

ABSTRACT

The Natural as a Reference

Faced with the climatic crisis, the modern grand narrative of progress has given way to two narratives: One techno-optimistic and another of idealised nature. We inherit the duality of nature and culture from the modern postulate and the architectural critical theories of the twentieth century. In design, standards compete with societal injunctions in terms of energy efficiency or ecological best practices. Designers struggle in this context where both narratives make the relationship with the environment abstract. An abstraction reinforced by the architect's conceptual training and the digital representation tools. Architects, by precept, "have to" create an object from which emanates a plastic force, an aesthetic achievement, they make a "work" of architecture. By making those conceptual intentions clear, architects distinguish their object from a simple construction, at the risk of no longer having a link with the cultural or environmental context.

A narrative field is opened up, made up of an interweaving of nature and culture

In order to avoid abstraction from the complexity of the relationship between nature and culture and the subject-object, we feel it is necessary to explore an intermediary path, as defined by Bruno Latour (1991). Evoking and provoking "natural" experiences, seems to be a way to design situations rather than try to describe a finished architectural object in an exhaustive manner. Referred as "concrétude" by Augustin Berque (2014), these experiences link the individual and their environment by accepting a degree of uncertainty of interactions. The "natural movement" created by this uncertainty would make the built environment a "milieu". This approach, which can be observed in some professional practices, needs to be structured in order to develop this intermediary field and to draw a narrative framework from it.

Structure this intermediate field to define an architectural ecopoetics

We therefore propose to rely on the "open work" process (Eco, 1962) and add to it references of these "concrétude" experiences. These include material and immaterial resources and their ecological perceptions from the beginning of the design process. These resources and their poetics of relating define a narrative field guiding the project and the designer, an open structure that aims to go beyond simple figuration. We will also draw on materiality, as suggested by Deleuze (1981), particularly from his analysis of the painter Francis Bacon. This open structure ecopoetics is then attached to references linked to the human experience of the environment, as well as to matter and the imprint of time.

Ecopoetics and architectural plasticity

Natural materiality and human imprint, cyclical time, temporalities of use, affordance of matter and places, etc. (Gibson, 1979), are all resources for situations imagined by designers and are free of interpretation by the practitioners of these spaces. This redefines an architectural plasticity that is more processual than a fixed aesthetic composition. A redefinition linked to the natural movement of human experience includes in an architectural ecopoetics as an open narrative framework of design.