influential in the formulation of International Style, dominated over the architectural circles worldwide during the century. A monolithic and universal set of formal principles were formulated to establish an architectural style which disregarded the cultural and local variations. “Supported by congress, exhibitions, publications, and defended by historian critics such as N. Pevsner, J.M. Richards and S. Giedion, the movement became so influential and, regardless of regional and national differences, changed so much the face of world architecture towards a

²⁷ Gropius, Walter. *The New Architecture and the Bauhaus*. Cambridge: M.I.T. Press, 1965. 45, 53.

²⁸ Ibid. 92

singleness of style that, it came to be identified with Modern Architecture.”²⁹
Its leading proponents were Walter Gropius, Mies van der Rohe, Le Corbusier and J.J.P. Oud.

“In Le Corbusier’s career, there is a clear separation of attitudes; his early purist period with a right-angled geometry was dominated by objective, universal sensations as he called it, and in his later phase, after the Second World War, he turned to individualism and to freedom of forms dominated by secondary, emotional sensations.”³⁰ The Chapel of Notre-Dame-du-Haut at Ronchamp which was identified as the crisis of rationalism by James Stirling, deliberately contradicted Le Corbusier’s early five principles. Moreover, “The chapel opened up new possibilities to redefine the relationship between modernity and tradition, since the design of chapel benefited from Mediterranean vernacular references.”³¹

The architectural perspective of Le Corbusier can be considered as the most important and influential modernist reference to the Mediterranean subject during the first half of the century. “In analyzing the traditional Mediterranean Architecture, Le Corbusier looked beyond formal issues and focused on the study of types, evaluating the principles underlying plan schemes, handling of climatic conditions such as sun and rain and the use of materials.”³² “The early private houses designed by Le Corbusier exemplified his approach to the dilemma of combining the universal types of centralized, urban, technocratic culture with the vernacular types that had emerged over the centuries in each region through the application of handicraft to local materials, and in direct

²⁹ Op. cit. Aslanoğlu. 64.

³⁰ Op. cit. Aslanoğlu. 64.

³¹ Sabatino, Michelangelo, and Jean-François Lejeune. "The Politics of Mediterraneanità in Italian Modernist Architecture." *Modern Architecture and the Mediterranean: Vernacular Dialogues and Contested Identities*. London: Routledge, 2010. 49.

³² Çaylan, Didem. "Cultural and Local Diversities in Contemporary Architecture: An Evaluation on the Regionalist Trends in 20th Century Turkish Architecture." Thesis. Izmir Institute of Technology, 2000. 21.

response to climate, landscape and way of life.”³³ Throughout the different periods in his career, Le Corbusier continued to employ vernacular references in his designs such as Villa de Mandrot in France, 1930 and Errázuriz House in Chile, 1931.

In addition to these developments, “It is possible to talk about various different and subjective approaches, too: Scandinavian empiricism, Frank Lloyd Wright’s organic architecture, Dutch and German expressionists, classical tradition within purism, romantic classicism of Mies, MIAR group in Italy which tried to merge tradition with rationalism, diverse minds even within CIAM and neo-classic reactions to *Neu Sachlichkeit* in Germany, Italy and Russia.”³⁴

Despite this plurality of expressions, a majority of earliest texts on modern architecture have tended to see developments from a single viewpoint, universalism and rationalism was triumphant in the modern movement. For example, in the early writings of Giedion, modern architecture was introduced as pan-cultural and transnational system of thought. “These essays produced in the early 1930s pay little attention to outstanding diversities caused by individual, and regional adaptations of the modern language; focusing primarily on formal issues and enthusiasm for the new building techniques.”³⁵ Only after the second edition (1949) of Sigfried Giedion's influential book “*Space, Time and Architecture*”, in which he added the works of Alvar Alto, Giedion has begun to give primacy to qualities that depart from functional and rational aspects, such as mood, atmosphere, intensity of life, and even national and regional characteristics. And he underlines the significance of organic and irrational principles in architecture. “Architecture is faced with the task of achieving a balance between the rational and geometric on the one hand and

³³ Ibid 21.

³⁴ Op. cit. Aslanoğlu. 64.

³⁵ Op. cit. Çaylan. 16.

the organic and irrational on the other –between the domain of thought and that of feeling.”³⁶

Another major text that has remained ignorant to the cultural and local variations in modern architecture was the first declaration of the Congrès International d'Architecture Moderne (CIAM) at La Sarraz, in 1928, proclaimed that rationalization was meant to abolish individual desires to the benefit of the masses. “The primary intention of CIAM was to serve as an instrument of propaganda to advance the cause of a new architecture that was developing in Europe in 1920s; specifically the modernism of Le Corbusier, Mies van der Rohe, and his close friend Walter Gropius.”³⁷ According to La Sarraz declaration, new architecture should be based on economic efficiency that can only be succeeded in the way of rationalization and standardization principles. Although standardization was essential for a cost efficient production line, it forced the architects to work more like machines than individuals. By this way, spiritual and intellectual demands of contemporary life were disrupted by the machine that was introduced as the most fundamental mode of production for development. In addition, standardization led to homogenized built environment which would be dominated by industry, machine, abstraction, simplicity and rational thinking. For the preservation of difference and diversity, the emphasis should be given to the individuality, because it shows the culture, the history, and the identity.

In the following meetings, CIAM's rational scope has broadened from architecture into urban planning. For instance, Athens Charter concentrated on the principles of “The Functional City” separating the city into functional fields (categorized as dwelling, working, circulation and recreation). However, later “These functional environments would be criticized due to the fact that they

³⁶ Op. cit. Heynen. 40.

³⁷ Canizaro, Vincent B. *Architectural Regionalism Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2007. 310.

did not take care of human's social relations.”³⁸ “The group “Team X” developed within the CIAM as a reaction to its zoning of functions and emphasized social concerns, inspired by everyday life and shifted attention from universal solutions to specific local situations.”³⁹

In short, seeing the developments from a single viewpoint that concentrated on the issues of style and form is not enough to understand the complex phenomenon of modern architecture. With a comprehensive survey it would be seen that “even in the early phases of modernism, expressionist, organic, and regionalist tendencies existed within the movement.”⁴⁰ This part of the study aimed to overview how difference and variety could inhabit in modern architecture. Moreover as stated by Colquhoun, “1920s was not just the simple triumph of rationalism that it often seems; instead it should perhaps be seen as the stage in which a variety of the social cultural as well as political ideas, having a wide impact on the following developments of modern theories in architecture, took a part.”⁴¹

2.3. MAIN CULTURAL ISSUES IN POSTWAR PERIOD

“The phenomenon of universalization, while being an advancement of mankind, at the same time constitutes a sort of subtle destruction, not only of traditional cultures, which might not be an irreparable wrong, but also of what I shall call for time being the creative nucleus of great civilizations and cultures, that nucleus on the basis of which we interpret

³⁸ Günay, Baykan. "Atina Sözleşmesi." *Kentsel Planlama Ansiklopedik Sözlük*, 2002. 17. cited in Engür, Özge. "Spaces of Communication in High-Rise Residential Buildings." Thesis. METU, 2013.

³⁹ Kömez, Esin. "Architectural Contextualism and Emerging Hybrid Morphologies: The Case of Olympic Sculpture Park for the Seattle Art Museum." Paper presented in New Urban Configurations Conference. 2012.

⁴⁰ Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Tradition and Modernity: The Feasibility of Regional Architecture in Post-Modern Society." *Architectural Regionalism Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. By Vincent B. Canizaro. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2007. 138.

⁴¹ Op. cit. Colquhoun. 1997. 16.

life, what I shall call in advance the ethical and mythical nucleus of mankind.”⁴²

In his essay dated 1961, “Universal Civilization and National Cultures” Paul Ricoeur emphasizes that the advancement of mankind is provided through the dialectical interplay between civilization and culture. On the one hand, civilization is an application of modern technologies and theories, the process of modernization in order to provide an opportunity for the pursuit of higher activities. On the other, “culture weaves together an endless array of physical conditions, conscious and unconscious behavioral features, collective responses, values, beliefs, and images, which are materialized in our physical settings and architecture.”⁴³ Moreover, “culture becomes “a general process of intellectual, spiritual, and aesthetic development,” an abstract notion belonging to society that provides it with an association and identity.”⁴⁴ Consequently, civilization is essential for progress and success, and culture is a necessary means of identification.

Ricoeur acknowledges the necessity of taking part in scientific, technical, and political rationality in order to pursue modern civilization. Although he seems to be optimistic about universal civilization that brings benefit and progress to humanity in the process of development and novelty, he is concerned with cultural and individual identity in terms of its formation and relation to civilization and he warns the effects of universalization at a cultural level.

“We have the feeling that this single world civilization at the same time exerts a sort of attrition or wearing away at the expense of the cultural resources which have made the great civilizations of the past. This threat is expressed, among other disturbing effects, by the spreading before our eyes of

⁴² Op.cit Ricoeur, 1965. 276.

⁴³ Pallasmaa, Juhani. "The Northern Dimension: Between Universality and Locality." *Modern North: Architecture on the Frozen Edge*. By Julie Decker. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2010.

⁴⁴ Alhasani, Nadia M. "Tradition vs. Modernity: The Quest for a Cultural Identity." *Traditional Dwellings and Settlements Review* 7.2 (1996): 36.

mediocre civilization which is absurd counterpart of what I was just calling elementary culture. Everywhere throughout the world, one finds the same bad movie, the same slot machines, the same plastic or aluminum atrocities, the same twisting of language by propaganda etc. It seems as if mankind, by approaching en masse a basic consumer culture were also stopped en masse at a subcultural level.⁴⁵

He explains the devastation of traditional culture and its impulse by the universalization of civilization. "The transition towards a "mediocre civilization" makes homogenous the various cultures of the world."⁴⁶ "The encroachment of universal civilization, while improving some qualities of life, erodes those that are vital and creative –one's attachment to and knowledge of self in relation to place."⁴⁷ Due to the loss of the symbiotic relation between civilization and culture especially in the post war period, universalization became a threat upon cultural and local diversity. As quoted in Frampton's essay "utility established as meaning generates meaningless."⁴⁸ Consequently, the loss of symbiotic relation between civilization and culture has reflected on the architecture and planning in the postwar period.

2.4. MAINSTREAM ARCHITECTURAL CONTEXT IN POSTWAR PERIOD

After the postwar period the political and financial crisis have highly influenced the architectural theory and practice. Due to the economic constraints, limited resources and the state of emergency; functional and rational design principles, and industrialized building production techniques were promoted as the most suitable solution for the reconstruction of European cities which had been severely damaged during the war. The question of how

⁴⁵ Op.cit. Ricoeur. 276.

⁴⁶ Paterson, Scott. "Critical Analysis of "Towards a Critical Regionalism"" 1995. Web. 26 Aug. 2014. <<http://home.earthlink.net/~aisgp/texts/regionalism/regionalism.html>>

⁴⁷ Op. cit. Canizaro. 42.

⁴⁸ Frampton, Kenneth. "Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance." *The Anti-aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*. By Hal Foster. Port Townsend, WA: Bay, 1983. 17.

to build low-cost housing along the economic and programmatic lines became the main issue of post-war architectural agenda. The economics of post-war period demanded efficiency which could be fulfilled by production with a minimum effort. In this respect, “industrialized building processes based on rationalization and standardization have been applied in architectural production in order to maximize the satisfaction of the needs of the greatest number of people.”⁴⁹

The ideological tendency behind the conceptualizing of modern architecture in postwar period has become politicized and the art of building was scorned as an elitist practice in the service of power and aesthetic yearnings were condemned. Due to the political and economic concentration and internationalization much stronger than previous period, the built environment started to become increasingly abstract and homogenous. Rifat Charidji describes this era as follows:

“As a result of economic necessity, competitive labour and lucrative markets, franchised production, universal dissemination of knowledge, structures and elements became increasingly homogeneous. But it was an unorganized and unsystematized homogeneity, hectic and restless, directed chiefly by individual self-interest. Disseminated universally, it was partly responsible for the loss of national and regional character and the destruction of coherent styles that had been characteristic of architecture.”⁵⁰

The critical issues associated with the terms –homogeneity, humanity and difference– in postwar period could be analyzed in both of the fields: urban design and architecture separately.

Functionally-based method for the planning of cities which had become the central concern of urban design circles, has begun to be realized in this period.

⁴⁹ Pedret, Annie. "CIAM and the Emergence of Team X Thinking, 1945-1959." Thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2001. 21.

⁵⁰ Chadirji, Rifat. *Concepts and Influences: Towards a Regionalized International Architecture, 1952-1978*. London: KPI, 1986.

Especially, Le Corbusier, at his most influential in the sphere of urban planning at this time, promoted the “functional city” as a model for the reconstruction of destroyed urban centers of Europe. “The public housing projects influenced by his ideas were seen as having had the effect of isolating poor communities in monolithic high-rises and breaking the social ties integral to a community's development.”⁵¹ In other words rigid functional cities, with citizens to be housed in high, widely spaced monotonous apartment blocks would lead to isolation and community breakdown. For instance, The Pruitt–Igoe, an urban housing scheme in St. Louis, Missouri in 1954 associated with the rationalist principles of CIAM, and particularly with the urban design principles of Le Corbusier, later has become an icon of urban renewal and public policy planning failure. In such a case one could expectedly assert that “the inhabitants of city needed a sense of belonging within a community –that the sterile blocks was alienating and did not address the human need to belong to community.”⁵²



Figure 2.1. Aerial View of Pruitt-Igoe dated 1954. An image used in the documentary film “The Pruitt-Igoe Myth: an Urban History”.

Source: The Pruitt-Igoe Myth. Web. <<http://www.pruitt-igoe.com/press-materials/#images>>

⁵¹ Borthwick, Gail. *Barbican: A Unique Walled City within the City*. Edinburg: U of Edinburg, 2011. 19.

⁵² *Ibid.* 23.

This radical urban transformation was crucial especially for cities with a cultural, historical and social heritage. For Kenneth Frampton, during the intense reconstruction of urban centers, 19th century city fabrics progressively overlaid by megalopolitan development, and high rise glass blocks and highways become the symbols of rationally designed urban centers during the postwar period.⁵³ Moreover, this rationally designed urban spaces with little regard for individual difference and needs failed to provide dialectical interplay between civilization and culture which afforded the possibility of maintaining of the urban fabric. Tzonis and Lefavre referred to the loss of humane concern in the mainstream approaches in postwar period in this way:

“Architecture since the Second World War has come to be strongly associated with inhumanity, desolation and devastation. The mere mention of post-war urban design invokes images of asphalt deserts and mean streets, nightmares of bureaucratic and technocratic know-how, “anomic”, “atopic” graveyards of urbanity. Although these apocalyptic generalizations are not wholly accurate, they capture the way many architects –and non-architects– of post 1968 generation feel about post-war planning and construction in European cities, a devastation often judged worse than the war-itself.”⁵⁴

Although they refers to the architects of post 1968 generations, the approaches for the preservation of difference and humanity had emerged much earlier, as the oppositions towards the universalization of culture and the standardization of urban environment. For instance, at the 9th congress of CIAM in 1953, the status and concepts of the organization began to be questioned by a younger generation of designers. “These younger architects saw its approach as a pragmatic and dogmatic approach to design –with little regard for individual difference and needs, but mostly they found fault with its unflinching support

⁵³ Op. cit. Frampton, 1983. 17.

⁵⁴ Tzonis, Alexander, and Liane Lefavre. "Introduction: Between Utopia and Reality: Eight Tendencies in Architecture since 1968 in Europe." *Architecture in Europe since 1968: Memory and Invention*. New York: Rizzoli, 1992. 21.

for the high-rise housing blocks that were standardizing communities and taking the soul out of inner cities— this universalism in design had become oppressive.”⁵⁵

On the other side, in the field of architecture it is possible to notice the social discontents and cultural failures as well. Unlike pre-war period in which the plurality of views about modern architecture could be found, in the post war period the architectural agenda proceeded in one direction, and it was limited to the individual practices of a few architects: an exceptional and elite minority of general architectural practice. Most of the new buildings in cities illustrated the formalist characteristics of modernism whose principles were reduced to standardization and universalization acknowledged throughout worldwide as “the international style”. “As the term international style also implies, modern architecture of 1950s was conceptualized more as a stylistic manifestation linked to an earlier historical period.”⁵⁶ In postwar period, all the “familiar formal tropes”⁵⁷ of style: flat roofs, “transparency” and lots of glass, compositions controlled with geometric rigor, structural armatures split off from building skins, a dynamically asymmetrical distribution of spaces, minimalist perfectionism, simplicity, an absence of ornament or historical references, an “abstraction”, and a resulting emphasis on the compositional play between elements and volumes have spread unconsciously all around the world, in diverse climates, culture, architectural language and varying definitions of modernism. “Rather than foster local relevance, International Style was intended to serve as basic formula relevant anywhere and specific nowhere in particular.”⁵⁸

⁵⁵ Op. cit. Borthwick. 20.

⁵⁶ Op.cit. Çaylan. 31.

⁵⁷ Goldhagen, Sarah Williams. "Something to Talk About: Modernism, Discourse, Style." *Journal of the Society of Architectural Historians* 64.2 (2005): 144.

⁵⁸ Op. cit. Canizaro. 31.

“In the process of intense and rapid reconstruction, modern architecture lost its dynamic and liberating character that allowed varying definitions taking into account the dynamics of different societies, cultures, climates, nations and regions.”⁵⁹ In fact spatial requirements of varying cultural and social structures should be the fundamental determinants of modern architecture. However, these were in danger of extinction because of the massive postwar building production. The architecture employed as a universal type in this production was “indifferent to the community, its inherited traditional technology, local materials, and natural environment.”⁶⁰ This critical quotation could be analyzed in detail as follows.

Firstly, the indifference to the particular geographical and physical conditions such as climate, topographic landform, plant diversity and natural light was evolved within later phases of modern architecture proclaimed universal principles appropriate for all places. Furthermore, in the process of modernization architecture have also lost the intimate connection with nature.

Luis Barragán asserts that:

“Before the machine age, even in the middle of the cities, nature was everybody’s trusted companion. Nowadays, the situation is reversed. Man does not meet with nature, even when he leaves the city to commune with her.”⁶¹

“With respect to topography, modernization favors the tabula rasa approach to clear and flatten the site, thereby optimizing the economy of earth-moving equipment and also making way for the rational layout of building.”⁶² This flatten of topography is a practice of the universal method that leads to placelessness. Moreover, by paying attention to the light conditions one could

⁵⁹ Op. cit. Çaylan. 31.

⁶⁰ Op. cit. Özkan. 8.

⁶¹ Smith, Clive Bamford. *Builders in the Sun; Five Mexican Architects*. New York: Architectural Book Pub., 1967. 74. Cited in Frampton, Kenneth. "Prospects for a Critical Regionalism." *Perspecta* 20 (1983): 153

⁶² Op. cit. Scott. 1995.

asserts that “architectural materials do not end with wood and concrete that have tangible forms but go beyond to include light and wind which appeal to human senses.”⁶³

Secondly, the indifference to the inherited traditional technology and local materials was intentional attempt to standardize the construction methods and materials as a universal type. On the other hand, it should be clearly stated that a matter of simply using the local materials, or of copying some simple forms of construction methods that predecessors used could not be brought forward as an opposing manner. This will be a revivalist pastiche and cheap nostalgia. Indeed, a conscious effort to unify inherited methods and local materials with modern design and techniques will provide a perpetual continuity.

This indifference to local conditions and sources has evitable led to loss tectonic qualities in architecture, which result from an interplay of material, craftwork, and physical conditions; in other words scenography concerns replaced tectonic qualities in architecture of late 20th century.

Lastly, modern architecture formulated by a monolithic and universal set of formal principles for building design was also indifferent to community and living patterns. These principles widely distributed throughout the world by transcending national and cultural boundaries are only the fixed formal set of rules that are incapable of responding the social demands. In fact, architecture should be a projection of life itself and reveal a close attention to spatial demands of varying social and cultural structures of communities. Because socially inherited behavior patterns constitute an integral determinant of architectural form. However, “during the postwar period when “international style,” which based on universal principles appropriate for all people, places,

⁶³ Ando, Tadao. "From Self Enclosed Modern Architecture Towards Universality." *The Japan Architects* 301 (1982): 8. Cited in Op. cit. Frampton, 1983. 159.

and times, dominated the architectural practice worldwide, these factors were simply ignored.”⁶⁴

To sum up, during the postwar period modern architecture lost its dialectic with its generative factors derived from the social, spatial, and physical demands of the human being. This concern could be traced in the early 20th century modern architectural discourse in which the plurality of expressions can take part. However, postwar architecture has moved away from its liberative and decentralizing modernist origin that can be in harmony with living local patterns. It proceeded in one stylistic direction as a singular mode of design. The reduction of complex phenomenon of architecture to a singular style will be an oversimplified picture. It should be remembered that “Modern Movement does not represent a coherent, identifiable unity but covers a wide variety of different approaches, depending on individual opinions, political climate, social and cultural context and time.”⁶⁵ Consequently, modern architecture could never be a style per se. It must remain in “constant flux, responding not only to regional differences and social demands but also reflecting the changing visual language of art and the ever-expanding wealth of technological means.”⁶⁶ Consequently, postwar architectural and planning developments soon gave rise to an intense questioning of modernist discourse in favor of preserving local and cultural diversities.

2.5. CRITICISM OF INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Intellectual productivity and the modernist architectural practice accelerated during the 1920s and 1930s were interrupted by political and economical crisis in Europe after the World War II. During this period architectural agenda

⁶⁴ Op. cit. Çaylan. 34.

⁶⁵ Op. cit. Henket. 9.

⁶⁶ Seidler, Harry. "Progress or Fashion in Architecture." *Back from Utopia*. Ed. Hubert-Jan Henket and Hilde Heynen. Rotterdam: 010 Publishers, 2002. 60.

became oriented to intense reconstruction activity. “Stripped off from its social program, modern architecture was reduced to a formal style in the 1950s.”⁶⁷

The crisis of modern architecture led to the enhancement of theoretical studies on architecture. During the 1960s these studies on architectural theory has become the significant references criticizing the International Style that has reductive formalist tendency and strict principles closed to alterations and interpretations as if becoming a concrete rigid ideology.

One seminal criticism of the international style is Italian architect Aldo Rossi’s book *L’architettura della città* (The Architecture of the City) dated in 1966, an important study about building and urban theory. Rossi did not focus on the forms of buildings, or the standard images of modern architecture, but he especially discussed the neglect and the destruction of “people’s collective memory” which is essential to create a city. “On one hand, he attacked Functionalism and Modern Movement; on the other hand he tried to restore the position of compositional techniques, and make it the subject of architectural research.”⁶⁸ And he emphasized the notion “urban artifacts” that implies not just a physical things in the city, but all of its history, geography, structure, and connection with general human life. Moreover, urban artifacts are the major elements contributing the cultural and morphological evolution of the city.

Jane Jacobs’s seminal book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* dated in 1961 is a another “strong critique of the urban renewal policies of the 1950s, which she claimed, destroyed communities and created isolated,

⁶⁷ Özdel, İlker. *Architectural Periodicals as a Reflective Medium of the Agenda: A Study on Turkish Architectural Media during the Republican Period*. Thesis. Izmir Institute of Technology, 1999. 22.

⁶⁸ Bu, Xiaoxue. "Aldo Rossi: The Architecture of the City." Review. 2013. Web. 28 Oct. 2014. <<http://urbaneco.blogspot.com.tr/2013/03/aldo-rossi-architecture-of-city-1966.html>>.

unnatural urban spaces.”⁶⁹ Although she does not have a professional background in architecture and urban planning, her ideas and observations in the book have become very influential on the subject of urban planning. Jacobs observed the city from the inhabitants’ eye not from the superior one. She underlined the diverse social networks and patterns that makes that city a heterogeneous organism. At that time, it is thought that older housing settlements should be demolished and high-rise buildings should take the place of them, Jane Jacobs described these activity as degenerating cities. “Instead, she often described the happenings on city streets as "an intricate sidewalk ballet," where people were engaged with one another –dancing, talking, and riding bikes– keeping the neighborhood lively and safe.”⁷⁰ For her, urban renewal plan, the replacement of older housing schemes with high-rise buildings break people off from the streets and put them into more isolated life.

In his book *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture*, dated in 1966 Robert Venturi criticizes the purist forms and tenets of orthodox modernism and focuses on embracing contradictions and complexities by recognizing various paradoxes emerging in architecture and society. For instance, while criticizing the abstract purity of Mies van der Rohe’s glass and steel buildings, he pointed the exclusion of the complex behavior of human for the sake of clarity in simplification. For him “the architects of orthodox modernism tended to break with tradition and start all over again, they idealized the primitive and elementary at the expense of the diverse and the sophisticated.”⁷¹ In fact, complex layers which tend to include “both- and” rather than exclude “either- or” preserve variety and difference in architecture.

⁶⁹ Ejigu, Alazar, and Tigran Haas. "Contextual Modernism and Sustainable Urbanism as New Housing Strategies - A Way for Better Understanding the Phenomena of Concentrated Poverty." Proc. of Enhr Conference, Toulouse. 13.

⁷⁰ Greenfield, Renee, and Jennifer Rabold. "Genius of Common Sense: Jane Jacobs and the Story of the Death and Life of Great American Cities." *Journal of Education* 190.1-2 (2010): 68-69.

⁷¹ Venturi, Robert. *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture: Robert Venturi*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1966. 16.

Thoughts and writings of critical philosophers such as Leon Krier, Jane Jacobs, Aldo Rossi, Robert Venturi, Kevin Lynch, Rob Krier, of late- modern approach laid the foundations of the postmodern architecture as well. “These individuals, opposing to urban space created by orthodox Modernism, brought ideas such as urban space away from monotony, human scale of traditional city, wholistic use of urban functions contrary to zoning principles, urban image concept and possibility of constituting cities with emphasis on societal aspects into the agenda.”⁷²

“Throughout the history of Western architecture, classical and historical forms and types have been familiar source of reference as a resistance against the rational and universal implied by modern thinking.”⁷³ “However, during the 1960s it has also been possible to notice several works that have pay attention to an alternative source for the preservation of difference and emerging humanistic culture foreseen by Lewis Mumford. Regionally and locally formulated architectural approach sensitive for particular social, cultural, and geographical situations was perceived as an alternative solution for the difficulties of postwar architecture.”⁷⁴ According to Lefaivre this was “the regionalist rebellion against the top-down, regimented, single-minded architecture of the generation of International Style.”⁷⁵

Bernard Rudofsky’s exhibition “Architecture without Architects” at the Museum of Modern Arts, and the catalogue published in 1964 increased the interest in vernacular architecture pointed out an area that had been ignored for a very long time. By the end of the 1960s, vernacular architecture was established as an academic field on study as well. And “Vernacular architecture

⁷² Barışkın, Emine. "Reflections of Late-modern and Post-modern Approaches on Urban Space." Thesis. Istanbul Technical University, 1994.

⁷³ Op. cit. Çaylan. 37.

⁷⁴ Op. cit. Çaylan. 37.

⁷⁵ Lefaivre, Liane, and Alexander Tzonis. "Critical Regionalism: A Facet of Modern Architecture since 1945." *Critical Regionalism Architecture and Identity in a Globalised World*. Munich: Prestel, 2003. 31.

distinguished itself as an important source where the basic components of design such as climate, technology, culture and related symbolism have existed and matured over the centuries of man's involvement with architecture.”⁷⁶

Comparing the vernacular architecture techniques with modern ones, he developed a number of statements such as –prefabrication, standardization of building components, flexible and movable structures, light control, air-conditioning– had been known before the modern era. For him, instead of trying to “conquer” nature, vernacular architecture welcome the vagaries of climate and the challenge of topography.

In addition, according to Eleftherios Pavlides “Rudofsky’s intentions went beyond the obvious picturesqueness and formal aesthetic qualities evident in the material which was presented; and he introduced the concept of “humanness” as a criterion of what architects can learn from vernacular architecture.”⁷⁷ “The wisdom to be derived goes beyond economic and aesthetic considerations, for it touches the far tougher and increasingly troublesome problem of how to live and let live, how to keep peace with one’s neighbors both in parochial and universal sense.”⁷⁸

Amos Rapoport, in his book “House, form and Culture” published in 1969 has also addressed the notion “humanness” in vernacular architecture. “He suggested sociocultural factors as the primary force in the creation of form in vernacular architecture, and physical forces as secondary and modifying factors.”⁷⁹ “In this view, “the form of buildings is to be studied as a direct

⁷⁶ Op. cit. Özkan. 8.

⁷⁷ Pavlides, Eleftherios. "Four Approaches to Regionalism in Architecture." *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. Ed. Vincent B. Canizaro. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2007. 162.

⁷⁸ Rudofsky, Bernard. Preface. *Architecture without Architects, an Introduction to Non-pedigreed Architecture*. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1964. 6.

⁷⁹ Rapoport, Amos. *House Form and Culture*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1969. 47. Cited in Op. cit. Pavlides. 164.

expression of changing values, perception, and ways of life, where physical constraints play only a modifying role.”⁸⁰

The cultural, social and architectural crisis emerged during the postwar period which falsely blamed on the modernism, generated a variety of approaches; ranged between the positions modern and anti-modern, all aiming to recover the essence ruined by universalization. “Different from the anti-modernist approaches that made use of the classical and vernacular codes in order to revive stylistic variety through a superficial transfer of historical and provincial forms; academicians and the critics at the other end aimed to redefine the principles of modern architecture without formal restrictions.”⁸¹ Thus, modernity was once again presented as a state of mind rather than a stylistic recipe. The main goal of postwar critical architectural discourse was to refute the anti-modernist schemes and revise the modernism by formulating a more humanist and formally more liberating architectural approach.

⁸⁰ Op. cit. Paylides. 164.

⁸¹ Op. cit. Çaylan. 35.

CHAPTER 3

REGIONALISM AS AN ALTERNATIVE POSITION

The claim to preserve local and cultural varieties endangered by the industrial culture displayed itself either as a revision of the historical, traditional and national modes of production; or as a critical architectural approach formulated by an emphasis on the social, physical and cultural concerns of a particular locality. Within the 20th century architectural discourse, both of these methods has indicated regionalism. Regionalism sensitive to the physical and natural environment, local materials and inherited appropriate technology and local culture and community does not conflict with modern architecture. In fact it has the potential to provide suitable and satisfying solutions for the discontents and failure blamed on the modernism. Particularly during the late 20th century, this sense of regionalism has become one of the most influential critical approaches within the modern discourse. On the other hand, it should be also noticed that regionalism has always contained the risk of a formalist imitation of historical and traditional forms and ornaments, romanticism tendencies, or sentimental desire to vernacular architecture. This would be very reductive approach leading to a singular stylistic definition of architectural regionalism.

3.1. DEVELOPMENT OF THE IDEA OF REGIONALISM WITHIN THE MODERN MOVEMENT

After the World War II, due to the crisis in modern architecture, the focus of architectural agenda has shifted to the preservation of cultural and local differentiations. Various manifestations generated within this context collectively support the resistance against the internationalization and stylization of modern architecture. Apart from the formalist and aesthetic principles, regionalism proposed an alternative solution that was not contradictory to the main principles of modernity. In this respect, regionalism

has managed to remain on the path of modern architectural project. However, until the 1940s architectural circles had a general tendency to associate the regionalism with the nationalism, because of that regional architecture was probably perceived as an anti-modern practice.

The quotation of Mumford, “The modern movement in architecture was regionalist at heart, but was high-jacked by the dogmatic International Style approach –the solipsistic and chauvinistic expression of authenticity.”⁸² was significant to correlate regionalism with modernity. Like Mumford, Suha Özkan also has drawn attention to this duality as follows:

“Modernism demands a respect for inherent qualities of building materials, expressiveness for structure, functional justifications for forms that constitute buildings. These abstract demands do not contradict much, in essence, with anything done by architect who wishes to adopt a regionalist approach.”⁸³

For him, what has been rejected by most of the regionalist architects is not modernism but its sub-theme internationalism. Because, internationalism proclaimed universality and worldwide applicability of certain values of architecture and almost totally discarded all the regional building activity. Therefore, according to Özkan, “it would not be wrong to point that the polarity is between internationalism, which demands a global relevance for its existence, and regionalism, which seeks meaning and content under specific local conditions.”⁸⁴ Moreover, to achieve the goals of the latter, modernism provides tools and techniques to cope with the problems.

Özkan remarks that Alvar Aalto found a medium to exercise his own kind of regionalism which allowed it to exist within the parameters of modernism, but one can find few other references to regionalism until the early seventies.

⁸² Op. cit. Tzonis and Lefaivre, 2003. 6.

⁸³ Op. cit. Özkan. 12.

⁸⁴ Op. cit. Özkan. 12.

Additionally, “Le Corbusier’s reference to vernacular architecture of Mediterranean countries and his justification of the similarities between the principles of modernism and the simplicity of vernacular forms was another example of this attitude.”⁸⁵ The formal introduction of the term regionalism in modern discourse is stated in Colquhoun’s article:

“As for regionalism, one only has to look at the introductions to the successive editions of Sigfried Giedion’s “Space, Time and Architecture” first published in 1940 and revised in five editions until 196, to realize the extent to which regionalist ideas increasingly permeated modernist theory in the post-World War II period. For instance, Alvar Aalto’s work was added in the second edition.”⁸⁶

Alvar Aalto avoided any attachment to the universal systems of architecture and never saw modern architecture as canon. “During the prewar period, Aalto was not so popular among the propagandists of International Style, who had dismissed his regionalist approach as overly subjective.”⁸⁷ According to Tzonis and Lefaivre Aalto’s concern with the identity of site, materials, microclimate, and the way of life of region was in conflict with mainstream globalist US architects. Neither did Aalto have much to do with the Scandinavian nationalist regionalism and its imitations of folk architectural tendencies in the pre-war Finnish architecture. Expectedly, since the early 1930s the most notable examples of the locally and culturally sensitive modernism in Europe has appeared in the Mediterranean and Scandinavian architectural practices.

The relation between modernity and regionalism is handled by William Cutis as well in his article “Regionalism in Architecture”. With reference to term regionalism he compares that tradition with modernity:

⁸⁵ Erkiliç, Mualla. "Legitimization of the Regionalist Idea in Architecture through Mumfords Early Writings." *METU Journal of the Faculty of Architecture* 18.1-2 (1998): 17.

⁸⁶ Op. cit. Colquhoun. 19997. 14.

⁸⁷ Lefaivre, Liane, and Alexander Tzonis. *Architecture of Regionalism in the Age of Globalization: Peaks and Valleys in the Flat World*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 2012. 151.

“The opposition between tradition and modernity arises from a false understanding of both ideas. The best within modernism can be profoundly rooted in tradition; and the best in tradition is to do with a dynamic process of rethinking certain central kernel ideas. Therefore the problem of continuing a tradition is not one of a fossilized reintroduction of old forms, it is on the contrary a question of penetrating the underlying, generating principles of the past, realizing where they are relevant and irrelevant, and then transforming them into present circumstances.”⁸⁸

In other words for him, the best regionalism penetrates the generating principles and symbolic substructures of the past and then transforms these into forms that are right for the changing social order of the present.

In conclusion, especially during interwar years there was a general tendency to exclude the concept regionalism from the architectural agenda. Moreover it was often interpreted as normative concept rather than as descriptive. In fact, well-defined regionalism is not a monolithic or stylistic subject, but a broad term that combines local architectural language with modernism principles and varies from region to region. Moreover the employment of regionalism would be unique response to a specific places and cultures and provide culturally enriched and revised form of modernism. Rather than dismissing regionalism as an anti-modern practice, one should consider the approach as an attempt for continuity within modernism. It should be noted that regionalism could not be segregated from modernity, because it proposes an alternative way of dealing with modernity and its inherent contradictions and tensions. Within the theoretical framework of this thesis, regionalism is approached as a strategy providing a continuity and innovation of regional identity, tradition and modernity.

⁸⁸ Curtis, William J. R. "Regionalism in Architecture." *Regionalism in Architecture*. Ed. Robert Powell. Singapore: Concept Media, 1985. 73-77.

3.2. CRITICAL REGIONALISM

The term “Critical Regionalism”, was first introduced by Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre in their essay “The Grid and Pathway” published in 1981. “The aim was to draw attention to the approach taken by a number of architects in Europe at the time, who were working towards an alternative to postmodernism, the dominant tendency of that period.”⁸⁹ Within this context, although it was not a new concept they decided to make use of the term regionalism. Tzonis and Lefaivre chose it to express the fact that “This new movement resembled in many aspects the efforts of long succession of architects who opposed an authoritarian, standard, and universal approach to design and who tried an alternative way of making buildings, landscapes, and cities that treasured the particularity of a region, its unique environment and materials, the special character of its culture, and the way of life of its people.”⁹⁰ However, due to its protean character, regionalism had been associated with several terms during the history such as; nationalism, romanticism, historicism and kitsch. Thus, to prevent a probable oversimplification and to make it different from the regionalism of previous periods in history, they needed to combine the notion of regionalism with the idea of critical that originates in the essays of Kant and is developed in the writings of Frankfurt School.⁹¹

By qualifying the old term “regionalism” with the new term “critical”, Alexander Tzonis and Liane Lefaivre have tried to preempt any imputation of regressive nostalgia. According to them, the word “critical” in this context, means two things. “First it means resistance against the appropriation of a way of life and a bond of human relations by alien economic and power interests.”⁹²

⁸⁹ Op. cit. Lefaivre, and Tzonis. 2003. 10.

⁹⁰ Op. cit. Lefaivre, and Tzonis. 2012. x.

⁹¹ For Kant, critical works challenge not only the established actual world, but also the very legitimacy of possible world views which interpret it in the mind.

⁹² Op. cit. Colquhoun. 1997. 18.

The second meaning Tzonis and Lefaivre give to “The word “critical” is to create resistance against the merely nostalgic return of the past by removing regional elements from their natural contexts so as to defamiliarize them and create an effect of estrangement.”⁹³

According to Tzonis and Lefaivre, critical position in architecture is accomplished when a building is self-reflective, self-referential, when it contains, in addition to explicit statements, implicit *metastatements* that make the beholder aware of artificiality of her or his way of looking at the world. Moreover, they states the features of the critical regionalist buildings as follows:

“An essential characteristic of critical regionalist buildings is that they are critical in two senses then. In addition to providing contrasting images to the anomic, atopic, misanthropic ways of a large number of current mainstream projects constructed worldwide, they raise questions in the mind of the viewer about the legitimacy of the very regionalist tradition to which they belong.”⁹⁴

As stated by Tzonis and Lefaivre critical regionalism has achieved its self-reflective function through the employment of the strategy of “defamiliarization” taken from Russian literary theory , whereas romantic regionalism has embraced the method of “familiarization”, which made use of regional elements linked in the memory with forlorn eras and inserted them into new buildings to construct scenographic and familiarized scenes. Thus, a sense of affinity and sympathy has been aroused in the viewer. On the other hand critical regionalism, by means of the method of defamiliarization;

⁹³ Tzonis, Alexander, and Liane Lefaivre. "The Grid and the Pathway: An Introduction to the Work of Dimitris and Susana Antonakakis." *Architecture in Greece* 15 (1981): 164. Cited in Colquhoun. 1997. 18.

⁹⁴ Tzonis, Alexander, and Liane Lefaivre. "Why Critical Regionalism Today?" *Theorizing a New Agenda for Architecture: An Anthology of Architectural Theory, 1965-1995*. By Kate Nesbitt. New York: Princeton Architectural, 1996. 488.

“... selects the regional elements for their potential to act as support, physical or conceptual, of human contact and community, what we may call “place-defining” elements, and incorporates them “strangely” rather than “familiarily”. In other words it makes them appear distant, hard to grasp, difficult, even disturbing. Through appropriately chosen poetic devices of defamiliarization critical regionalism makes the building appear to enter into an imagined dialogue with the viewer. It sets up a process of hard cognitive negation in place of the fantasized surrender that follows from familiarization and the seduction that follows from overfamiliarization.”⁹⁵

Shortly, in critical theory one’s personal or local background is available only through the method of defamiliarization, otherwise one is attracted to nostalgia. Tzonis and Lefaivre have tried to identify not any general criteria of style or physical design criteria, but an approach. For them, “the poetics of critical regionalism does not include a set of design rules of partitioning, motifs and genera as does the definition of classicism, the picturesque or de Stijl.”⁹⁶ In other words it not a static or a closed concept, indeed it has a liberative attitude of modernism.

Richard Ingersoll also draws attention to critical regionalism not being a style. For him it is a theory that is not only difficult to understand (because of its dialectical premises) but nearly impossible to visualize. He defines this idea while criticizing some stylistic attitudes in architecture:

“Critical regionalism has neither slogans nor visual mnemonics: Frampton offers seven points, but they do not seem axiomatic in the manner of Le Corbusier’s “five points” or reducible to icons, such as Venturi’s “duck and decorated shed.” Furthermore, buildings that might qualify as examples of critical regionalism do not appear cognate to each other,

⁹⁵ Op. cit. Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1996. 489.

⁹⁶ Op. cit. Tzonis and Lefaivre, 1996. 490.

for it is not a style; one cannot unequivocally recognize a critical regionalist work.”⁹⁷

While surveying on the issue of critical regionalism, one also needs to analysis Kenneth Frampton’s adaptation of the idea which have provided the most influential and complex development of critical regionalism. Frampton’s first essay about the concept, “Prospects for a Critical Regionalism” published in *Perspecta* 1983, has been highly influential on practitioners and helped raise and spread the concept of critical regionalism. Aiming to establish theoretical basis, he begins with a long quotation from Paul Ricoeur’s important essay in which the two structures –culture and the civilization– are framed as an oppositions. For Ricoeur, “the universalization of human culture has been imposed around the globe, and with the rise of single-world civilization comes the loss of diversity and disappearance of local traditional cultures that are the creative nucleus for defining place.”⁹⁸ In this context, Frampton believes that critical regionalism looks for the architectural synthesis of these two structures and expresses the mediating practice of the notion of critical regionalism as follows:

“I wish to employ the term to allude to a hypothetical and real condition in which a local culture of architecture is consciously evolved in express opposition to the domination of hegemonic power. In my view, this is a theory of building which, while accepting the potentially liberative role of

⁹⁷ Ingersoll, Richard. "Critical Regionalism in Houston: A Case for the Menil Collection." *Architectural Regionalism: Collected Writings on Place, Identity, Modernity, and Tradition*. By Vincent B. Canizaro. New York: Princeton Architectural, 2007. 387.

⁹⁸ Op. cit. Ricoeur 276. Quoted in: Orozco, Juan Carlos. "A Comparative Analysis of Kenneth Frampton’s Critical Regionalism and William J. R. Curtis’s Authentic Regionalism as A Means for Evaluating Two Houses by Mexican Architect Luis Barragan." Thesis. Kansas State University, 2011. 3.

modernization, resists being totally absorbed by forms of optimized production and consumption.”⁹⁹

Critical regionalism suggests resistance against the homogenization of the built environment arise from the intense modernization of construction practice. Nevertheless, it neither makes use of vernacular stylistic elements, nor is against modern architecture. In fact, it emphasizes the significance of both rootedness to place and also modern innovation.

“While Frampton does critique of the uniformity of modernism, he does not dismiss the technical value and cultural possibilities that century of modernism has contributed to human settlements. Rather, Frampton seeks an architectural language that reinterprets indigenous solutions and also reflects the technological capacities of modernity. For him, through its tectonic form, adaptability to location, social relevance, and architectural vocabulary, a building may reinterpret old traditions in a modern setting.”¹⁰⁰

With respect to this, Frampton aims to establish “an alternative theoretical position with which to continue the critical practice of architecture based on the liberative and poetic legacy of the prewar modern movement.”¹⁰¹ In this sense, one can summarize “Frampton’s critical regionalism, not as style, but as a critical category oriented towards certain common features or attitudes that embrace and emphasize specific characteristic of site, climatic conditions, geographic positioning, environmental context, and local cultural background expressed through unique structural compositions utilizing a contemporary architectural language, thus strengthening regional identity and contributing to the creation of place.”¹⁰²

⁹⁹ Frampton, Kenneth. "Place-Form and Cultural Identity." *Design after Modernism: Beyond the Object*. By John Thackara. New York, NY: Thames and Hudson, 1988. 56.

¹⁰⁰ Op. cit. Orozco. 4.

¹⁰¹ Op. cit. Frampton, 1988. 54.

¹⁰² Frampton, Kenneth. *Modern Architecture: A Critical History*. London: Thames and Hudson, 1992. 327. quoted in Op. cit. Orozco. 7.

According to Frampton, critical regionalism is identified as a cultural resistance to the universalizing effects of civilization through varying architectural practices with his five following dialectical pairs –“resistance points– namely: space/place, typology/topography, architectonic/scenographic, artificial/natural, and visual/tactile.”¹⁰³ It should be noticed clearly that these points does not mean any kind of stylistic formulation.

Space/Place: Within Frampton’s own dialectical scheme, the first opposition, is derived from his gloss on Martin Heidegger’s 1954 essay “Building, Dwelling, Thinking”. “Frampton relates Heidegger’s two alternative conceptions of space, the Latin *spatium in extensione* and the Teutonic *Raum*, to two modes of experiencing built form and the environment: the unobstructed clarity of the measured, rationalized opticality of formal representation versus the phenomenologically thick, bounded, material experiences of touch, hearing, and smell.”¹⁰⁴

Architectural practice should be conceived not as a detached object, but as a related and identified by the components of place such as idiosyncratic social structures, local living patterns. Frampton explores a dynamic flow between space and place that provides the interrelation of architectural practice with its surrounding context. He criticizes the megalopolis urban development by giving reference to Melvin Webber’s slogans; “community without propinquity” and “non-place urban realm” that refer the total loss of civic domain in modern society.

Typology/Topography: These are the two significant elements that should be integrated in order to develop an architectural practice that relates to both the regional cultural background and the demands of the physical environment. “Typology, for Frampton, is relevant to both civilization and culture. It reflects

¹⁰³ Op. cit. Frampton, 1988. 58.

¹⁰⁴ Hays, K. Michael. Introduction. *Architecture Theory since 1968*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT, 1998. 358.

the cultural evolution of human settlements as they adapt to place and react to certain regional qualities, with a vernacular principle being passed down through time and becoming an iconic element identified with place.”¹⁰⁵ Topography, on the other hand, is site-specific and relates to the inherent shape of the existing natural environment as it becomes a defining characteristic of a particular place. The integration of this pair of concepts creates “place-form” equilibrium between existing natural environment and the cultural background.

Architectonic/Scenographic: According to Frampton, the generic term “architectonic” refers not only to the technical means of supporting a building, but mythic reality of this structural achievement. For him, a building should display the way in which its various elements come together and interact with nature. Scenography, on the other hand, is defined by Frampton, as originated from the Latin word *scena* and from *frons scenae*, meaning scene, and thus being essentially representative in nature. “Frampton establishes the importance of architecture to be appreciated as a structural form, acknowledging its assembly and artistic composition as a whole not just as an aesthetic sequential scenes.”¹⁰⁶ Frampton criticizes the current tendency that reduce built form to a series of images or scenographic representations alone only serves to strengthen the imagistic reception/perception of built form, as opposed to its intrinsic architectonic potential.

Artificial/Natural: According to Frampton, more than any other art form, architecture needs an interactive relation with nature which is not only the topography and the site, but also climate and light. Frampton draw attention to our dependency upon universal technology in the form of modern mechanical services –air conditioning, artificial light, etc. – that eliminate nature’s diversity. Nevertheless, Frampton indicates the need for balancing the

¹⁰⁵ Op. cit. Orozco.14.

¹⁰⁶ Op. cit. Orozco.15.

techniques of universalization with rooted forms of climatically inflected culture.

Visual/Tactile: According to Frampton, our perception of space is not limited with the visual responses, and also involves experiential factors. For instance, in addition to materials and surfaces utilized in built form as the presence of visual form; he promotes the sensorial factors –air movement, acoustics, ambient temperature and smell– that affect our experience of space. Diverse human senses and bodily experiences incorporated in architectural practice would not only enhance the experience of place, but also establish an architecture of depth and uniqueness.

Finally, Kenneth Frampton’s study on his dialectical scheme defines an architecture of resistance against the destructive effects of universal civilization through various architectural practices that strive to reconcile the oppositions mentioned above. Moreover, “his theory creates the opportunity for reflecting culture in an adequate contemporary way as to be seen and respected at an international level, without the loss of identity and cultural heritage.”¹⁰⁷ That is the essential quality of critical regionalism attempting to deal with the conflict of becoming modern and at the same time returning to sources.

3.3. CRITIQUE OF REGIONALISM THROUGH THE WRITINGS OF ALAN COLQUHOUN

Critical regionalism is a conception that embraces simultaneously both the universal progressive qualities of civilization and the local culture. The adoption of two opposite poles at the same time caused the concept being criticized.

The most comprehensive criticism about the validity of regionalism is done by Alan Colquhoun. According to Colquhoun, the concept of regionalism is based

¹⁰⁷ Ibid. 18.

on “essentialist model” as an ideal social model. According to this model, “all societies contain a core, or essence, that must be discovered and preserved.”¹⁰⁸ Colquhoun associates this essentialist model which firstly formulated at the end of the 18th century with romanticism. For him, romanticism creates an object of desire rather than one objective fact. The use of local materials, sensitivity to context, scale are the ways of representing the idea of authentic, regional architecture; however regionalist architecture announced by romantics has never been authentic thing, but only a representation of the authentic. For him, the search for absolute authenticity by mimicking of forms would be an only an oversimplified picture of a complex cultural situation.

Colquhoun also discussed the critical regionalism introduced by Tzonis and Lefaivre. According to Colquhoun, aiming to prevent such an oversimplification, they qualified the old term “regionalism” with the new term “critical”, thus they have tried to preempt any imputation of regressive nostalgia. For him, the word critical has two meanings: “First it means resistance against the appropriation of way of life and bond of human relations by alien economic and power interests.”¹⁰⁹ In other words, the concept tries to preserve regional essence and local cultural qualities from a universal, rationalized and standardized civilization. But he states, “Any doctrine of regionalism has always implied such an intention, so that, taken in this sense, the word “critical” would seem to add nothing of substance to the concept.”¹¹⁰ The second meaning for Colquhoun, “the word critical is given to create resistance against the merely nostalgic return of the past by removing regional elements from their natural contexts so as to defamiliarize them and create an effect of estrangement.”¹¹¹ And he conclude that these two meanings do not seem to have anything to do with each other. It seems that what is being presented as a single idea, “critical regionalism” is in fact two separate ideas.

¹⁰⁸ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 17.

¹⁰⁹ Op. cit. Colquhoun. 1997. 18.

¹¹⁰ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 18.

¹¹¹ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 18.

He goes further and asserts that the second interpretation of the “critical” actually appears to contradict the first.

For him, postulated unitary body of regional architecture no longer exists. All that remains of an original, unitary body of regional architecture are shards, fragments, bits, and pieces which have been torn away from the original context. Thus, Colquhoun believes that any attempt to retrieve the original contents in all their original wholeness would result only in a sort of kitsch.

“Behind the doctrine of a regionalism based on the old virtues of an organic (and therefore unconscious) social and artistic unity, there lies the doctrine of a sophisticated manneristic art that consciously juxtaposes incongruous elements to produce unstable combinations.”¹¹² With regard to issues raised before, Colquhoun suggests that the term regionalism has become obsolete; hence, a new term should be introduced. This thought does not mean that there are no longer any regions with their characteristic climates and customs. Indeed, “there are many contemporary designs whose refer to local materials, typologies, and morphologies; however in doing so their architects are not trying to express the essence of particular regions, but are using local features as motifs in a compositional process in order to a compositional process in order to produce original, unique, and context-relevant architectural ideas.”¹¹³

¹¹² Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 19.

¹¹³ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 19.



Figure 3.1. Stone House, Tavole, Italy, 1982. Herzog & de Meuron.

Source: Web.<<http://living.corriere.it/living/ricerca/search.action?chiave=Jacques%20Herzog>>

According to Colquhoun, the work of Swiss architects Jacques Herzog and Pierre de Meuron are exemplary, where the local dry stone wall and “rational” concrete structural frame are related in unexpected ways. For him, this house is a sort of endless text. What is encountered in this building cannot be called regionalism. “Instead it is a work that makes subtle comments on a number of architectural codes, including the *fenetre en longueur* (horizontal window), the cube, the frame, and the organicity of natural materials.”¹¹⁴ For him, in considering the building “the mind tends to oscillate between a number of hypotheses, none of which are completely confirmed or denied.”¹¹⁵

In conclusion, Colquhoun suggests that regionalism must be redefined constantly according to changing circumstances, otherwise it becomes merely an object of desire. According to Canizaro Colquhoun’s criticisms “are an attempt to raise the awareness of regionalist architects and theorist –a call for more rigorous and disciplined thinking about the possibility of a theory that relies on stable meanings in a world that does not appear to recognize them.”¹¹⁶ Finally he suggests a destabilized model of regionalism. According to this

¹¹⁴ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 20.

¹¹⁵ Op. Cit. Colquhoun, 1997. 20.

¹¹⁶ Op. cit. Canizaro. 140.

model regionalism does not interest in authenticity, it only tries to build original, unique and context-relevant architectural ideas.

CHAPTER 4

NORDIC ARCHITECTURE AS AN ALTERNATIVE TO INTERNATIONAL STYLE

Within this chapter, the architecture in the Nordic countries is evaluated in order to display both being modern and being sensitive towards to local individual patterns is possible. Finnish architect and theorist Juhanni Pallasmaa defines Nordic modern architecture as follows:

“Nordic modern and contemporary architectures have their distinct identities among the architectural cultures of the modern world, and they have widely been regarded as exemplary of the architecture’s ability to be rooted in its physical and cultural reality. Nordic modernity is generally characterized by a human scale, subtle interplay with nature, preference for natural materials and crafts, sense of democracy, modesty, and formal understatement. Instead of abrupt break with tradition, a feeling of interrupted continuity from indigenous and earlier historical styles to contemporary architecture can usually also be felt.”¹¹⁷

With these sensitivities, Nordic architecture comes to fore as an alternative architectural conception to International style. In Nordic region the nature has always been the greatest source of inspiration for architects. Nature is not a stable, it is in continuum change to adapt changing circumstances and it is not a pure form, it accommodates complexities and contradictions. The knowledge gained from nature that is complex phenomenon is in conflict with International Style whose principles are standardization and simplicity. Additionally the poetic atmosphere of nature formed by light conditions, climatic conditions, sound effects and topographic surfaces evokes the tactile senses. Similarly, the emphasis on tactile senses is important design strategy for these architects.

¹¹⁷ Op. cit. Pallasmaa 2010. 30.

The human concern also plays a prominent role in Nordic architectural understanding. Architecture need to be in close contact with human activities to provide a continuity, without human content it would be a meaningless. Nil-Ole Lund explains this human concern as a social engagement and claims that the relation with society had already taken part in Nordic Tradition:

“No other places where one can so easily couple architectural expressions with the developments in society... The marriage between social engagement and professional quality awareness is probably the most important feature in the Nordic Tradition. Our political and cultural history makes it natural for us to see a connection between form and content, between ideology and society. This political and cultural understanding prevent us from seeing architecture exclusive as surface. Architecture is just as much about ethics as it is about aesthetics.”¹¹⁸

Norwegian architect Knut Knutsen also draws attention to the importance of human figure in architecture. Like several architects from Nordic region, Knutsen is opposed to the style-based architecture as well, he offers the human content as a determinant of design. In his article “People in Focus”, he states:

“Human architecture -liberated from style- will be able to bring architecture nearer an idiom which has a more lasting value. One must build for people, not for systems. Systems change and artistic idioms change with them. If one builds for systems, architecture will lack an inner coherence and therefore be inharmonious. It is not the style that is to be model, but the human content.”¹¹⁹

¹¹⁸ Lund, Nils-Ole. "The Nordic." *Nordic Architecture*. Denmark: Arkhitektens Forlag, 2008

¹¹⁹ Knutsen, Knut. "People in Focus." *Nordic Architects Write: A Documentary Anthology*. Ed. Michael Asgaard Andersen. Oxford: Routledge, 2008. 249.

It is possible to notice similar reactions against the reduction of modern architecture to a formalist styles. For instance Swedish architect Leif Reinius criticizing the high modernism as follows:

“We are attempting to crush the dogma of the straight lines, right angle and level surface. Buildings must not be restricted by any kind of formal system at all but should be shaped as integral parts of their surrounding society. And this setting, this society, must be a living context.”¹²⁰

Moreover, the attachment to place is necessary to develop an architecture that not only provides the main needs of residents in a particular geographic region but is also is a reflection of local identity and cultural background. According to Norwegian architects group, Reiulf Ramstad Architects:

“A place is not simply an aggregate of physical elements and conditions. It is not an object, however complex, to be viewed as raw material for the architect’s creative will. A place is indivisible; it is unique and has a distinct expressivity of its own. Therefore architecture must always acknowledge the innate character of every location and make its design a marriage of place and concept.”¹²¹

To conclude, as a critical response to the modernism, Nordic architectural conception has unique quality; since it was developed within modernism. For this reason, it suggests an alternative models rather than an anti-modernist attitude. Thus, Nordic architecture shows that both rootedness to place and pursuing the modern innovation are the key themes to create a continual architecture.

¹²⁰ Reinius, Leif. "Architectural Experiments." *Nordic Architects Write: A Documentary Anthology*. Ed. Michael Asgaard Andersen. Oxford: Routledge, 2008. 349.

¹²¹ Ramstad, Reiulf. "Place and Context." www.reiulframstadarchitects.com/about-us/. Web. 28 Dec. 2014.

4.1. ALVAR AALTO FROM FINLAND

Due to the Alvar Aalto's remarkable influence on modern architecture and architects in 20th century, he becomes the first name coming to mind, while one has studied on architectural consideration in Nordic region. During this part, firstly Aalto's design conception and his critical attitude in modern architecture will be discussed. Then, within the thesis main aim, the mediation between modernism and locality, his architectural practices will be examined through the critical regionalism's resistance points that have mentioned previously. Before reviewing Aalto's design conception, as a role model in Nordic region, his influence on Scandinavian architects will be surveyed briefly, because his legacy is significant driving force to establish a Nordic conception in architecture.

According to Kenneth Frampton, his legacy was obtained by various architects in Scandinavia: first by Finnish followers such as Aarne Ervi, Juhanni Palasmaa of the constructivist line, as well as Reima Pietila of the organic way. And non-Finnish Scandinavians: Sigurd Lewerentz's Crematorium, Eastern Cemetery, in Malmö of 1943, and Sverre Fehn's Nordic Pavilion, Biennale di Venezia of 1962 that have been directly touched by his work.¹²² As stated by Frampton, among his Danish followers, one may excerpt Arne Jacobsen, and especially Jørn Utzon of whom one may argue that no other architect with such a distinct manner has been so deeply influenced by Aalto. "The synthesis of tradition and modernity developed by Aalto influenced Jørn Utzon professional career, without Aalto his buildings would have been very different."¹²³ According to Frampton, Utzon who was working briefly in Aalto's office in Helsinki, responded directly to Aalto's emphasis on topography as

¹²² Frampton, Kenneth. "The Legacy of Alvar Aalto: Evolution and Influence." *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism*. Ed. Peter Reed. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998. 126.

¹²³ Forés, Jaime Ferrer. "Alvar Aalto and Jean-Jacques Barué." *Alvar Aalto Museum* (2012): 2.

indispensable point of departure for any architectural endeavor. And nature-inspired architecture of Aalto, employment of natural metaphors, had a great influence on the Danish architect's work. Moreover, it is possible to discover his impression in the works of many modern architects. He is certainly one of the most influential modern architects and his design conception seems to still be valid today.

The validity of Alvar Aalto's design conception in current architecture could be generally could take place at two levels. The one is its implication of postmodern concept "complexity and contradiction" in Venturi's term generated in 1966. "It could also be seen as that of "heterotopia", borrowing from Demetri Porphyrios, which discards the homotopic integrity, and instead pursues "an unstable unity" of heterogeneous elements."¹²⁴ According to Hyon-Sob Kim, the other is "the increasing contemporary interest in the phenomenological sense of place, nature and man that Aalto's design retains; the association of him with Finnish context in other words."¹²⁵ It is obvious that, in both levels, his design conception cannot be associated with orthodox, rationalist modernism that have been criticized previously.

Aalto's approach to rationalization is very different from the mainstream rationalism understanding in modernism. For him modern architecture has been rationalized only from the technical point of view, not from the humanitarian and psychological fields. "Aalto categorically rejected the technocratic rationalism of the early modern movement as unacceptably reductive, while recognizing that without the popular support of society one cannot achieve anything of lasting consequence as far as the habitat is concerned."¹²⁶ His critical approach against rationalism is best expressed in his article, "The Humanizing of Architecture" dated in 1940. For him, "The fault lies in the fact

¹²⁴ Kim, Hyon-Sob. "Alvar Aalto and Humanizing of Architecture." *Journal of Asian Architecture and Building Engineering* 8.1 (2009): 9.

¹²⁵ Ibid. 9

¹²⁶ Op. cit. Frampton, 1998. 125.

that the rationalization has not gone deep enough, it would be correct only if enlarged to cover the psychophysical field, sharing both the physical and psychological qualities.”¹²⁷ In other words, it is needs to be synthetic phenomenon that covers all kind of human activities, which is “humanly rational” in his own words. “Alvar Aalto emphatically expressed his suspicion of universal and techno utopian ideology of main stream modern movement. In Aalto’s thinking, the task of architecture was to mediate between man and technology and support his social and cultural integration.”¹²⁸ This statement is exactly along the lines of Frampton’s culture and civilization discussion, in “Towards a Critical Regionalism: Six Points for an Architecture of Resistance, in which he advocates the dialectical interplay between civilization and culture which afforded the possibility of maintaining of the social fabric.

Kenneth Frampton has given reference many times to Aalto’s work in his various writings, while formulating his approach to the critical regionalism. Because of that Aalto’s works and underlying design thoughts are important case for this thesis as well. Within the framework of this thesis, Kenneth Frampton’s points for architecture of resistance and Tzonis and the strategy of defamiliarization generated by Tzonis and Lefaivre will be illustrated in Aalto’s works.

Paimio Tuberculosis Sanatorium, built in 1933 was an important work within the Alvar Aalto’s architecture career. Only being a healthcare facility building was not enough for him to the healing process of patients. He believe that the building itself a medical instrument. In this respect, he draw particular attention especially to the design of patient rooms. For him, peaceful atmosphere was essential for the healing process. All the patients’ rooms receive the full morning sunlight, and were painted in soft color tones with darker ceilings to

¹²⁷ Aalto, Alvar. "The Humanizing of Architecture." *The Technology Review* (1940). Republished in: Schildt, Göran. *Alvar Aalto in His Own Words*. New York: Rizzoli, 1998:77.

¹²⁸ Op. cit. Pallasmaa 2007. 134.

provide comfortable and humane atmosphere. This attitude could be seen in the furniture, for instance, Paimio Chair; “the angle of chair’s back was designed to optimize the best position for the seated patient to breathe.”¹²⁹ He considered carefully the patient’s psychological aspects and behaviors within the existential space to design psychophysical space. He explain his design conception:

“The ceiling should be darker, with an especially selected color suitable to be the only view of the reclining patient for weeks and weeks. The artificial light cannot come from an ordinary ceiling fixture, but the principal center of light should be beyond the angle of vision of the patient. For the heating system in the experimental room, ceiling radiators were used but in a way which threw the heat mainly at the foot of the bed so that the head of the patient was outside the direct rays. The location of the windows and doors likewise took into account the patient's position. To avoid noise, one wall in the room was sound absorbing, and wash basins (each patient in the two-patient rooms had his own) were especially designed so that the flow of water from the faucet hit the porcelain basin always at a very small angle and worked noiselessly.”¹³⁰



Figure 4.1. Patients room section in Paimio Sanatorium.

Source: Web <<http://atlasofinteriors.polimicooperation.org/2014/03/19/alvar-aalto-paimio-finland-1929/>>

¹²⁹ Anderson, Diana. "Humanizing the Hospital: Design Lessons from a Finnish Sanatorium." *Canadian Medical Association Journal* 182.11 (2010): 536.

¹³⁰ Op. cit. Aalto. 78.

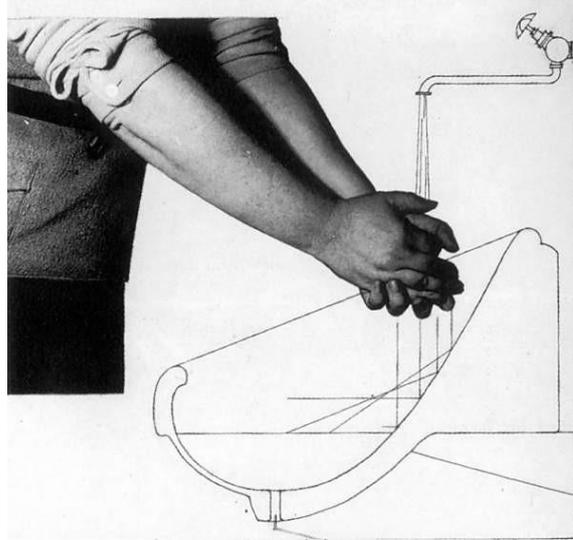


Figure 4.2. Patients' room washbasin section with inclined splash-back in Paimio Sanatorium.

Source: Frampton, Kenneth. "The Legacy of Alvar Aalto: Evolution and Influence." *Alvar Aalto: Between Humanism and Materialism*. Ed. Peter Reed. New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1998.

Aalto's biorealist concern satisfies not only physical, but also the emotional requirements of the patients. While formulating the notion critical regionalism, Frampton emphasize the tactile quality of architecture and promote an environment that can be experienced in terms other than sight alone. In other words, he seeks the employment of human senses to improve the experience of architecture. It seems Aalto has achieved this thought in micro scale, in one single patient room.



Figure 4.3. Exterior view of Villa Mairea from west. Wood volume serves as living room, while dark, curve one as Mairea's studio, and at the top master bedroom.

Source: Web .<http://www.flickr.com/photos/trueman_photography/8199207404/in/photostream/>

Aalto's similar sensibility is best seen in Villa Mairea, 1939 in which the multitudes of sensory experiences are highlighted. "The Villa Mairea reflects not a retinal architecture but a tactile architecture evoking all the senses and needing to be experienced through the body's moving in the house's spaces."¹³¹ In other words, he gave emphasis on the body of dweller than on the mere visual aesthetics. According to Pallasmaa:

"His elaborate surface textures and details, crafted for the hand, invite the sense of touch and create an atmosphere of intimacy and warmth. Instead of the disembodied Cartesian idealism of the architecture of the eye, Aalto's architecture is based on sensory realism. Instead of the disembodied Cartesian idealism of the architecture of the eye, Aalto's architecture is based on sensory realism. His buildings are not based on a single dominant concept or Gestalt; rather, they are sensory agglomerations. They sometimes even appear clumsy and unresolved as drawings, but they are conceived to be appreciated in their actual physical and spatial encounter, 'in the flesh' of the lived world, not as constructions of idealized vision."¹³²

¹³¹ Pallasmaa, Juhani. "Image and Meaning." *Alvar Aalto: Villa Mairea*. Helsinki: Alvar Aalto Foundation, 1998. 90.

¹³² Pallasmaa, Juhani. *The Eyes of the Skin: Architecture and the Senses*. Chichester: Wiley-Academy, 2005. 76.

Unlike Paimio Sanatorium, the tactile qualities of Villa Mairea are not immediately apparent, they are embedded in deep level. Various textures, materials, openings, constructions and details that are not repeated, but come together at deep level. In order to create the cohesion of a multitude of details and references he uses compositional technique, collage.

For instance, while on the ground floor, the wood volume serving as living room based on dark stone; above the dark, curved space is in sharp contrast with the white primary volume characteristic of orthodox modernism. In this respect, in the exterior of the house, the use of contradictory materials with different textures and colors evoking the various senses such as; warmth, coldness, purity and earthiness enriches the perception of building. Similarly, from the entranceway to the inside of the villa, the materiality of the surface finish constantly changes from stone to tiles to timber and rugs, towards a more domestic and intimate senses. Furthermore, “The visual impact of the interior’s spatial flux is augmented by the sounds of floor surfaces that alternate between hard and soft, tile and wood, defining key moments of transition.”¹³³ “The interplay of antithetical surfaces, materials and details creates a rich and lively ambience that act as triggers to arouse bodily, muscular and haptic experiences.”¹³⁴

Throughout the villa, it is very possible to recognize the cohesion of a various contradictory and sensuously loaded materials and details. For instance, Aalto designed a number of unique door handles for the Mairea ranging from the technically motivated handle for closing and tightening the sliding glass wall, to the sculptured bronze pull of the main door, and tactile and inviting handles of the interior doors, bound with leather thongs.¹³⁵ One of the most significant

¹³³ Poole, Scott. "The Villa Mairea 1938-39." (2013): 5.

¹³⁴ Op. cit. Pallasmaa, 2005. 71.

¹³⁵ Pallasmaa, Juhani. *Alvar Aalto: Villa Mairea, 1938-39*. Helsinki: Ram Pubns & Dist, 2005. 66.

detail within the Alvar Aalto's collage is carved on the living room's fireplace. According to Richard Weston:

“Nowhere, perhaps, is the poetic expression more intense than in the fireplace. Thoroughly traditional in overall form and material, it is elaborated with the sensuous relief nicknamed “Aalto’s ear” by his staff at the time. Visually, this neatly resolves the potentially awkward juxtaposition of plastered block and glass, beautifully modulating the light as it enters the room. The overtly biomorphic form lends an intimate, unmistakably feminine quality to the symbolic heart of the home.”¹³⁶



Figure 4.4. Sculptured cast-bronze pull of main door. And sculpturally curved indentation on fireplace, "Aalto's Ear".

Source: Author's personal archive

“This playful combination of rich associations affords the ‘dweller’ the experience of sensuously loaded materials, stirring up feelings of intimacy and ‘nearness’.”¹³⁷ “The meeting of the object with the body of the user in this dynamic spatial encounter moves us and we are touched.”¹³⁸

¹³⁶ Weston, Richard. "Between Nature and Culture: Reflections on the Villa Mairea." *Alvar Aalto: Toward a Human Modernism*. Ed. Winfried Nerdinger. Munich: Prestel, 1999. 74.

¹³⁷ Quah, Grace. "Perceiving Touch: Exploring the Work of Alvar Aalto through Juhani Pallasmaa." (2013): 8.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.* 8.

In addition to the Villa Mairea's high tactile sensations, the emphasis on the quality of place is recognized as well. Frampton within his dualities, "space/place" explores a dynamic flow between space and place that provides the interrelation of architectural practice with its surrounding context. Similarly, Aalto does not conceive his works as a free-standing object, but as a related and identified by the components of place. Aalto realized this design idea in the Villa Mairea surrounded by a pine forest, by a development of architecture as an abstraction of forest. "The building is bound with the notion of nature on many levels: the use of natural materials and textures, forms suggestive of natural processes and rhythms as well as explicit metaphors of nature."¹³⁹



Figure 4.5. The entrance canopy of Villa Mairea.

Source: Author's personal archive

Arriving the villa after walking through pine forest, one encounters under the entrance canopy a screen of bamboo-like poles –the lashed and slanted structural supports alludes to trees in the woods, a sensitive mediator between the actual forest and the microcosmic forest inside the villa. Inside, the main staircase is a significant part of metaphoric forest, with its poles organized in irregularly spacing. "When the sun sets, the evening glow that comes through the large windows splits into many fractions in the screen of poles, as though

¹³⁹ Pallasmaa, Juhani. "The Fusion of Utopia and Tradition." *Mairea Foundation*. Web. 10 Dec. 2014. <<http://www.villamairea.fi/en/villa-mairea/architecture>>.

amidst a thick forest.”¹⁴⁰ The attempt to avoid architectural rhythm in the building is also seen in the structural columns all of which are individualized. In this respect the irregular arrangements of the elements inside and outside the villa have the character of the irregular rhythms of nature. Richard Weston explains the “forest space” as follows:

“Wandering around the living room, one experiences something very much akin to the feeling of wandering through the forest in which spaces seem to form and re-form around us: in a forest, the individual feels himself to be the moving center of its spaces.”¹⁴¹



Figure 4.6. Main staircase in the living room.

Source: Author’s personal archive

Within the design conception of Villa Mairea, both biological analogies and psychological dimensions were regarded in order to establish an architecture as a part of surrounding context, nature. “The sensitivity towards nature, deeply rooted in the culturally defined relationship with the landscape, achieves an intense sense of place, to adapt buildings to the surrounding landscape.”¹⁴²

Aalto’s sensitivity to the integration of architecture with surrounding context is highly inspired from Finnish tradition –Karelian wooden architecture– where

¹⁴⁰ Op. cit. Kim. 14.

¹⁴¹ Weston, Richard. "Villa Mairea." *Architecture in Detail*. London: Phaidon, 1992. quoted in op. cit. Kim. 15.

¹⁴² Forés, Jaime Ferrer. "Tradition in Nordic Architecture." *Arquitectura E Investigación*. Barcelona: Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya, 2013. 70.

nature is an essential aspect of the developing Finnish identity. He defines Karelian architecture as:

“Specific qualities, forms and working methods of natives, and those that arise in the natural surroundings, can be found in here. Karelian architecture is particularly valuable as a method of analysis to understand how we can bring in our regions, human life and its habitat built in the wilderness.”¹⁴³

Aalto combined these impressions derived from vernacular tradition in his work with modern language to create new meaning. For instance, according to Jaime Forés, Aalto applied the additive design principle of Karelian house, allowing to grow freely, to Villa Tvistbo:

“Aalto compared the “expanded Karelian house” to a “biological cell formation” and argued that this ability to grow organically was based on the vernacular practice of adding. The additive plan for Villa Tvistbo, 1944 was his most explicit attempt to reflect the organic growth of Karelian vernacular building. His idea of “the growing house” vernacular farmsteads were a paradigm for Aalto of architecture made close to nature.”¹⁴⁴

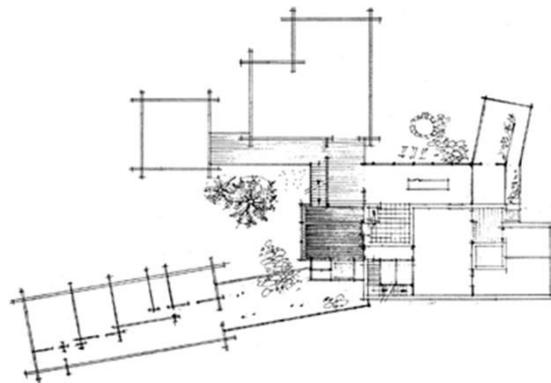


Figure 4.7. Sketch plan of the Villa Tvistbo

Source: Web. <<http://file.alvaraalto.fi/search.php?id=482>>

¹⁴³ Aalto, Alvar. "Karelian Architecture." *Alvar Aalto in His Own Words*. By Göran Schildt. New York: Rizzoli, 1998. 118.

¹⁴⁴ Op. cit. Forés, 2013. 66.

According to Pallasmaa, “Aalto used the modernist vocabulary in shamelessly unorthodox combinations with romantic, historicist, and folk motifs; however his motifs are not borrowings; they are re-creations and they merely hint at a possible origin elsewhere.”¹⁴⁵ “As a result, he could use motifs of history and vernacular tradition, combined with a modern language, and create architecture remarkably rooted in place and time.”¹⁴⁶ This design conception is in similar line with the strategy of defamiliarization formulated by Tzonis and Lefaivre in the notion of critical regionalism.

Furthermore, in his conception of critical regionalism, Kenneth Frampton points the significance of both “typology and topography” to create the architectural identity of region. For Aalto as well, “typology” is important because it emphasize social memory, the cultural evolution of human settlements as they adapt to place and react to certain regional qualities. “While the recurring presence of the courtyard or atrium space in Aalto’s building can be seen as a reference to an organizational type found in Finnish farm complexes and Scandinavian town halls, it also denotes a space of public action.”¹⁴⁷ This articulation of public realm recalls such remembered social spaces of agora, forum, and piazza.

In terms of topography, it could be said that Aalto’s design conception is based on the integration with the surrounding environment, at both physical and psychological level. According to Frampton his intuitive, biomorphically inspired approach to environmental design caused him to place an enormous emphasis on the capacity of built form to modify equally both the landscape and the urban fabric. In this regard he would have been sympathetic to the architect Mario Botta’s slogan, “building the site.” “All of Alvar Aalto’s sites were built in this topographical sense, and his achievements as an architect

¹⁴⁵ Op. cit. Pallasmaa, 2007. 134.

¹⁴⁶ Op. cit. Pallasmaa, 2007. 134.

¹⁴⁷ Miller, William. "Sources of Modern Eclecticism: Studies on Alvar Aalto." Rev. of *Sources of Modern Eclecticism: Studies on Alvar Aalto*. *JSAH* 43.4 (1984): 375.

cannot be separated at any stage of his career from his capacity as a designer of landscapes.”¹⁴⁸

Finally, for Aalto modern architecture should be synthetic phenomenon that covers all fields of human activities and should mediate man and surrounding context. This approach enhances our architectural experiences in a tactile and meaningful way. Moreover, his design conception offers the way where modernity and locality appear side by side within mutual reconciliation. Consequently, his architectural approach could be considered as an alternative answer to Ricoeur’s question: “how to become modern and to return to sources.”

4.2. JØRN UTZON FROM DENMARK

This part analyses the Danish architect, “Jørn Utzon’s inspiring sensory architecture that pushes itself the limit of technology whilst retaining sensitivity of place and humanity.”¹⁴⁹ His architecture represents a remarkable example, in terms of integrating local architectural themes, traditional building techniques with contemporary understandings and methods to develop site-specific architecture. “The works of Jørn Utzon is characterized by instinctive and profound feeling for architecture of the ground: the desire to anchor the building to the physical reality and memory of territory.”¹⁵⁰ As he acknowledged that, behind the Utzon’s Nordic sensibility to surrounding context, there is a great influence of Alvar Aalto and his teachers in Royal Danish Academy of Fine Arts; Kay Fisker, reinforcing the concept of tectonic integrity, and Steen Eiler Rasmussen, providing a formative phenomenological influence.

¹⁴⁸ Op. cit. Frampton, 1998. 121.

¹⁴⁹ Sparks, Duncan. *Understanding the Vernacular Culture*. 2011: 32.

¹⁵⁰ Op. cit. Forés, 2013. 63.

Utzon was highly interested in the inherently topographic aspect of architecture and strove to project a global building culture that would “exploit technological advances while simultaneously responding to the contours of a particular site and the latent expressivity of a specific program.”¹⁵¹ Utzon move the topographic sensibility in architecture a step further by generating his opposition of “earthwork” versus “roofwork.” These are the two seminal principles of his architecture that cannot be separated at any stage of his career. “First, the recovery of the roof-form, hitherto largely repressed in the Modern Movement with its fixation on the flat roof, and, second, the equally intrinsic import of the earthwork as a necessary landform capable of integrating a structure into the surface of the earth.”¹⁵²



Figure 4.8. Kingo Housing general site plan, 1956, Helsingør, Denmark.

Source: Prip-Buus, Mogens. *Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. I: The Courtyard Houses*. Bløndal, 2004.

The validity of his approach is highly demonstrated in two low-rise, medium density housing schemes built in north of Copenhagen, between 1956 and 1963: Kingo and Fredensborg residential settlements. Both housing developments are based on single story atrium typology consisting of L-shaped courtyard units covered by monopitched roofs and arranged in adjacent clusters

¹⁵¹ Frampton, Kenneth. "The Architecture of Jørn Utzon." *The Pritzker Architecture Prize*. Hyatt Foundation, 2003. Web. 13 Dec. 2014.

¹⁵² Op. cit Frampton 2003.

with the high potential to place on any topography. This “difference in orientation not only remained faithful to the topography but also allowed for a more dynamic placement of the houses which comprised both earthwork and roofwork into one single module.”¹⁵³ At the same time, this topographical sensibility of Utzon’s architecture which make Kingo housing a site-specific project, would be an exemplary answer to Kenneth Frampton’s topography concern in the notion of critical regionalism.



Figure 4.9. Kingo Housing aerial view, 1956, Helsingør, Denmark.

Source: Prip-Buus, Mogens. *Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. I: The Courtyard Houses*. Bløndal, 2004.

His interest in courtyard typology housing was based on his own experiences. For instance, according to Carlos Jimenez, “his family house in Ålborg had a nursery garden in front and neighbors all had huts, sheds or some kind of shelters for a variety of activities –raising rabbits, boat-building, or simply storing items for family activities moreover; traditional Danish farmhouses had four sheltering sections set around a central courtyard.”¹⁵⁴ Furthermore, throughout his life, Utzon visited foreign cultures many times, and was also highly inspired from their traditional architecture. For instance, “in Morocco, Utzon was greatly impressed by the cohesion and architectural integrity of the mountain villages of courtyard houses built entirely with local clay, unifying

¹⁵³ Birlain, Armando, and Clara Goitia. "Thin Air between Ground and Sky: Jørn Utzon's Additive Architecture." 2011. Web. 13 Nov. 2014.

¹⁵⁴ Jimenez, Carlos. "Jørn Utzon 2003 Laureate." *The Pritzker Architecture Prize*. Hyatt Foundation, 2003. Web. 14 Nov. 2014

them with the surrounding landscape.”¹⁵⁵ “And he learned of a Turkish traditional building regulation that allowed no one to block the view of existing houses.”¹⁵⁶ Within the design of Kingo and Fredensborg residential settlements, Utzon combined the impressions derived from vernacular building tradition that was completely in harmony with place and materials; with modern language. Moreover, it should be noted that Jørn Utzon interested in “original primitive and vernacular architecture long before the subject was widely popularized by Bernard Rudofsky’s pioneering classic “Architecture without Architects” more than a decade later.”¹⁵⁷



Figure 4.10. Fredensborg housing aerial view, 1963, Zeeland, Denmark

Source: Web. <<http://www.pritzkerprize.com/sites/default/files/2003-w-011g.jpg>>

¹⁵⁵ Carter, Adrian, Henning Kirkegaard, and Roger Tyrrell. "The Nature of Tectonic Architecture and Structural Design." *Structures and Architecture: Concepts, Applications and Challenges*. Ed. Paulo Cruz. London: Taylor & Francis, 2013. 241.

¹⁵⁶ Op. cit. Jimenez, 2003.

¹⁵⁷ Op. cit. Carter, 2013.



Figure 4.11. Kingo Housing Open Areas, Helsingør, Denmark.

Source: Prip-Buus, Mogens. *Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. I: The Courtyard Houses*. Bløndal, 2004.

Moreover, the employment of interstitial greensward permeating the settlement, and entirely restricted to pedestrian use; provides a highly habitable environment for the inhabitants of Kingo and Fredensborg housing settlements. The courtyard house units were designed “in rows following the undulating terrain, providing a specific view and direct access to a green slope for each house, as well as the best situation possible for sunlight and shelter from the wind.”¹⁵⁸ Utzon likes to describe the arrangement of the houses as “like flowers on the branch of cherry tree, each turning towards the sun.”¹⁵⁹ The significance of sun for Utzon’s design could be derived from the fact that he often drew the sun in his sketches.

Nevertheless, the humane and socially responsive attitudes were more valuable design features than sensitivity to climatic conditions. In these settlements Utzon tried to create an intentional community where residents lives together with a high level of social cohesion and teamwork and shares common interest. For instance, after the construction of houses was completed, the open spaces

¹⁵⁸ Op. cit. Jimenez, 2003.

¹⁵⁹ Faber, Tobias. *Jørn Utzon, Houses in Fredensborg*. Berlin: Ernst & Sohn, 1991.

were planted by residents themselves collectively under the guidance of Utzon. “This was the start of the unique collaboration between architecture and residents, which played a very large part in the great success of the undertaking and helped to create the sense of unity between the residents.”¹⁶⁰ This common spirit has been preceded in this way. “Maintenance of the common areas was also undertaken by committees established among the residents, such as: green committee, lake committee, building committee. In addition, everyone according to their own wishes and abilities participates in working weekends, meetings and annual festivities.”¹⁶¹ Thus, Utzon’s idea to create an intimate community with satisfying living conditions turned into reality. These low-cost housing settlements very soon achieved a great success and they have been called “the finest Scandinavian examples of humane housing.”¹⁶² With reference to all these physical and social sensitivities, it can be asserted that these housing settlements provide a unique sense of place where life and community interaction exists. Additionally, Utzon’s concern to create a unique place, could also be explained by his own words.

“The partner is thus in the broad sense the place. On land it’s about a site and some surroundings –it may be by a forest or on a plain, with the wind conditions and the light that the place happens to offer, but at all events it’s a partner you have to relate to.”¹⁶³

Like Alvar Aalto, the metaphorical use of nature as an inspiration is evident in the works of Utzon. For instance, his design strategy –additive architecture– also apparent in the design scheme of Kingo and Fredensborg residential

¹⁶⁰ Prip-Buus, Mogens. *Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. I: The Courtyard Houses*. Bløndal, 2004. 61.

¹⁶¹ Ibid. 62.

¹⁶² Carter, Adrian. "Between Earth and Sky: The Work of Jørn Utzon, as an Exemplary Phenomenological Approach to Modern Architecture Made Concrete." Proc. of Architecture and Phenomenology: Second International Architecture and Phenomenology Conference, Kyoto. 2009. Web. 15 Nov. 2014.

¹⁶³ Utzon, Jørn. "On the Site as Partner." *Architect: The Work of the Pritzker Prize Laureates in Their Own Words*. By Ruth A. Peltason and Grace Ong-Yan. New York, NY: Black Dog & Leventhal, 2010. 92

settlements; derived from the growth of patterns of nature. “These projects demonstrate the degree of flexibility and freedom that can be achieved by using units and components to be developed in stages or continuously growing organically.”¹⁶⁴ The architectural critic Keld Helmer-Petersen emphasizes to Utzon’s affinity with nature:

“To this artist, there is no essential difference between a city organism and a plant organism. He deducts living truths from the construction of nature and reshapes them quickly into rough drafts of houses for human beings. His houses grow, like organism, they reflect the form of nature’s growth.”¹⁶⁵

The theme –nature as a source of inspiration was used variously in his works. For instance, Utzon’s proposal for Paustian showroom in Copenhagen was an allusion to the birch woods and the experience of their light-filled openings. “The project –Paustian showrooms suggests a forest-in: a Danish birch wood is like a hall of columns, which dissolves upwards in a network of branches and in the tree tops which make up the roof of this hall of trees.”¹⁶⁶ In the dimness of the forest, clearings have the effect of overhead light.

¹⁶⁴ Beshir, Tarek. "Architecture Beyond Cultural Politics: Western Practice in the Arabian Peninsula." Thesis. MIT, 1993. 30.

¹⁶⁵ Petersen, Keld Helm. "Jorn Utzon: A New Personality." *Zodiac* 5 (1959): 70. Quoted in *Ibid* 25.

¹⁶⁶ *Op. cit.* Forés, 2013. 68.

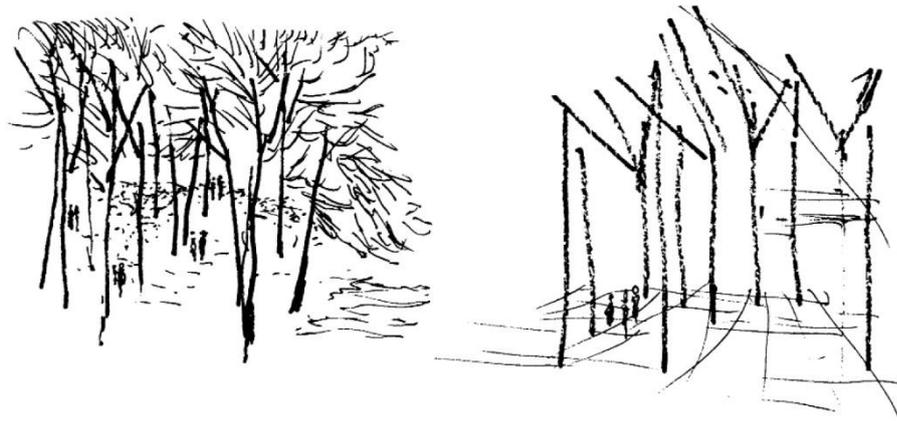


Figure 4.12. Paustian Showroom in Copenhagen suggest a forest-in, 1985

Source: Forés, Jaime Ferrer. "Tradition in Nordic Architecture." *Arquitectura E Investigación*. Barcelona: Universitat Politècnica De Catalunya, 2013. 63-72.

Nordic light passing through the clouds and foliage creates a unique poetic atmosphere with the mixture of light and shade. Utzon is very successful to discover these poetic metaphors in nature as a source of creative inspiration. This ability was also very evident in Bagsværd Church completed in 1976. His early sketches demonstrate that “the image of clouds is a strongly recurring motif in Utzon’s work, as exemplified by Bagsværd Church, where the interior is conceived as a spiritual space for the congregation to gather beneath billowing concrete ceiling vaults, as if under rolling clouds, through which diffused light enters.”¹⁶⁷ The relation between church and sky is experienced not only in the white washed, curved surfaces above the nave but also in narrow corridors with ridge skylights that enable to view sky.

Additionally the unique tactile character of the church are not limited with the diffusion of natural light through man-made clouds but involves the special acoustic experiences. “The church’s natural acoustics appear to have been created as the result of logical considerations of the geometry and the materials, so that they are experienced in harmonious relationship with the

¹⁶⁷ Op. cit. Carter, 2009.

church's lighting and tactile qualities."¹⁶⁸ Inside the church, it is felt that the main worship space is in itself a musical instrument. With reference to Kenneth Frampton, these deep spiritual experiences touch the man's tactile senses than merely visual, and enhance one's being there.

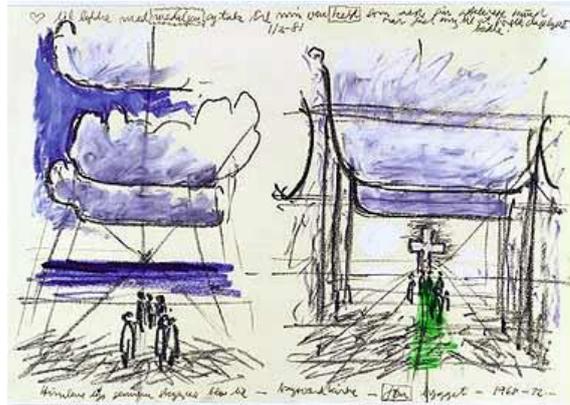


Figure 4.13. The two sketches show the transformation from a gathering on the beach under the clouds to a congregation framed by an abstract landscape of tree-like columns and “cloud-vaults”.

Source: Web. <<http://elearning.rcub.bg.ac.rs/moodle/mod/forum/discuss.php?d=479>>



Figure 4.14. Bagsværd Church interior, Copenhagen, 1976.

Source: Author's personal archive

In the case of defamiliarization method, one can refer to Utzon's The Kuwait National Assembly project built in 1972. For instance, in the roof of the

¹⁶⁸ Mortensen, Bo. "The Acoustics in Bagsværd Church." *Jørn Utzon Logbook Vol. II: Bagsværd Church*. Bløndal, 2005. 152.

assembly hall and the canopy of entrance square, he gave references to the traditional Bedouin tent. This is a remarkable echo of the billowing tent. According to William Curtis, “the conception of the sheltering roof invokes tribal memories to do with the princely tent of the elders.”¹⁶⁹ In his work, Utzon was inspired not only by formal structure of tent but also by the shadow underneath. As he explains:

“The dangerously strong sunshine in Kuwait makes it necessary to protect yourself in shade –the shade is vital for your existence– and the hall which provides shade for the public meetings could perhaps be considered symbolic of the protection a ruler extends to his people. There is an Arab saying: “When a ruler dies, his shadow is lost.”¹⁷⁰

Consequently, he adopted the inherited local patterns and integrated with modern language, thus developed architecture intensely rooted in particular place. “Utzon’s Kuwait National Assembly rest upon archetypes of its local society and translate these into a building that fuses new and old, regional and universal, and extends both modern movement and Middle Eastern traditions.”¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Curtis, William. "Towards an Authentic Regionalism." *Mimar 19: Architecture in Development*. Ed. Hasan-Uddin Khan. Singapore: Concept Media, 1986. 31.

¹⁷⁰ Utzon, Jørn. "A House for Work and Decisions: Kuwait National Assembly Complex." *Architecture in an Age of Scepticism: A Practitioners' Anthology*. Ed. Denys Lasdun. New York: Oxford UP, 1984. 222. Quoted in Ibid. 31.

¹⁷¹ Ibid 31.



Figure 4.15. (a) Kuwait National Assembly entrance canopy, 1972. (b) Traditional Bedouin tent.

Source: <http://www.archdaily.com/568821/ad-classics-kuwait-national-assembly-building-jorn-utzon/>

To conclude, throughout his career it can be noticed that “Utzon’s work embodies a visionary approach to architecture that is site specific and poetic, tectonic and humane; one that is informed by a profound appreciation of nature and openness to the diversity of human cultures, as a source of inspiration and analogy, combined with a sense of architecture as art and an innovative approach to the use of technology.”¹⁷² With these themes Utzon’s architectural conception is along the same lines of the critical regionalism that embraces the universal progressive aspects of modern architecture, while responds to social, cultural and physical contexts of particular region.

4.3. SVERRE FEHN FROM NORWAY

Like Aalto and Utzon, Sverre Fehn also could not be categorized within canonic modernism; each has achieved to break the codes and has developed his own interpretations. Moreover Fehn, “along with Norberg-Schulz, Grung, Mjelva and Vesterlid, all other Norwegian architects of the same generation, and Jørn Utzon formed an organization which was the Norwegian branch of CIAM, called PAGON (Progressive Architects Group Oslo Norway) that had a

¹⁷² Op. Cit. Carter 2009.

profound influence, creating architecture which had firm foundation in the modern movement, but was expressed in terms of the materials and language of their own region and time".¹⁷³ Thus, their individual interpretations are very different from the attitude of post war CIAM.

Within his projects, the most remarkable work is the Nordic Pavilion at Venice Biennale (1962), in which he has managed both to display the regional character and to remain on the path of modernity. In order to demonstrate the Nordic presence in this work, he focused on the unique quality of Nordic light. In north, the sun never rises the zenith, thus it creates a horizontal light which illuminates in soft glow with a shadow less character. According to Fehn:

“In the north you are moving in the fog, you are moving in a world which has no shadows, in a way where the shadows do not define anything. If you make a piece of architecture in the south of France or in Italy, the shadow is there immediately”.¹⁷⁴



Figure 4.2. Soft illumination of exhibition space, Nordic Pavilion, Venice, 1962

Source: Web. <<https://www.flickr.com/photos/panovscott/5916020635/>>

¹⁷³ "Sverre Fehn 1997 Laureate Biography." *The Pritzker Architecture Prize*. Hyatt Foundation, 1997. Web. 24 Nov. 2014

¹⁷⁴ Norberg-Schulz, Christian, and Gennaro Postiglione. *Sverre Fehn: Works, Projects, Writings, 1949-1996*. New York: Monacelli, 1997. Quoted in Neveu, Marc J. "On Stories: Architecture and Identity." *Architecture Norway*. N.p., 5 Mar. 2008. Web. 29 Dec. 2014.

This shadow less illumination of northern light that is specific for Nordic region, was portrayed in the pavilion where the exhibition space is illuminated by indirect light. In this project, Fehn has discovered a way to demonstrate the northern light character in a different context. He managed this light quality by means of concrete joists which covers the exhibition space in both directions and translucent fiberglass sheets fitted between joints. In addition to the articulation of the natural light, these elements also define the tectonic quality of the building as well.

As mentioned before, the close connection with nature is inherent in Nordic culture. Not surprisingly, the pavilion demonstrates that architecture and natural environment can coexist in harmony. The roof joists are not continuous, they are divided to provide openings for the growth of three existing trees. In order to serve the same purpose, the main beam that supports the roof joists is split in two, like form of “Y” letter. Moreover the curved fiberglass sheets fitted between joints collect the rainwater and direct it to water the plants within the pavilion. Lastly, the circulation scheme of the exhibition space is determined by existing trees rather than by walls. In fact, like column or wall, they have become the inevitable elements of the building, but they are living organism, grow and transform their appearance year by year. Simultaneously and more importantly they changes the visitor’s perception continuously.

Inside the pavilion, the employment of soft illumination of northern light, the existing trees growing continuously, and the water sound created while pouring from the roof, collectively create an aura that evokes the tactile senses of visitors and makes them feel Nordic presence. In this respect, “the concrete pavilion becoming a metaphysical house of the North and working as a play between light and the integration of nature.”¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁵ Phelan, Shane. *Sverre Fehn: Conducting a Nordic Light within the Venetian Climate*. Diss. Dublin School of Architecture, 2013.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The experience of modernity –the request for progressive change and development, with a high level of self-consciousness, the exclusion of everything that is stable- evokes responses in the field of architecture. These responses are collectively called as modernism. Because of the liberative and decentralizing origin of modernism, diverse approaches could participate in this enlightenment project. However, this broad and complex concept is reduced to a monolithic style that has a set of formal principles. Especially after the Second World War the built environments determined by simplistic, functional and universal ideals of International Style, were considerably abstract and homogenous. Due to the construction of similar buildings throughout the world, cities have lost their individual character and communication with inhabitants. The universalized and standardized architecture paid no attention to the physical and cultural needs of different cultures and regions.

As one of the alternative critical responses against the failures of International Style, an architectural discourse that takes cultural and historical references as the primary source of inspiration was put forward. These approaches urging to resist the homogenizing impacts of universal civilization, collectively referred to the idea of regionalism. Although this fundamental theme is common, the various approaches show themselves in several ways. These are summarized as –on the one hand- formalist expressions of past forms, sentimental and nostalgic mimesis of vernacular architecture or romanticism; on the other hand, critical approach toward the material and immaterial features of particular region. Therefore, the formation of regionalism includes the risk of being

reduced to stylistic expression, because of the fact that the line between two sides is very thin and delicate.

After an extensive survey about regionalism, one could conclude that the boundaries and the underlying sources of the regionalism are not clear. This ambiguity provides a possibility for many different approaches to legitimize themselves under the name of regionalism; since each ideology addresses its own desires within regionalism to reinforce its theory.

On the other hand, another controversial issue is whether making a clear description for the term regionalism is appropriate, since, the definition of regionalism is needed to be re-defined according to varying conditions in different physical, social and cultural contexts. Another problem with regionalism is the suffix –ism which implies the assumption of style or a set of aesthetic treatments. Additionally, the clear description might create a ground for a potential reduction to a monolithic style.

Regionalism intends to create a resistance against modernism; however it can be expressed that the presence of regionalism is dependent on modern architecture; since without a modern architecture, regionalism becomes only a representation of traditional and historical modes of building or a kind of symbolism associated with past.

In the second half of the twentieth century, architectural scene demonstrates a complexity where the idea of regionalism is interpreted in different ways. It displays itself either as a formal attempt or as an interpretation of the universal and rational architectural discourse. The former characterizes itself as a negation of modernism to retrieve lost values. This approach expresses itself as a postmodern architectural discourse. According to Tzonis and Lefaivre postmodernism claimed to replace modernism whose models and codes were seen as responsible for the many failures and discontents that characterized most building reconstruction and urban renewal projects realized since the end

of World War II. “At first, postmodernism enjoyed a meteoric rise in popularity; however within a decade it became clear that the postmodernist projects were failing in the same way as the modernist ones were, because like their modernist predecessors, postmodernists continued to impose dogmatic, universal, global models disregarding the environmental particularity, the social individuality, and cultural uniqueness of the places in which they were constructing their buildings.”¹⁷⁶ Furthermore, although the failures and discontents originated from the international style which can be considered as the misinterpretation of modern architecture, postmodernism as an anti-modernist position falsely accused the whole modern project. In addition, the revival of the past forms problematically set an alternative ground for legitimizing the demands of consumer society.

On the other hand regionalism is interpreted within the universal and rational architectural discourse. This interpretation shows that preservation of local differences could be possible in a sustainable way by reconciling with modern movement. It does not need to be contradictory. Moreover this approach seems to be the most suitable solution for the indifference of modernism to social and cultural domains. This architectural approach is consistent with the main argument proposed in this study that modernism and locality are not contradictory ends but they are compatible and integral concepts that present a mutual continuity. This approach which has become highly influential in the second half of the twentieth century refers to the concept of critical regionalism.

It is significant to distinguish critical regionalism from the attempts trying to revive the hypothetical forms of past. The critical position of the concept is provided only if critical regionalism dissociate itself from both the myth of progress and return to past. According to Frampton, “the fundamental strategy of critical regionalism is to mediate the impact of universal civilization with

¹⁷⁶ Op.cit. Lefavre and Tzonis. 2012. iix.

elements derived indirectly from the peculiarities of a particular place.”¹⁷⁷ Within the critical regionalism, the derivation of particular elements or place-defining elements to use an indirect way refers to the method of defamiliarization, whereas postmodern formulation of regionalism has embraced the method of familiarization which makes use of regional elements in the cultural memory to construct scenographic and familiarized scenes.

In this sense, one can consider “critical regionalism, not as a style, but as a critical category oriented towards certain common features or attitudes that embrace and emphasize specific characteristic of site, climatic conditions, geographic positioning, environmental context, and local cultural background expressed through unique structural compositions utilizing a contemporary architectural language, thus strengthening regional identity and contributing to the creation of place.”¹⁷⁸ In other words, critical regionalism embraces the universal progressive aspects of modern architecture, while responding to the social, cultural and physical contexts of particular regions. Consequently, it would evoke an experience of locality, place and identity; and create deep and enrooted contemporary built environment.

After a comprehensive study about Frampton’s critical regionalism, this thesis concludes that although all five points are important aspects for an architectural resistance, two of them –sense of place and tactile character- come to the fore, since their focus is centered around the issue of humane dimension. In other words they give modern architecture an opportunity to cover all fields of human activities and mediate man and surrounding context. By doing this they evoke deep spiritual experiences and enhance one’s sense of belonging. These principles also refers to phenomenological side of critical regionalism.

Especially after an extensive survey of the cases from Nordic region, it seems that these two points intimately take part in Nordic architecture more than other

¹⁷⁷ Frampton, Kenneth. 1983. 21.

¹⁷⁸ Frampton, Kenneth. 1992. 327.

ones. This definitely does not mean that Nordic architecture does not find its inspiration in the other points of Frampton's critical regionalism. On the contrary as mentioned before in the cases, the themes –topographic sensitivity, tectonic quality and natural techniques against the artificial ones are taken into consideration by architects. However sense of place and tactile character of architecture is more common in Nordic architectural practice.

For instance, in the Bagsværd Church, diffusion of natural light through man-made clouds and special acoustical experiences create a unique poetic atmosphere and evokes the tactile senses of human body rather than merely visual senses. Furthermore in Villa Mairea the relation between the actual forest and the microcosmic forest inside the villa; or in Kingo Housing the community system where residents lives together with a high level of social cohesion and teamwork achieves an intense sense of place.

Within this thesis, it is claimed that the source of Nordic architects' sensibilities is their ultimate relation with Nordic nature from their childhood onwards. Aalto defines this relation as "in communion with nature".¹⁷⁹ The natural wonder of aurora borealis seeming in the night sky, the immensity of forest, long rivers and lakes seen in most of the region and Norwegian fjords created by glacial erosion, even the coldness implicitly inspire Nordic man. Norwegian architect and theorist Norberg-Schulz defines this relation between site and man as follows:

"In our context "identification" means to become "friends" with a particular environment. Nordic man has to be friend with fog, ice and cold winds; he has to enjoy the creaking sound of snow under the feet when he walks around, he has to experience the poetical value of being immersed in fog."¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁹ Schildt, Göran. *Alvar Aalto, the Early Years*. New York: Rizzoli, 1984. 59. Quoted in Op. cit. Kim. 9.

¹⁸⁰ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Genius Loci: Towards a Phenomenology of Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1980. 21.

According to Norberg-Schulz these are the natural places that architects should get in touch with. Moreover he states that “a work of architecture is always related to a specific situation, but it also has to transcend this situation and make it appear as a part of a more comprehensive, meaningful totality.”¹⁸¹



Figure 5.1. Aurora borealis, Luleå, Sweden

Source: Author's personal archive



Figure 5.2. Sognefjord, Sogndal, Norway

Source: Author's personal archive

In addition to local sensibilities mentioned above, the interpretation of modernism by these architects is different as well. The origin of the formation of their attitude to modernism fundamentally depends upon the 1920s Nordic welfare state model which was based on the combination of capitalist economic system with leftist social ideals; midway between capitalism and socialism. This model has provided healthy and productive life to citizens. In Sweden, “a group of politicians, social visionaries, architects, and designers

¹⁸¹ Norberg-Schulz, Christian. *Meaning in Western Architecture*. New York: Rizzoli, 1980. 225.

joined forces around the idea of building the Swedish *folkshemmet*, or “people’s home,” a term that suggests the converging of continental modernism’s emphasis on housing with the idea of the welfare state.”¹⁸² Correspondingly, 1930 Stockholm Exhibition and in parallel to that Stockholm Housing Exhibition have been organized to display Nordic modernism. “Sigfried Giedion reported these exhibitions as the ultimate realization of modernist ideals, not least because the houses and apartments seemed both cheerier and more habitable than those at the Stuttgart Exhibition.”¹⁸³ Furthermore, for Eeva-Liisa Pelkonen, “what makes Swedish debates about tradition versus modernism in architecture interesting from a preservation perspective is that these debates attempt to resolve the contradictions between past and present by integrating them into seamless continuum.”¹⁸⁴

To conclude, these discussions mentioned above collectively refers to the main theme of this study that modernism and locality are not opposed poles but they are adaptable and inseparable notions which survive within each other. After a comprehensive survey of Nordic architecture through the Nordic architects, it is observed that the architectural conception in this region represents a remarkable example, in terms of integrating locally and culturally inherited patterns with contemporary understandings and methods to develop site-specific architecture.

Lastly, a few words could be said on the current use of the regionalism with regard to its contemporary validity. Because of the current developments in communication technology, and media; the elimination of the social, cultural and physical boundaries of the region is somehow enabled. The regional architectural codes and cultural patterns have begun to lose their existence.

¹⁸² Pelkonen, Eeva-Liisa. "Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption, and the Welfare State." Rev. of *Swedish Modernism: Architecture, Consumption, and the Welfare State*. *Future Anterior: Journal of Historic Preservation, History, Theory, and Criticism* 7.2 (2010): 124

¹⁸³ Op. cit. Pelkonen, 125

¹⁸⁴ Op. cit. Pelkonen, 125

However, with regard to the current discussion about the sustainability in architecture, along with the ecological sustainability, the cultural and the social sustainability have also begun to be reconsidered again. In this manner, locally developed architecture still has potential to provide sustainable solutions for the globalized world. Additionally the revival of hypothetical forms of past still serves the demands of consumer culture, especially in the developing countries. In this respect the establishment of a reconciliation between the universal progressive development and local practices in a critical way offers an alternative architectural position that could be re-visited.

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