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Copy-and-Paste

by
Zeynep Atas

A THESIS SUBMITTED
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MASTER OF ARCHITECTURE

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HOUSTON, TEXAS
MAY, 2005
ABSTRACT

Copy-and-Paste

by

Zeynep Atas

Copy-and-Paste is a self-sustaining system generating sameness in different locations. The same urban grid, the same outfit, the same house, the same car appear everywhere; copies of each other pasted all around.

Copy-and-Paste is there, unquestioned, and seem-to-be arbitrary.

This thesis explores and experiments copy-and-paste as a design method, applied strategically, considering the already existing condition and its own potentials, to create beneficial architectures and environments, while introducing a bit of disturbance to the system to turn it back over itself.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

TO
MY FAMILY, FOR THEIR ENDLESS SUPPORT:
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I LOVE YOU ALL.
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06. TO CONCLUDE
01_INTRODUCTION_ COPY-AND-PASTE
Copy-and-Paste generates sameness in different locations. Similarities are increasing, and slowly, difference is being replaced by homogenity.

The same suburban house appears everywhere, so does the same outfit, the same car, the same self phone, the same pair of shoes. Eiffel Tower is copied. There is a Ponte Vecchio in Las Vegas, together with a Sphinx and a Venice. The same urban grid is applied almost in every modern city without questioning anymore. There are fountains at every corner in Downtown, Houston belonging to lovely, lively images of *life around a fountain* in our minds. Mc Donald’s is everywhere.

Copy-and-paste is all around, unquestioned and seem-to-be arbitrary.

What is Copy-and-Paste essentially? How does this system work? What are the techniques of copying and pasting? Can something, that is seemingly arbitrary, have a structure in itself and become a driving force for a design? What if?

This thesis explores Copy-and-Paste, on the existing examples, through its techniques, and experiments it as a design method in both object and urban scales. The final project is designed by continuous Copy-and-Pasting, applied strategically, considering the already-existing condition and Copy-and-Paste’s own potentials, to create beneficial architectures and environments while introducing a bit of disturbance to the system to turn it back over itself:
02 BASIC COPY-AND-PASTE

INITIAL STUDIES

Following are the initial studies to have a general understanding of copy-and-paste through some of the everyday happenings.

The surface experiment(a,b) constitutes base for the argument.
02.01. 1. a.b in detail

Primary surface studies:
Predetermined transmitter and receiver environment.

a.b.3. Direct copy from an original and paste.

a.b.5. Degree of difference between the copy and the receiver effects the impact of copy-and-paste.
Serially reproduced ‘homes’, copies of each other, pasted all around, appear everywhere.
03_TECHNIQUE_COPY-AND-PASTE
There are three techniques to copy something:

1. Direct copy:
   One surface is created directly on the existing one.

2. Serial Reproduction:
   Many others are created from a prototype; there is no original or are all originals.

3. Reconfiguration of Information:
   Copies are created by reconfiguring the information (the location of control points, etc.) of the existing, the copy is reproduced from the existing, and becomes the existing for another copy. Each new one is a copy of the previous.
03.02 TO PASTE THE COPIED

There are three techniques to paste the copied:

1. Replacement:
   The previous condition is totally replaced by the paste.

2. Partial Replacement:
   The previously existing and the pasted exist together, both partially. The paste is superimposed on the existing.

3. Displacement:
   The paste displaces the existing. A new condition is formed as a result of the collision; a total hybridization of the previously existing and the pasted.
04_EXPIMENT COPY-AND-PASTE

APPLICATION: OBJECT

The following experiment applies Copy-and-Paste observing the effects on a real life object.

Umbrella is taken as an already serially-reproduced object. Copy-and-Paste is applied, first on the umbrella-object, directly, creating a system of umbrellas on a certain site(a flat site), for a certain problem(creating shadow).

Then the system is taken as a given and directly Copy-and-Pasted on another site having different characteristics(topography).

ADAPTATION observed in the unit,object-umbrella,,through its variables, to keep the system working under changing conditions.

To take the experiment further, the adapted-system is taken as given this time, and Copy-and-Pasted on another site, having same characteristics with the first one, creating a second order Copy-and-Paste.

Copy-and-Pasted is Copy-and-Pasted again and again upgrading orders continuously.

Through ADAPTATION, the object-umrella De- and Re- CONTEXTUALIZEs itself.
OBJECT

VARIATION

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE00</th>
<th>ACTION01: copy-and-paste of the object</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>STATE01</td>
<td>ACTION02: copy-and-paste of the system</td>
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An umbrella as a serially reproduced object

Continuous copy-and-paste of the serially reproduced object of the umbrella to create a system of copy-and-paste

The system of the state01 is wholly copy having a differ as introduced-base adaptation in order.
the system of the state 01 is wholly copy-pasted on another site having a different topography adaptation is introduced-base adaptation in order to make the system work.

the system of the state 02 is taken as given and copy-pasted on another site creating a 3rd order copy-paste/datacopy of the core object varieties in order to adapt to the existing site conditions and in order to make copy-paste work.

the system of the state 03 is taken as a given and copy-pasted on another site with a different topography, creating a 3rd order copy-paste on a small hill. Umbrella starts to decontextualize itself.
OBJECT

VARIATION

conditions:// houston.august.2.p.m.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATE00</th>
<th>STATE01</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><img src="image1.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
<td><img src="image2.png" alt="Diagram" /></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**action01** serial copy-and-paste of the object

| an umbrella as a serially reproduced object | continuous copy-and-paste of the serially reproduced object-umbrella to create a system of copy-and-paste |
>> action02 copy-and-paste of the system

STATE02

the system of the state01 is wholly copy-and-pasted on another site having a different topography adaptation is introduced-base adaptation- in order to make the system work
>> action03 copy-and-paste of the already-copy-and-pasted[2nd order]

STATE03

the system of the state02 is taken as given and copy-and-pasted on another site creating a 2nd order copy-and-paste/copy of the copy object variates in order to adapt to the existing site conditions and in order to make copy-and-paste work
action04 copy-and-paste of the already-copy-and-pasted[3rd order]

STATE04

the system of the state03 is taken as a given and copy-and-pasted on another site, having a different topography, creating a 3rd order copy-and-paste on a small level umbrella starts to decontextualize itself
Copy-and-Paste has its own potentials:

1. **INDIFFERENCE**: technically, anything can be copied and pasted to any location. Even the most unrelated things can end up being right next to/on top of hybridizing with each other.

2. **DICHOTOMY**: while homogenizing by reproducing the same, Copy-and-Paste creates difference in the big scale. Difference within the whole is created by continuous repetition of a piece.

While generating beneficial architectures and environments, it is those potentials of Copy-and-Paste to introduce disturbance to the system to turn it back over itself by striking, with continuous repetition and unrelated togetherness, its very piece and amnesiac creator, the human being.

Following, the Final Project of this thesis, applies Copy-and-Paste experimenting its techniques and the concepts derived from the previous object-umbrella experiment, ADAPTATION, DECONTEXTUALIZATION AND RECONTEXTUALIZATION, on an urban scale considering the already existing condition and Copy-and-Paste's own potentials:
05.01 SITE ANALYSIS

_COURT COMPLEX PLAZA-HOUSTON/DOWNTOWN

Site selection is done randomly; any site having any kind of certain problem.

The future plaza of Harris County Court Complex:

Surrounded by Harris County Court Buildings, there is a 24 hour, tremendous, for Houston standards which are really low, amount of human activity to which the site does not respond at all.

Besides, it is a nominee to be another one of the vacant but green lots, and revitalization hopes of Downtown which, in itself, is a strong example of the system-work Copy-and-Paste activity, with its generic urban grid, generic skyscrapers and continuously growing number of fountains copied from the city lives in which they work perfectly.

Anything that has been done in Downtown for its revitilization, including the erection of fountains, does not work as none of them is based on the existing facts of the city and the way Houstonians live.
>>SUPERIMPOSITION
PROPOSAL.

THREE LAYERS:
PARKING LOT
SHORTCUTS FOR PASSERS-BY
POTENTIAL WAITING SPOTS
05.02 DESIGN PROCESS

This project is designed by continuous Copy-and-Pasting.

The process goes by Selection, Copy-and-Paste, and Adaptation.

The main line of Copy-and-Paste and Adaptation, which goes on top, is the system's continuous Copy-and-Paste over itself, creating the necessary infrastructure for the design.

The secondary line, going along the bottom, represents the external unit Copy-and-Paste to the system.

Black represents the first order Copy-and-Paste while the second order is shown by red color.

SELECTION happens on plan. Following COPY-AND-PASTE, ADAPTATION occurs:

the pasted, re-formed by it, displaces the existing; the garden has split into several parts up and down; the paths of the garden go nowhere; the restaurant has cut into pieces, each begin to function as one etc.
<table>
<thead>
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<th>1.2 ENTRY/HUMAN CIRCULATION</th>
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<td>1.1.1 EXISTING</td>
<td>1.2.1 SELECT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1.2 COPY-AND-PASTE</td>
<td>1.2.2 COPI</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

[Diagram of various patterns and structures, labeled 'ZERO' on the bottom left and '1 FIRST ORDER UNIT COPY AND PASTE/VARIATION/UNIT FLIPS' on the bottom right.]
3.4 MOTIVATION: FOOD

3.4.1 SELECT 3.4.2 COPY-AND-PASTE 3.4.3 ADAPTATION

FIRST ORDER EXTERNAL UNIT COPY-AND-PASTE/UNIT + SYSTEM ADAPTATION
05.03 A BENEFICIAL ARCHITECTURE/ENVIRONMENT

_FINAL DESIGN
06_TO CONCLUDE:

My thesis, ‘with the goal of transforming’ the processes of Copy-and-Paste ‘from habitual and blindly repetitive procedures to perceptive and productive ones, has undertaken the exploration and analysis of the forces and operations by which the architectural elements and surfaces are replicated and transpositioned’¹ and adapted into different sites and the already-existing conditions. It aims to create more thoughtful, beneficial and slightly disturbing architectures and environments.

Copy-and-Paste experiments has to be continued with a series of different Copy-and-Paste generated projects in order to have a more general point of view on the topic.

¹ Nana Last, Thesis Director.
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HOUSTON DOWNTOWN MANAGEMENT DISTRICT