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The design process: A global vision versus a fragmentary vision

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Abstract

This paper presents a new approach in the way of thinking design process with a dialectical vision: grammar of production/grammar of reception. An approach oscillating between the fragmentary vision and the global vision evolves along with the currents and the structure of human thinking. The fragmentation is considered as indispensable to the setting in frame, to the representation and consequently to the configuration of the conceived object. On the other hand, the globalisation, since the antiquity, has always been considered as a vision that has allowed man to master his field of intervention. In design, the objective of a global vision is to establish a certain systemic coherence in every production. Hence, we find ourselves that facing a questioning will expose Design to a dialogic oscillating vision between the global and the fragmentary.

Keywords: Design process, user experience, complexity, global approach, fragmentary approach.

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1. Introduction

Human thinking articulates around the plurality of approaches, which according to Juignet (2015) raises a variety of fields as 'mental, spiritual, semantic, sensible, representative, cognitive, psychological, psychic, intellectual, reasonable, symbolic, ideational, eidetic, propositional, phrastic, etc.'. Morin (1990) creator of the concept 'the complex thinking' focuses on the emblematic thinking described as 'complex'. Complexity is a method used to orient towards a better perception, apprehension and therefore comprehension of his environment.

According to Edgar Morin, the 'complex thinking' method articulates around 'knowledge, neither mutilated nor divided. This knowledge could respect individual and singular while inserting it in its context and whole'. In his book 'Think globally, the human and his universe', he confirms that 'the definition of the human is Trinitarian. It includes simultaneously individual, human society and biological species'. This focuses on the wide complex and evolutionary characteristic of the human thinking. Undoubtedly, it interferes, according to a diversity of prisms, in the modes, methods and approaches of conception in design. Knowing that Design is a purely intellectual activity, it draws its significance and its meaning from thinking, which in turn directly influences the design process.

The design process was investigated through many approaches such as elementalism, globalism, structuralism, functionalism, systemic and other theories. New reading of the design processes are permanently evolving as it will be explored in this work. In this article, we propose a new vision in the manner of rethinking the design process. This approach guarantees an optimisation of the production results through the interaction between the design standards of conception and usages.

2. Basic concepts: design process/user experience/fragmentary approach/global approach

Approaching the notion of the design process comes back to put forward all the surroundings of the Design project from the ideation, going through the representation and the modelling leading to the embodiment and therefore the mental or effective projection of the project. The Designer, through this conceptual approach, aims at meeting the user's needs while providing him with 'an ideal future, better and durable'. According to Vial (2017, p. 83), 'to practise the project in Design is to conceive in function of an ideal world an artifactual complex plan that gives form to uses as far as it produces information, as a reaction to a request or a dissatisfaction, and thanks to a rigorous methodology in constant evolution, that aims in a creative and innovative way to ameliorate the *habitability* of the world'.

It is in this direction that the designer proceeds to the conception and consequently to the production of concept while principally focusing on the user in a way that not only meets his expectations and needs, but that also considers him as an active participant in the process itself.

According to Stephane Vial, design process can be understood in two ways: the first method considers it as 'an act of creation' and the second one as 'an act of project founded on rational methods'. If the first articulates on 'the aesthetic approach' and favours the notion of the 'beautiful' in the conception, the second rather adopts 'a pragmatic approach insofar as it becomes rooted in observing the practice of the project for professional designers and it tends to rationalise the process of design from it'. A vision that fragments the method adopted for understanding design.

For teaching design, the fragmentation is carried out on two levels. The first one separates interior design from product design or graphic design. And the second one generates a hyper-specialisation giving birth to specialties, namely, scenography, furniture design, craft design, car design...

Furthermore, the fragmentary approach is adopted by the designer in the representation of the project manifested by means of representative alternations oscillating between the 2-D and the 3-D (plans, section plane, perspectives...). This fragmentation representative of project in Design, via the global approach, allows leading to a global representation of the project.

A project emerging for usage is considered as a fundamental phase in the mission of the designer, the basis of conception and its priority and also the matrix of all design production. The user experience thus operates on three levels: perception/selection/assimilation. The visual perception fragments the Design product into mental images in a first step; these images will be received in the brain according to a subjective selection intimately linked to the user. Finally, via this selective perception, the user reconstructs a global mental representation suitable to his user experience.

3. Method

The methodology adopted thereby articulates an oscillating approach between the analytical vision and the pragmatic one. Indeed, in order to better understand the transposition logics of conceptual intentions configured through lines, forms, volumes, colours, materials, techniques, systems...in arrangements and in usage scenarios, it is necessary to resort to analysing the diverse phases of conception and usage in Design.

It is in this context that we have been able to observe and detect this struggle between the fragmentary and the global. A struggle notably analysed by means of two fundamental procedures in the process of Design, namely, the representation (conception) and the perception (reception and usage).

The pragmatic and rational vision is justified compared to our contextual frame that is Design. Considered as a scientific discipline that articulates around ergonomic norms, Design is rational in its conception as well as in its reception. Besides, this vision is related to the functional side distinguishing the Design Product from the artistic work.

4. Discussion, development and positioning

The practice of Design in the professional life as well as in education is repositioned here compared to the design process so as to put the global approach in the lead of any production process. The question that concerns us in this context is to bring everything into question notably how to understand Design by teaching or by practising it.

In this frame, Kekhia (2017, p. 33) affirms that: 'For teaching Design, the hyper-specialisation engenders a delimitation of disciplinary frontiers and the installation of a partitioning between the different specialties of a discipline supposed to be thought by the whole world as global'. It is clear that any Design production is justified, manifested and therefore legitimised according to a global context. In this case, it is absurd to produce objects without taking into consideration the societal, cultural, economic...environment to which they belong.

Edgar Morin uses the 'complex thinking' and therefore as a foundation for the 'global thinking'. He affirms that 'the complex thinking is a mode of reliance. So, it is against the isolation of the produced objects; it restores them in their context, and, if possible, in the globality where they belong'. This complex thinking thus helps connect objects while contextualising them, which is opposed to the traditional thinking, which divides the fields of knowledge into disciplines and compartments.

By approaching it from this angle, the design process will be envisaged according to two parts: the first one is installing it in a recoil position facing the back and forth 2-D and 3-D reflexive representation of the project; the second one is laying down on a system of communication of coding and decoding between the representation (conception) and the reception (perception). This would, therefore, lead to an optimisation of production by means of an interaction between the repositories of conception and those of usage.

4.1. The design process: reliance between representative two-dimensionality and three-dimensionality

Designer, during conception phase, will resort to representation as a tool of configuration and projection of his ideas, his reflection into a concrete project. According to Edgar Morin, the representation is defined as being a 'cognitive synthesis endowed with qualities of globality, coherence, constancy and stability'. Representation is obtained from a construction process, while implementing the perception, the memory as well as the fantasies. It is about a construction that forms a loop at the same time *selective* meaning that a part of reality is eliminated and *additive* insofar as it is necessary to add schemas (Morin, 1986).

This demonstrates that the representation will encompass the subjective and objective side of the designer whose concern is certainly not only to satisfy the needs of his customer by coming closer to reality but also to leave a trace that emanates from his aspirations and ideas.

In order to ensure an optimal mastery over design process, designer will resort to rethinking, reorganising and therefore refashioning his intervention and representation using a recoil vision. It is absurd in this case to consider the 2-D and the 3-D phases as independent or separated. The project is considered as whole, an entity generating accordingly a new vision in the way the design process is thought. The latter articulates, hence, around an interactive relation, back and forth between any 2-D and 3-D representation.

Such a position will allow the designer a better control over the project insofar as this new conceptual posture will have a global vision of the work. The fragmentation goes hand in hand with the representation; 'the complex thinking' will help the designer link things, contextualise them and therefore achieve a global understanding of the project.

4.2. The design process: a system oscillating between the coding and decoding of information

During the conceptual phase, designer works on thinking the project by preparing it for a specific target and a particular use. He proceeds in this case to transmit information through its production. The theory of information handling, being defined by Shannon and Weaver (1975) designates a simple linear model of communication that can be summarised as: 'a transmitter, thanks to a coding, sends a message to a receiver who carries out the decoding in a context disturbed by noise'. For the transmission of information, designer proceeds to inject codes, signs, configured through forms, lines, colours, texture, materials... His objective is to intrigue, attract and provoke user. This product is comparable to a narrative, a story that boosts reader to decipher events, to go forward in this reading for a better hold over the story. Writer, in analogy here with designer, engages reader in a narrative where suspense plays a fundamental role in the progression of actions as in the adopted scenario of usage.

In front of the fashioned design Product, user utilise his perception for the reception, the comprehension, the assimilation of this production. During this experience, the user is led to decode and decipher the intervention and the conception of the designer. The user becomes himself designer insofar as he will be asked on the why of the conceptual make? We find ourselves here in front of a system of information that is not only configured and put into practise for a single satisfaction of needs, but rather meant to make user participate in design process.

The design process is, therefore, considered as a system of information leading to a continuous and permanent interaction between designer and user. Indeed, Edgar Morin affirms that 'we can conceive the system as a global unity made of interrelations between elements, actions or individuals'.

The design process accordingly adopts a systemic approach that defends the idea of totality which makes of conception an organised 'whole' whose interpretation must be studied by means of its systemic and organisational logic. Such an approach will lead the user to a global interpretation of the design product, putting here in crisis the idea of 'the object' and the unity.

4.3. Towards an optimisation of production in design

The progress of the design process is carried out according to a back and forth interactive loop, sometimes with creative emergence peaks, sometimes with phases of hesitation, self-criticism, self-organisation and self-reorganisation... This loop leads to the perpetual interaction of the repositories of conception and those of usage. On the one hand, the designer's repositories occur by means of a large range of functional and technical parameters (norms, ergonomics, feasibility, execution...) and also of aesthetic parameters (trend, taste...). On the other hand, the user's repositories reveal as well all that the user expects and wishes to have in the production but also the way of undertaking during the user experience (route, location...).

By adopting a dialogical vision oscillating between the fragmentary and the global through the comprehension and the global interpretation of the project, designer will have a better mastery of his conceptual and reflexive intervention. And consequently guarantees an optimisation of his production through a user performance. A global production that counteracts any form of disciplinary partition and adopts a transverse conception more coherent with these communication methods, resulting in a better representation and commercial efficiency.

5. Conclusion

The 'complex thinking' stated by Edgar Morin generates a design process that adopts a global reflection rather of entity, of a whole than of parties or of independent phases. It helps sometimes designer and sometimes user to connect things and contextualise them.

Designer will adopt a new conceptual posture that considers the ideation as well as the representation an inseparable whole. His behaviour towards the project will evolve while having a recoil posture allowing him a global understanding of the production. Starting from this design process whose systemic approach makes the conceived Product an organised whole, user will rather resort to a global interpretation of the work.

This new way of 'thinking' design process is likely to establish a certain systemic coherence in production. Nothing can separate the product from its design, place of production, graphic communication and selling point. Also it works to abolish all the barriers found between the diverse disciplines of Design. Nothing can separate interior design from Product design or Graphic design.

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