

The Oecodesignator: The Ecocentric Environmental Design Professional

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Abstract

The environmental design professions are having a difficulty redefining their practice for the next millennium, especially with current circumstances that question the validity and efficacy of their respective practices. A paradigm shift, brought about by concepts from fields outside the environmental landscape profession can contribute to a holistic approach and conduct of their respective practices that will address sustainability of a designed and built project, as well as the true integration of all these professions into what we can call generically as the oecodesignator. Rather than competing professions, the new paradigm espouses the concept that they are all of the same breed, utilizing the same thought processes to attack a spatial and environmental problem, but differing only through the context filter and language that one opts to use.

Introduction

At the dawn of this new millennium, the architects, the planners, the landscape architects, the interior designers, and others - collectively the environmental design professionals - seem to be confronting an identity crisis. In the local context, this questioning of roles has been brought about by occurrences that span through different professions. The Cherry Hill slope failure; deterioration or planned destruction of cultural landscapes like the Ifugao Rice Terraces and the Chocolate hills of Bohol, respectively; massive traffic jams in the metropolis; people in the provinces commuting to the city to work; people from Manila heading for the industrial estates to work; the demolition of the Jai Alai building; the ongoing changes to portions of Mehan Garden. Many more seemingly unrelated episodes touch one or more environmental design profession, and this has led some to introspection. How must our profession act? What seems to be lacking to our practice? What must our vision be to see how we can serve the nation in the next millennium?

Clues to this answer seem to stem from outside the world of environmental design profession, but from the biologists, linguist, environmental activist, social geographers, environmental psychologists, the traditional cultures of the world, ultimately from the earth and the cosmos itself. How can this be? Some salient points are discussed below.

Ecocentrism and the Ecological Matrix Model

O' Riordan (1976)¹ defines *ecocentrism* as a philosophy based upon ecological principles, which advocates the reverence, humility, responsibility, and care (of the world's resources)². This philosophy is the seeming culmination of a shifting world view from the rampant consumerism, which proliferated after the Second World War, a time frame we commonly know as the Baby Boom Era³. By adopting this worldview, man is considered as co-equal with other beings or elements of this earth, accorded with the same level of respect as he used to mete only to himself and his products (physical or abstract). This supercedes the view of man as ascendant over other beings, or an anthropocentric philosophy. Man, then, is not an entity distinct from surroundings, nor is he the manipulator of resources immune to feedback accruing from his actions. Man is an active participant, just as the other elements are, in the dynamic processes occurring in the environment.

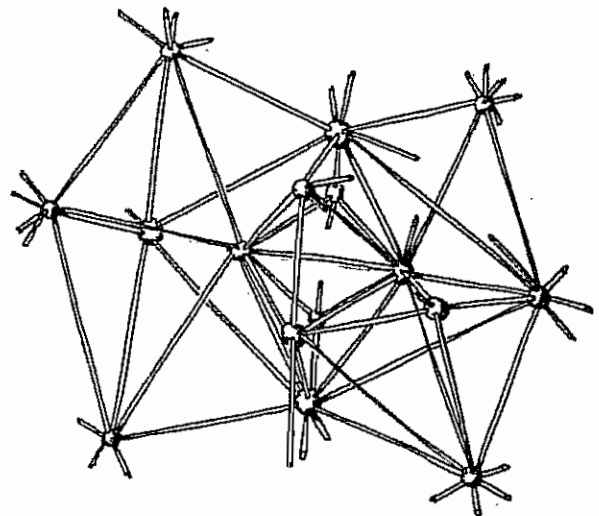


Figure 1 - Ecological Matrix Model

The implication of this emerging worldview is that all distinguishable elements within the environment (not *man vs. nature*), are inexorably linked with the other elements, and any change experienced by any element will impact

some or all other elements. This interconnected relationship can be shown in an "ecological matrix" model (Figure 1). The totality of the environment is approximated by the polyhedron itself. Each corner of the polyhedron represents each element in the environment. The more interacting elements present, the more corners (or sides) the polyhedron possesses. Lines with arrows show the links or relationships between elements and directional arrows represent the reciprocative interaction between elements. The interaction does not have to be limited between two elements. A reaction can trigger a series of stimulus-reaction cycles that will eventually manifest itself in the whole polyhedron. The occurrence of a continuous series of events, triggered by several events affecting each other does occur in nature, as suggested in the currently accepted *non-equilibrium paradigm* in ecological systems, wherein nature is changing constantly.^{iv}

This early on (and consistent with the ecocentrist's viewpoint), one should realize that if any central point exists within the polyhedron, it couldn't represent man. Rather, the sun most likely should be the element to occupy this central spot as it is the most significant source of (solar) energy that powers most of the processes in the biosphere.

Units and units of polyhedrons can coalesce to form a "superpolyhedron," just as a conglomeration of small environments makes up a "super-" or global environment. This is consistent with the concept of hierarchies of scale in ecological units. Theorists propose that the smallest recognizable unit of almost homogenous character is the *ecotope*; followed by the larger scale called the *ecosystem*; and culminating into largest scale called the *ecosphere*, which is the thin, life supporting crust of the earth where life is supported and elements interact. Note, however, that a "unit environment" is a human concept, a definition that has meaning only to man. The interconnections between elements or distinguishable environments can be so vast that the only recognizable environment might be the "superenvironment" itself.

Homo Environmentus

The cause for difference between ecocentrism and anthropocentrist/technocentrist point of view is the relationship of man with respect to the other elements of the globe. This becomes the key for understanding a paradigm shift, which affects the practice of man the basic environmental design professionals.

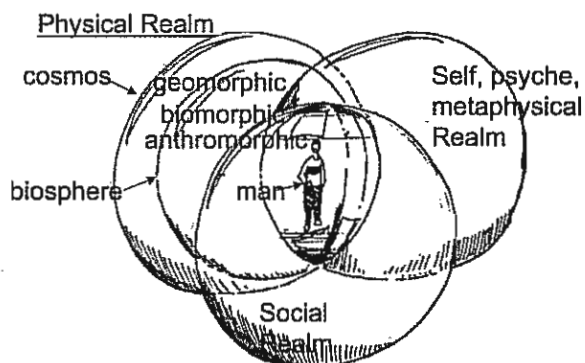


Figure 2 - Homo Environmentus

Should man realize his position as equal to that of the other elements, and that his actions (or what others would refer to as *anthropogenic impacts*) will affect other elements, it follows in the ecocentrist's point of view that an ethos akin to an ecological conscience^{vi} will be developed. Henceforth, this conscientious man will strive to make its impact environmentally benign. This member of the environment can be called *Homo environmentus* (Figure 2).

Homo environmentus is an element within the ecological matrix polyhedron. Man (for this illustration, in the center of everything) takes in a "stimulus" from the other elements of the environment, consciously or unconsciously. The stimulus can be physical or psychosocial, tangible or an abstraction. A conscious or unconscious output from man will constitute a reaction, completing a stimulus-reaction cycle of interaction between the linked elements of the matrix.^{vii}

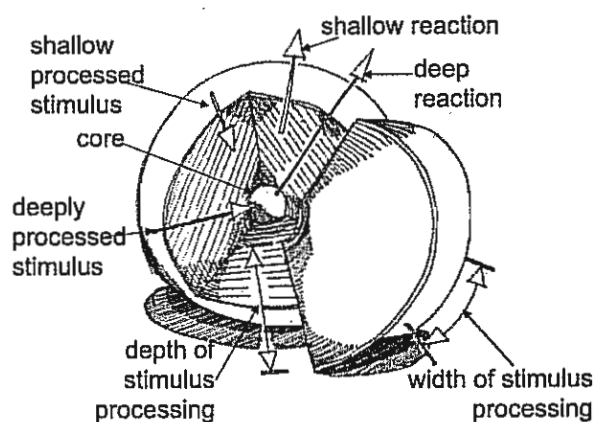


Figure 3 - A stimulus processing model

Homo environmentus engages in a stimulus processing method prior to manifesting a reaction (Figure 3). At the very least, stimulus processing operates in two dimensions. The first is the level of consciousness given to a stimulus,

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thereby affecting the quality of the subsequent reaction. At the very basic level, any element can sense^{viii} a stimulus, and the said element reacts without any conscious effort.^{ix} On the other hand, *Homo environmentus* has the capability of being unconscious or highly conscious of the stimulus (thus, the previous statement applies). *Homo environmentus* can examine the stimulus, form conclusions, innovate and possibly invent from it. *Homo environmentus* seems able to process a stimulus from the most basic level to the deepest level. One can make a calculated reaction. The level of stimulus processing has relevance to the output of the design professional, as will be discussed later.

Another dimension is the tendency of *Homo environmentus* to produce a highly conscientious or pro-active output. The lesser the level of conscientiousness, the closer the reaction gets to become a basic, reactive one with limited relevance. A proactive reaction tends to address a wider variety of issues, thus making the output relevant to more elements in the polyhedron, and consequently more significant to the totality of the polyhedron. Again, this has implications in the conduct of the design professional.

The Oecodesignator

A conscious, purposeful element (as man sees his fellow man, anyway — another bit of inevitable anthropocentrism) man has striven to make his impact on the earth to his benefit. Is there any better reason why the design professionals as well as the farmers, shepherds, and hunter-gatherers exist? As Constantin Doxiadis (1967), the planner and originator of *ekistiks*^x claims, only one subject within the realm, which he calls *anthropocosmos*, is of primary importance: man as an individual.^{xi} It follows then that the goals and objectives of man are for the betterment, preservation, and continuity of man's health, life and happiness.

However it can be contended that the design professionals are members of *Homo environmentus*. Although they hold the ethic espoused by Doxiadis for man, they should also possess an ethos of according equal importance to the other elements of the ecological matrix. Being *Homo Environmentus*, means internalizing or living the life of an "eco-conscious," "eco-conscientious" element — thereby infusing one's daily work with an active ecological philosophy. The landscape architect, architect, city planner, interior designer, landscape gardener, builder of indigenous or vernacular houses — assuming all behave as *Homo Environmentus* — will take in the various stimuli that the environment offers them (recall Figure 2), process the stimuli and, depending on the level of processing, produce an output conscientiously — a plan, a project, a home, a garden, a treatise, and numerous other possibilities. It seems apropos to call this breed of *Homo environmentus* the *oecodesignator* (pronounced oi /ko /de /sig /ua /tor)^{xii}.

A closer look at the model would reveal processes that are brought to bear upon a stimulus so that *Homo*

environmentus can comprehend it, find its place and its importance in his understanding of the world (world view), and associate an appropriate design treatment (or non-treatment, as will be explained later) for it. Note, though, that the model does not claim to represent all the processes that is used, nor is the hierarchal arrangement definitive. More importantly, though, the same process or set of processes are used regardless of which design profession one chooses to practice. There is congruence in the thought process, and it breaks through the seemingly insurmountable distinction or separation between design professionals. Man the planner goes through the same type of stimulus processing as man the interior designer. Man the architect thinks along the same lines as man the landscape architect as they problematize the issues of their respective design assignments. The division is blurred, their vocations occasionally overlap and complement, all for a common goal of producing an environmentally benign, widely relevant and highly significant output contributed to the ecological matrix. The accomplished *oecodesignator* will strive to process the stimulus at the deepest level, and at a most conscientious or proactive manner, so to speak, to deliver the most appropriate output for the ecological matrix.^{xiii}

How can the current, seemingly insurmountable, distinction between design professionals be rationalized? These would be the effect of what can be called *context filters* (Figure 4) as well as the *lungunge* selected by the *oecodesignator* to express himself, or his output.

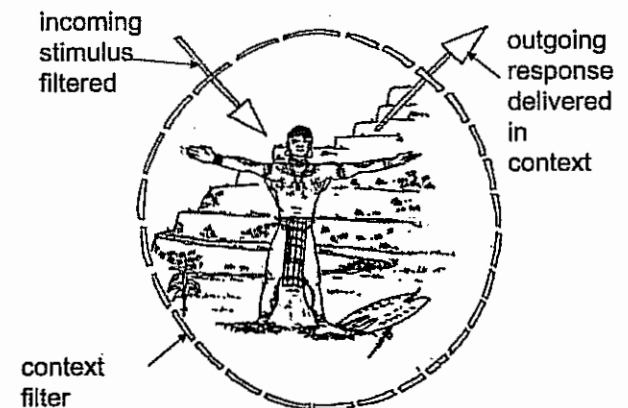


Figure 4 – Context filter

The context filter screens both incoming stimuli and the outgoing product. The screening of inputs can be a trained activity (through the formal education of a professional, or the unseen social pressures brought to bear on a member of a tribe) or by choice (one chooses to deal with either a wider or narrower range of issues). More often than not, the context filter helps the *oecodesignator* to focus on certain relevant issues, lest the individual be too involved and too

distracted to render him inutile. In the orthodox practice of the design professions, the designers tend to filter their concerns and be specialists on certain aspects of the designed environment, i.e., the architect for buildings and most structures, the interior designer for the spaces within the structures, the landscape architect for the green outdoors, and the urban designer for the outdoors and the total physical form of the built environment.

Those that are capable of confronting a wider range of inputs by choice tend to produce a better output. The author speculates that this significant ability can be learned through time. Meanwhile, screenings of outputs tend to be a more conscious activity as the type, appearance, or form of the output is closely related with the language chosen to express the output.

Language is defined as a systematic means of communicating ideas or feelings by the use of conventionalized signs, sounds, gestures, or marks having understood meanings.¹⁴ In the context of the design professions, say landscape architecture, the manner in which movement of people is suggested, the various choices of activities offered to people in public spaces (or other organisms in a certain setting), the choice of plant and construction materials, the arrangement of spaces --- all these become our signs, our symbols, our words and compositions. In short, they are our vocabulary to express the output. Architects, interior designers, city planners, informally trained garden designers, and builders of indigenous houses have their respective peculiar languages; in a loose sense, these are jargon. Those equipped with a limited range of languages tend to have a limited arsenal with which to express their output. Those with similar languages tend to adapt easily to another form of expression, facilitating an easy crossover between professions. In fact, the *oecodesignator* does not need to confine oneself to a single "orthodox" design profession because, as one may recall, the same manner of processing stimuli is shared by all *oecodesignator*. As such, he should be able to transcend orthodox boundaries. It is only in the ease (or difficulty thereof) in making oneself proficient to another set of language that makes or breaks the ability of the *oecodesignator* to perform design tasks spanning across boundaries of the orthodox professions. Consequently, the integration of professions is abetted further by this emerging ecocentric worldview. Following this outlook, it will seem presumptuous for one design professional to profess the incapability of another design professional to comprehend the former's practice.

The Oecodesignator and the Environmental Design Profession

How, then, can this proposed paradigm for the ecologically conscientious design professional and, say, the "orthodox" landscape architecture practice? To do so, O' Riordan's definition of ecocentrism is recalled.

O' Riordan uses the terms reverence, humility, responsibility, and care as qualities operant in an ecocentric individual. Reverence is awe or fear. It translates to an attitude of respect, in our context, towards any element of the ecological matrix, or towards the matrix itself. Reverence also alludes to things metaphysical --- the spirit, the supernatural, the presence of gods or a one true God --- while perceiving the environment. The ecocentric attaches sacred meanings to elements of the environment, and consequently treats these said elements with respect, not as mere commodities for consumption. The ecocentric takes only what one needs, and in turn make available to the other elements of the matrix the stuff they need which gives them their identity. That is why enduring, benignly consumptive, traditional cultures (or what other would call ethnic, or indigenous cultures) and the habitat they dwell in tend to manifest ritualistic relationships with the world. The world is not a food basket but an awesome gift from the Creator and must not be wasted wantonly.¹⁵

Humility is the absence of pride or self-conceit. In doing so, the concern for oneself is not prioritized over and above, again in our context, the concerns of other elements of the matrix. Ideally then, the needs of each and every element are considered equally. Restraint is exercised in pursuing an unnecessary need, a want. Concomitant to this, wisdom is exercised to distinguish between a need and a want.

Responsibility is the ability to distinguish right from wrong, as well as the assumption of accountability for any deed done. In the ecocentric viewpoint, value judgements translate to appropriateness of action toward the context or situation the environment is in. This is made clearer if one takes into account the approach that a technocentric will most likely apply. That is, by putting more faith on the sophistication of his technology. Thus, the issue of an action's appropriateness vs. sophistication comes into play. By having the ability to distinguish which action is most suited to the ecological matrix, the *oecodesignator* exercises responsibility for his impact.

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Finally, *care* is the act of watching over, protecting, or having custody over (in our context, the ecological matrix). Caring for and protecting an element is also ensuring its existence, or survivability. In the extreme, it can refer to life and death (for living elements) or existence (for non-living elements) considerations.

In summation, O' Riordan's definition establishes for us the considerations that the oecodesignator can at least undertake as one perceives and interacts with the ecological matrix at all spatial scales. In the order of importance, these are:

- **SURVIVABILITY** (*care*). These are considerations that cater to the very basic, survival or physical existence of any element. It can be the sustenance of the hydrologic processes governing the La Mesa watershed, as well as the sanitary considerations for the benefit of one element we call man.
- **NEEDS** (*reverence*) of an element in order to exist, accessing only one's NEEDS and not gather the unnecessary. This pertains to psychical needs, which defines an element's being. The concern for water quality not just for sanitary reasons, but also for the very intrinsic, basic quality that it gives to water. Turbid water, albeit potentially potable, is usually accorded a lower quality by man, than clear water.^{xvi} The displaced Badjao must be near the sea or a similar element he can relate with to be a Badjao, if an intrinsic value is attached to his traditional culture.^{xvii} This also pertains to the recognition of what the needs are as opposed to what the wants are. Although this would require a big leap of faith for some because the oecodesignator appears guilty of "anthromorphizing" elements, it not without precedence nor is this an invalid attitude to assume, as shown by Feng Shui, Vaastu Shastra^{xviii}, and the 'six senses approach' by renowned landscape architect and environmental psychologist Clare Cooper Marcus.^{xix} Interestingly, all three thoughts give premium to respect as an attitude to bear in order for these thoughts to succeed in site planning.
- **WANTS** (*humility*) of an element in order to exist. Wants are the outcome of a wise discrimination between vital requirements of an element, and the more psychical, non-vital needs that applies mostly to man (or physical manifestations of it), bringing to fore the individuality of man. One could say it is a need that exists only with man as an element of the matrix. This becomes important when designing for man, but there should be judiciousness in exercising this bias if the ecocentric ethic is to be applied.
- **SUITABILITY** or **APPROPRIATENESS** (*responsibility*) of interventions (or technologies) to be applied. History has shown us that the touted solutions to end all

solutions are not foolproof, given any context or setting. It has been man's bane to immediately use "new" technology to solve "problems". Thus, the lure of sanitary landfills and incinerators have led us away from sustaining and enhancing a intrinsic, culturally reinforced or espoused recycling ethic, which could have been the basis for a thriving recycling business/industry. Looking back, though, the traditional Filipino had some way of incorporating wastes in agriculture, or using most of his foodstuff for, well, food (why else do we have panga ng isda, walkman, isaw, sisig, and adidas?)^{xx} as well as other stuff (upong salakot, soil additive or pataba).

Presented in the following page is a matrix interpreting the relationship between the virtues/considerations of the oecodesignator and the scale of the ecological unit (Table 1). The matrix also shows side by side the possible output of the oecodesignator as compared to the output of the traditional place and space designers.

The field of landscape architecture, in which the author finds himself closely affiliated with is, then, among one of the many facets of the oecodesignator. Being a component of the ecological matrix, the oecodesignator bears a concern in the larger scale for the longevity, persistence, and survivability of the ecosphere. On the ecosystem level, he must be cognizant of all members of the ecological matrix, as well as all of the processes governing it. Because of an ecocentric outlook, an operant stewardship ethic is meted out equally to all elements of the matrix, may they be anthropogenic or non-man. At the ecotope level, a scale in which the orthodox landscape architecture practice is familiar with (the scale of subdivisions, resorts, public spaces, and parks), the equal concern for both man and non-man elements still govern. However, the manipulable details become significant, as these are the vocabulary of the landscape architectural language.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the oecodesignator's role in the ecological matrix is more easily defined than accomplished. Adopting the ethic is nonetheless possible. As enduring (but not necessarily primitive), benignly consumptive cultures and the habitats in which they dwell and commune with nature have shown, their persistence is evidence of the potential for success. All it took them to be successful was sensitivity in finding one's place in nature.

ECOLOGICAL UNIT	SURVIVAL	NEED	WANTS	APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS	DECO DESIGNATOR OUTPUTS	TRADITIONAL OUTPUTS OF THE SPACE AND PLACE DESIGNERS
ECOSPHERE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued existence of matrix element on Earth Survival, health and/or physiological well-being of living matrix elements on Earth 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of integrity of elements' intrinsic values Acceptance or consideration of recently recognized intrinsic values of elements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of matrix elements' values for psychological satisfaction of humanity 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Environmentally sensitive applications Ecologically sensitive applications Socially and culturally sensitive applications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Theory Paradigms Policies Strategies Manifesto Range of data for a universally applicable design applications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Design ideology Design theory "Worldwide" design standards
ECOSYSTEM	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued existence of matrix elements specific to the region Survival, health and/or physiological well-being of region-specific living matrix elements Mental/psychological well-being of living, thinking species 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of integrity of intrinsic values and characters of region-specific matrix elements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of matrix elements' values for the psychological satisfaction of region-specific or region-based human population 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Environmentally sensitive applications appropriate to region Ecologically sensitive applications appropriate to region Socially and culturally sensitive applications appropriate to region 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Region-appropriate policies Region-appropriate strategies Region-appropriate design archetypes Region-specific data applications 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Regional resource management plans Regional land use plans Watershed management plans Regional master plans Regional natural resource preserves Cross-border ecological restoration projects

ECOLOGICAL UNIT	SURVIVAL	NEED	WANTS	APPROPRIATE INTERVENTIONS	DECO DESIGNATOR OUTPUTS	TRADITIONAL OUTPUTS OF THE SPACE AND PLACE DESIGNERS
ECOSYSTEM (continued)						<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cross-border wildlife and Nature parks
ECOTOPE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Continued existence of populations of matrix element or representative Survival, health and/or physiological well-being of populations and individuals of living matrix element Psychological well-being of populations and individuals of living and thinking matrix element 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of integrity of intrinsic values and characters of populations and individuals of matrix elements 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Preservation of values for psychological satisfaction of populations and individuals 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Applications appropriate to local setting 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Local policies Local strategies Local design archetypes Locality-specific design data Locally sensitive design 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Nature parks Historic and cultural parks Cities Towns Communities Large-occupancy structures Urban parks and public spaces Streetscapes Shelters Residential landscapes Interiors Interoscapes Pocket gardens

Table 1 - Considerations, ecological scales, and outputs of the Oecodesignator

Endnotes

¹ T. O'Riordan, 1976, *Environmentalism*, Pion, London, as cited in Jala Makhzoumi and Gloria Pungetti, 1999, *Ecological Landscape Design and Planning: The Mediterranean Context*, E and FN Spon, London. p. 169.

ⁱⁱ Although the concept was introduced 1976, ecocentrism is more recently being recognized in man-environment studies, specifically during the last decade. Studies of this nature are commonly found in the "unarchitectural" but highly relevant field of environmental psychology.

ⁱⁱⁱ Due to what Stewart Udall calls the Myth of Superabundance or belief in the inexhaustibility of the earth's resources, the developed countries led by the United States scoured all over the globe seeking raw materials to be processed by the new technologies left over from the previous war. The produce became the merchandise to be sold and consumed so as to maintain the economy as well as growth of the developing and rebuilding nations. By the 1960's, a backlash on this consumerist attitude gave rise to the environmental movement.

^{iv} S.Pickett, J. Kolosa, and C. Jones, 1994: *Ecological Understanding*. Academic Press, San Diego. To elaborate, the non-equilibrium paradigm suggests that the environment is in flux, and is never in a stable state. Processes are constantly ongoing. Also, the non-equilibrium paradigm acknowledges the intimate involvement of humans that characterizes so much of nature. There is no final or climax product that can be maintained through a state of equilibrium. As every event is an ongoing process, the emphasis in terms of resource management is switched in the conservation of the process and not of the product. It means the conservation of the conditions which produces, say, a watershed and not the pristine preservation and non-utilization of the elements contained within the watershed.

On another note, the acknowledgement of man as part and parcel of the ecological process has enabled environmental and cultural theorists to realize that managed landscapes can be both a valuable natural and cultural resource. Read Makhzoumi and Pungetti, 1999, pp. 166-167.

^v Naveh and Lieberman, 1990; Zonneveld, 1989; Zonneveld and Forman, 1990, as cited in Makhzoumi and Pungetti, 1999, pp. 12-13.

^{vi} N.F. Reimers (1993) defines "ecological conscience" as the ability to realize liaison of Mankind and Nature, the dependence of people

prosperity on the integrity and permanence of the environment. As cited in Gabidullina, 1998, p. 23.

^{vii} Even a non-reaction can be considered a reaction. A non-reaction can be a negative (or withheld) reaction. A failure in the stimulus-reaction process occurs when the element is in no way affected by the stimulus. For living elements, non-perception of the stimulus can lead to a failure, resulting in the discontinuity of the reaction process.

^{viii} Although non-living elements do not literally sense stimulus, the word is applied metaphorically. "Sensing" can be the satisfaction of ionic conditions, which trigger the potential chemical reaction. Even "inert" gases, most significantly fluorochlorocarbons, given the right conditions "sense" and chemically react — resulting in among others in the depletion of our ozone layer.

^{ix} In my attempt to treat the elements of the environment equally, I had the choice of either reducing man into a reacting element similar to chemicals, or metaphorically assigning anthropomorphic qualities to some elements. Apparently, this latter path was more convenient in the above discussion. One should be made aware of this anthropocentrism, and thus should be open-minded enough not to absorb the language *ad verbum*.

^x C.A. Doxiadis, "The Coming Era of Ecumenopolis". *Saturday Review*, March 18, 1967, as cited in G. Leinwand. 1970. *The City as a Community*. 630 Fifth Ave., New York, N.Y.: Washington Square Press.

Doxiadis' anthropocosmos has five elements which shape man and are shaped by him: (1) nature in which he lives (2) man himself; (3) society, which he has formed; (4) the shells or structures which he builds; and (5) the network or routes he constructs. The setting for man's living is on the earth's crust or what biologists would call the biosphere, the habitable or life-supporting section which includes the atmosphere, the lithosphere, and the hydrosphere.

^{xi} Ekistics is the science of city and area planning dealing with the integration of basic needs of both the individual and the entire community, as transportation, communication, entertainment, etc.

^{xii} The basis for selecting the term OECODESIGNATOR is the existence of many variants that have evolved from the Greek root *oikos*, meaning HOUSE. In Indo-European, *weiko* is both HOUSE and SETTLEMENT. The Old English *wic* is both HOUSE and VILLAGE. The Latin *vicus* is also HOUSE. The current usage of the combination form *eco-* implies ENVIRONMENT or HABITAT. The many variants cover a wide range of meanings and scale, from the solitary house, to the village or settlement, to the habitat or environment and is, thus, appropriateness for describing the Homo

environmentus who is capable of designing his many types of environments, from a corner of a room to a complete shelter, to a garden, to a large public space.

The word fragment “-DESIGNATOR”, meanwhile, comes from the Latin *designare*, TO MARK OUT, the root of the word DESIGN. We design spaces and forms; we do not, in fact, “create” them.

^{xiii} To my mind, men who are so attuned with the environmental and social needs of their surrounding (or those who are inherently sensitive to the various stimuli given them) can also produce a remarkable, conscientious output without deeply processing the stimuli. These would include traditional cultures who have successfully lived with their surroundings and producing enduring habitations. In a sense, they only react, but do so in a phenomenal manner. They would have no need to process the stimulus deeply, as their very core has already expanded out towards the sensing layer. They have become highly perceptive, but are not conscious about it.

^{xiv} Webster's Third New International Dictionary of the English Language. 1993. Springfield, Mass.: Merriam-Webster.

^{xv} Julian Burger cites in the document “Indigenous Views of Land and the Environment” that “for most indigenous people, land is not viewed as a commodity...but rather a substance endowed with sacred meanings which define their existence and identity...trees, plants, animals and fish...are not ‘natural resources’ but highly personal beings which form part of their social and spiritual needs.” From Steele, 1997, p. 58.

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^{xvii} Of course in the end, it is up to the individual to choose the quality and type of life he wishes to lead. Sometimes, philanthropic intentions as preserving a traditional culture alive (as in keeping it in a non-evolving, static culture) can be harmful, stunting the self-growth that the concerned group of people requires for reestablishing itself in the evolving anthropocosmos. They risk ending up “Disney-fied”, or existing as a novel culture just for show and not for a need to exist.

^{xviii} Mehta, H. 2001. Participatory and holistic approaches in ecotourism planning and design. Proceedings of the 2001 National

Planning Conference, New Orleans. American Planning Association. www.asu.edu/caed/proceedings01/MEHTA/mehta.htm.

In both the Chinese Feng Shui and the Hindu Vaastu Shastra, harmony between elements are sought; conflict or disorder between elements is avoided. This brings to mind a garden design experience where I had to soften the “spear” generated by patio rafters. This was achieved by suspending masses of Boston ferns on the rafter ends. The reason this was called for? The client would not want to throw “spears” at her neighbors to cause disharmony. The client respected her neighbors.

^{xix} Ibid. Clare Cooper Marcus is well known as a former faculty of UC Berkeley's College of Environmental Design, crossing disciplines through landscape architecture and architecture. She had pioneered the field of environmental psychology, from whence interests in neighborhood and child-safe spaces, man-environment studies, and indirectly, participatory planning and design, would owe their roots to.

^{xx} The Ilocano's are known to consume all parts of a felled goat, from its flesh (*kilawen*), to its meat (*kaldereta*), innards (*papaitan*), and bones (as stew).

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