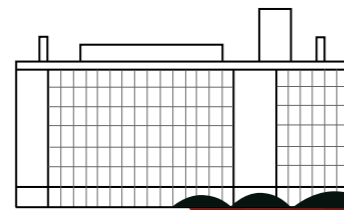


Le Corbusier's modular functions as an yardstick of measure, its envisioning of the measurable: what can be measured and applied in the making of social reality. Albert Einstein's comment on the modular was that it creates a "scale of proportions which makes the bad difficult and the good easy." The Modular saw little use beyond Corbusier's own work, though the principles applied at the Unité D'Habitation became a prototype for mass social housing and a blueprint for industrial methods of scaling basic human needs. Scaling involves interconnections, methods of connecting the small and big, the micro and macro harmoniously. In the globalised information age, the issue of scaling - of applying useable modules and the very concept of the modular becomes relevant anew as interconnections are being renegotiated in a piecemeal way at every level of society.

In this context a reworking of the modular in the digital age can serve as a modelling exercise of scaling a different form of cultural modular beyond late corporate capitalism and welfare state planning based on the development of what might be termed a complementary culture. The complementary as an idea resists the advancement of consumerism into the gaps left by the withdrawal of welfare state. Instead it evolves and scales up the social exchange network of a resource-based economy based on associational culture. This requires a rethink of the tools of economy, starting with the idea of money. To do so, we need to disentangle the concepts of Money, Market and Capitalism from each other - as separate entities which can connect in many ways. This does not imply wholesale social re-configuration as a prerequisite condition, but the building of new instruments for culture and social life forms which can grow by themselves within the skeleton of existing economic environments.



The global age has been paralleled by the shrinking role of the Modernist State as a guarantor of social provisions, the State's role replaced by new market economy formations led by information technology tools that penetrate deep into civil society and the privacy of individual lives. The tools of micro-social management made possible by technology have so enabled the making of a globalised consumer market in all social sectors. These tools have been revolutionary but the consequence has been the near-absorption of all cultural life into a single all-pervasive economic order that in effect determines all inter-relations between small and large. This in turn devalues the evolution of social and cultural possibilities that can not service a direct economic interplay between the global market and individual consumer. Out of this emerges the social and environmental contradictions that mark the reality of modern culture and its tools of management.

The economist John Kenneth Galbraith distinguished in simple terms between the market system - the world of thousands and thousands of traders, and capitalism - the world of a few hundred highly organised corporations based on establishing monopolies. The historian Fernand Braudel also separated the idea of the market from capitalism, drawing on the *economia pura* of Thomas Aquinas and the pre-industrial city where the density of trading between members of a community provided a coordinating dialectic between capitalism and non-capitalism. Modernity has progressively removed the social instruments of such trading patterns with disastrous consequences as they generated economic feedback spaces which coordinated the use of money as a tool of accumulation and speculation whilst playing a role in the provision of good and services in a parallel economy embedded in associational culture. What we have forgotten is that it is not essential that all forms of social and cultural life are contained within one economic environment but several which hold each other in reciprocal parallel exchanges.