

Editorial

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Architecture and City in a socioenvironmental agenda: Paths for a regenerative management of the human habitat

[...] today we are all facing the imminence of Earth not supporting our demand. [...] This tragedy that now strikes all is postponed in some places, in some regional situations in which politics – political power, political choice – compose temporary safety spaces where communities, even when void of the true sense of space sharing, are still, let's say, protected by an apparatus ever more depending of the exhaustion of forests, rivers, mountains, putting us in a dilemma in which it seems that the only possibility for human communities to remain existing is at the expense of exhaustion of all other parts of life (KRENAK, 2019, p.24).

What is made of our rivers, our forests, our landscapes? We are so perturbed by the regional derangement we live in, so out of sorts with the lack of political perspective, we cannot rise and breath, see what really matters to people, the collectives, and the communities in their ecologies (KRENAK, 2019, p.12).

Mobilized by the powerful speech of Ailton Krenak, this special edition of arq.urb constitutes an act of resistance and faith in the future – it is a small but vigorous inventory of possibilities of overcoming the terrible picture before us in this moment: a social environmental crisis whose most dramatic and recent expression transpired with the new coronavirus – Covid-19 – pandemic, as far as it is known so far, resulting, among other aspects, from the ecological imbalance associated to the reduction of bat population in a certain region of China, which led, in their absence – habitual hosts for the virus, to its adaptation to the human body as an alternative. The dissemination of the new coronavirus in humanity was exponential and reflected in the economies of every country in the world, also highlighting the lack of health conditions (a basic premise for avoiding it spread) in many human communities left out by globalized capitalism, concentrated in the hands of few, supposedly protected in

places voided of meaning, to whom Krenak refers in the speech reproduced as this text's epigraph. Thus, clumsy environment management intertwines with a perverse social and economic inequality.

Uncertainties regarding the possibility of new pandemics, a political world situation in which non-adherence, something dramatic in the face of the instituted urgency, to the warnings regarding the risk of the planet's climate change caused by human action is observed, putting in danger the lives of many beings, among which we are included, combined with the regression, even if circumscribed, of social achievements in a relatively recent past, due to dismantlement promoted by antidemocratic and non-solidary governments. In this sense, lack of care towards others have been a disturbingly dominant condition amongst those who hold power in the conduction of humanity and, therefore, is overwhelmingly explicit

[...] the impact we, humans, cause on this living organism that is our Earth, which in some cultures is still recognized as our providing mother in ample senses, not only to the extent of subsistence and maintenance of our lives, but also in the transcendent aspect that gives meaning to our existence (KRENAK, 2019, p.23).

In this dismay-inducing scenario, Brazil has been an exponent composed of convicted denialism, and intransigent and arrogant defense of a way of life that concentrates privileges and suffocates the planet. The Brazilian federal government have heavily invested in the fragilization of social movement and deconstruction of fundamental public services and still frail support networks, in education, culture, research, environment and traditional and original peoples defense structure, the perspective of food, and healthy relationships, always by means of fostering violence (both verbal and in action), absence of dialogue, amidst a continuous torrent of false, defamatory messages, contrary to diversity and care.

In this terrible context, it becomes even more urgent to value intelligence that, in our chastised country, points to regenerating action, both in the relationships between beings, and diversity and, therefore, our living planet and its resources.

We assume, based on Daniel Wahl, the idea that “sustainability is not enough: we need regenerative cultures” (2019, p.56) and, as far as “what we are actually trying to sustain is the underlying pattern of health, resilience and adaptability that maintain this planet in a condition where life as a whole can flourish” (WAHL, 2019, p.56), it is not enough to point to a zero impact of anthropic action – in face of a condition perceived as scorched earth, it is indispensable to regenerate, recompose, ensure, and intensify biodiversity, life. The expectation is that we resume the condition of caregivers/drivers of the garden that is our planet, great organism – Gaia, in the words of Lovelock (2006), which may be cared for as the providing mother recalled by Krenak, something already experienced in humanity, for instance, in the management of the amazon forest by original peoples (SANTOS, 2020, p.136-7). The so-called “black earth” (of anthropogenic origin), identified there by archeology, unveils that such forest is the result of sophisticated and conscious human management, an extraordinary and monumental “indigenous farm”, that serves us as guide on how to act, of how to build the human habitat as a means to celebrate and intensify Earth’s biotic wealth, assurance of its health and plenitude.

In this sense, to shed light on what some thinkers have been searching for, in the ambit of research, such as paths to support regeneration, is to believe in the power of ideas in the construction of another future, conscious and solidary, for humanity. It is a great ambition, but we know great changes have their genesis in a myriad of small moves, gestures, inspired and prompted by ideas that arise whispering, here and there... In a type of archeology of the future, we imagine being able to see, in the ideas presented in the articles compiled here, possibilities and opportunities before the challenges we face. We understand there are, in them, clues as to an indispensable movement of reconnection with the natural cycles in the action that has been undertaken based on western urban-capitalist culture. We also notice signs of attention to the intensification of participation and engagement of human communities in the care of planet Earth, beings, and relationships. The ideas herein cast as seeds, that hopefully will sprout and contribute to a reinvention of our presence, of

our experience as humanity, stem from the observation of ancestral and scientific knowledge, and noted good practices.

Thereby, there are glimpses of ways out of or systemic crisis:

The awareness of the communion of earthly fates between living nature and the human adventure must become an important occurrence of our time: we must feel solidary to this planet, for our life is connected to its existence, we need to recognize our biological filiation and our ontological filiation; it is the umbilical cord that needs to be reattached (MORIN, 2020, p.78).

In this sense, the invitation for the articles of this special edition of *arq.urb* cast the inquiry on perceived possibilities for the transformation of the human habitat henceforth, from the scale of the built object to that of the bioregion. How can the reflection of another management condition of the planet in architecture and in the city which, as we know, is connected, and reverberates on the territory be?

Therefore, it is about the search for clues on dealing with the challenges we face, reflections of what Edgar Morin announces as a possibility for ecopolitics or a “politics of the Earth” (MORIN, 2020, p.76), dimension that stems from the comprehension of the interdependence and even “kinship” between all beings and elements.

There are challenges to be faced, as well as perspectives to broaden and value:

Western civilization may and must propagate its best: humanist tradition, critical and self-critical thinking, democratic principles, human rights. It also needs to abandon arrogance. Traditional civilizations maintain relationship with nature, have a sense of insertion in the cosmos, of communal social bonds they need conserve, even introducing in themselves the best of the West (MORIN, 2020, p.71).

We cherish – and the effort waged in the preparation of this publication points in such direction – a regeneration in many layers of relationships intrinsic to the terrestrial organism. One of such layers, so to speak, may be noticed in Edgar Morin’s reflections when in search for basis for a recomposition of our action stemming from the new coronavirus crisis:

Regenerated humanism rejects the humanism of near divinization of man, focused on the conquest and domination of nature. It recognizes human complexity, made of contradictions. Regenerated humanism recognizes our animality and our umbilical cord with nature but recognizes our intellectual and cultural specificity. It recognizes our frailty, our instability, our delusions, the ignominy of slaughter, of torture, and of slavery, the lucidities and the blindnesses of thought, the sublimity of

masterpieces of all arts, the prodigious works of skill, and the destructions operated by means of the same skill (MORIN, 2020, p.78).

And, from such recognition, in kindly indicating means for advancing in the operation for saving the planet and, therefore, ourselves, the author indicates that “[...] all political art, as well as all humanist hope, needs to take into account human ambiguities, instabilities, and versatilities” (MORIN, 2020, p.79).

In short, the herein presented edition of *arq.urb* has as a backdrop the aforementioned inquietudes and intuitions, on the perspective of bringing input for future human action, for an ecopolitics, and an activism with adhesion to the social and environmental agenda. The expectation, generously met by the articles sent to us, was to highlight new narratives as a basis for the process of idea decolonization and collectively orchestrated actions, in which traditional and scientific knowledge could stand arm in arm, with the participation of new and ancestral agents, on the perspective of an undoing of the problematic illusion of a dichotomy nature-society. Contributions in tune with the reminder that “*we are nature* and, as such, we may design as nature” (WAHL, 2019, p.194, italic from the original).

Instead of forcing a nature world away from us, to meet our human needs, as the separation narrative would, we must interact as a species who has a lot to learn from the rest of nature in the attempt of discerning which projects better serve the whole system (WAHL, 2019, p.197).

In other words,

[...] as participants in a complex dynamic eco-psycho-social system that is subject to certain biophysical limits, our goal has to be appropriate participation [...] [and therefore,] to pay more attention to systemic relationships and interactions, [as well as] to aim to support the resilience and health of the whole system, to foster diversity and redundancies at multiple scales, and to [...] pay attention to the quality of connections and information flows in the system (WAHL, 2019, p.56).

Inspired by the aforementioned issues, some sections were thought for the edition of this publication and, as the articles were received, their recomposition and agglutination took place and, finally, we comprehended it was possible to organize the presented set in two sections: the first one, *Architecture and natural cycles: other narratives, other perspectives*, in which there are a few views on the relationship of human action with ancestral and scientific knowledge, that stray from the inertia of a way of acting that has placed us in a crossroads regarding the living planet we are a

part of – in this sense, the articles bring perspectives of traditional and scientific knowledge reintegration that evidence the awareness regarding the intrinsic relationship of human action with natural cycles, with other beings, with the vibrations of our living planet. The second section, *Nature-City: for an end to dichotomy*, refers to other perspectives on addressing the design of our spaces of collective use, the great artifact that is the city, spatialization of relationships between community members in their interaction with the environment, and before the urgency of change of course towards a regenerative condition.

The set of articles seeks a resignification of the relationship nature-society, something we believe to be an echo of original peoples' knowledge, such as those propagated by the great thinker Ailton Krenak, who, regarding that, reminds us that “we should admit nature as an immense multitude of forms, including each piece of ourselves, who are part of everything: 70% water and a bunch of other materials that compose us” (KRENAK, 2019, p.37).

Next, a few words on each article:

Section “*Architecture and natural cycles: other narratives, other perspectives*”

Narratives for a Forest City registers an experience by Grupo de Trabalho e Pesquisa (GTP) Arquiteturas Tradicionais (which operates in the ambit of Plataforma Arquitetura e Biosfera, accommodated by Associação Escola da Cidade), who develops work related to the traditional knowledge of indigenous peoples. Anchored on the statements by interviewed indigenous leaders: Jerá Guarani Mbya, Time'i Awaeté, Thawá Yudjá, Yakuy Tupinambá, the essay, by authors Anna Dietzsch (professor at Escola da Cidade and Cornell University), Luis O de Faria e Silva (resident professor at PGAUR-USJT and professor at Escola da Cidade), Paulla Mattos, and Sabrina Carvalho Dias (both GTP Arquiteturas Tradicionais, Plataforma Arquitetura e Biosfera researchers), argues for the idea of a potential Forest City, where the anthropic action would be plainly connected with the natural cycles. The paper offers a dive into original cultures, unveiling the immanent cultural shock amongst *homo sapiens* – Jurua/Karaí (white man), Awaeté, Yudjá, Guarani, and Tupinambás, who coinhabit Mother Earth.

The article **Átinsás: The sacred trees and architectures of the Candomblé Terreiros of Cachoeira and São Félix**, by Fábio Macêdo Velame (resident professor

at UFBA's Programa de Pós-graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo and Centro de Estudos Afro-Orientais – CEAO researcher) expounds on the relationship between nature and architecture in the Candomblé houses of the Nagô-Vodum nation, in Recôncavo Baiano. Stemming from the African Brazilian religious tradition, in which trees are sacralized entities, the author discusses how symbolism around vegetation articulates spatiality and materiality in the architecture of the Capivari (Pé-da-Cajá), Ilê Axé Itaylé, Raiz de Airá, Ilê Axé Ogunjá, Viva Deus temples.

The article **Land as architecture in the construction of possibilities: aspects, experiences, and challenges of earth architecture in Brazil**, by authors Cláudio Amaral (residente professor at PGAUR-USJT and member of Grupo Papo Terra), Fernando Minto (professor at Universidade Santa Úrsula and member of Grupo Papo Terra), and Natália Lelis (architect at Pensar Construir e Habitar Arquitetura e Urbanismo – PCH and Moreira Reis Advogados), discusses the challenges of contemporary architectural production, which uses earth as building material, before the resistance of the *status quo* – educational, commercial, and sociocultural, which the authors call Police Architecture. Stemming from real experiences, the authors debate the objective and subjective conditionings that limit or hinder the use of vernacular technique, that was hegemonic in the first centuries of Colonial Brazil. The authors therefore defend the retrieval of the technique in the current context of the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, notably, SDG 10 and SDG 11.

Joana Gonçalves – professor at Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo of Universidade de São Paulo – through the paper **Parametric procedures for environmental adequacy of architectural conception: Methodological proposal**, dives into the universe of possibilities for the Environmental Building, by using digital tools in project conception. The author verifies the application of environmental adequacy procedures – thermal performance, lighting, and natural ventilation, by means of parametric analyses and advanced computer simulation techniques, since the stages of conception, with the obtained results feeding the creative process back. It is a methodological proposal for qualifying the architectural project's process, maximizing passive strategies, and resulting in better adaptation of the building to the climatic conditions in which it stands. Thus, a change in designing culture, based on the deep understanding of climatic conditions, the potentializing of passive strategies and analytical procedures that, at the same time, broaden the array of possibilities and

facilitate architectural environmental adequacy.

Section **“Nature-City: for an end to dichotomy”**

Reflections on land planning and the rural dimension, by Paulo Pellegrino (professor at FAU-USP's Pós-Graduação em Arquitetura e Urbanismo, and ESALQ-USP's Programa em Recursos Florestais), and Martina Croso Mazzuco (architect, permaculturist, and master's student at ESALQ), addresses Planning in Bioregions, as an alternative path before the Climate Change scenario. From a substantial revision of literature on Planning, since its origins as a subject, until current days, when it assumes the dimension of “planning for impermanence”, the authors argue that rural territorial planning must be developed seeking to restore the planet's natural ecosystems. They debate the concept of Bioregion as a synthesis-concept that adequately meet the goals of sustainable development at the local level, and suggest different permeability mechanisms be designed to enable the community to benefit from shared territory management in bioregional properties.

Seeking the socio-ecological approach and aiming to promote urban and local community resilience before the challenge of climate change, the article **Socio-ecological approach as a basis for local and neighborhood scale to promote urban and community resilience to climate change**, by Liza Andrade (professor specialization course Reabilitação Ambiental Sustentável at Universidade de Brasília's Faculdade de Arquitetura e Urbanismo), and Lara Freitas (Instituto Ecobairro do Brasil e GTP Ecobairros, Plataforma Arquitetura e Biosfera), expatiates on the emerging ecovillage and eco neighborhood movements. It describes the healthy initiatives of rapprochement between public authority and community leaders, in search for joint solutions for environmental problems, potentialized in the context of the pandemic. By means of a robust literary revision, the paper analyses the main authors and concepts: resilience, urban ecosystems, sustainable urbanism, urban villages and eco neighborhoods, among others. It suggests planning strategies amidst inequalities, governance, infrastructure, and sustainable urbanism at the local level, guided by the global 2030 Agenda.

The article **Urban resilience in a systemic perspective: the case of the Jardim Pantanal Neighborhood Plan**, by Pedro Roberto Jacobi (collaborating researcher of IEA/USP, attached to Programa USP Cidades Globais); Leandro Luiz Giatti (associated professor at Departamento de Saúde Ambiental, of Universidade de São

Paulo's Faculdade de Saúde Pública), and Leila Maria Vendrametto (PhD student in Environmental Science at Universidade de São Paulo's Instituto Energia e Ambiente) approaches the resilience process by means of a case study on participative urban planning in far-east São Paulo. The paper debates urban resilience from the democratization of participative socio-environmental governance, seeking to potentialize actions for confrontation of urban vulnerability; and tries to ponder on the overcoming of the dichotomy nature-society. The reported case study, which follow the concept of mini-public, proved to be an important rapprochement tool between community and public authority in decision-making for the confrontation of socio-environmental problems.

Landscape connections: urban afforestation as a bioconnecting infrastructure brings the record of Grupo de Estudos e Práticas (GEP) Camboatã Território Natureza's experience, through some of its members – Ana Maria Antunes Coelho (CDHU, former USJT professor), Sidney Carneiro de Mendonça Fernandes (master's student at PGAUR-USJT), and Wellington Tohoru Nagano (SVMA). The essay debates vegetation as a type of infrastructure and the potential of the streets as their support, to increment urban afforestation. It revises the literature and concepts related to the topic. It presents the citizen's protagonism by means of urban collectives, private agents, and the third sector in afforestation management, besides presenting proposals by the GEP Camboatã group itself.

The contemporary city, its (multiple) representations, and representativeness: questions for research – article by Marcos Virgílio da Silva, coordinator of the graduate program at Centro Universitário Belas Artes de São Paulo, stems from the conceptualization of "representation" in cultural studies, in order to unveil images and discourses on contemporary urbanization. It reports how adjectives applied to the word "city" – competitive, creative, smart, educating, or resilient – became fragmented agendas. It discusses the potential mismatch of such agendas, and their inability for generating effective propositions regarding cities as "integral entities". The paper brings a consistent debate on potential agendas towards the goals of the 2030 Agenda.

Thus, in the set of articles which compose this special issue of *arq.urb* journal, there are important subsidies for reflecting on the question raised in the beginning of this editorial: How can the reflection of another management condition of the planet in

architecture and in the city which, as we know, is connected, and reverberates on the territory be?

In the ideas by German sociologist Ulrich Beck, the contemporary socio-environmental issues and their risks reveal the limits and consequences of human actions, of the current society's practices, bringing "reflexivity", in the sense that the risk-producing society has become a "problem" to itself (BECK, 2008). Nevertheless, in recognizing the relevance that new paths must be covered, drawn in this relationship of the human being with nature, with the city, with the different spaces we occupy, we believe this issue's articles may, more than inspire us, motivate us to believe in the possibility of alternatives to what is "seemingly" put, new paths from the regenerative management of the human habitat.

Also aware of the relevance of thoughts by educator Paulo Freire, it is necessary to recognize the "beauty" of life and "hope". To this end, among other aspects, we consider broadening the spaces for dialogue and, consequently, for listening between universities and the various social agents, as expressed by articles in this issue, instrumental. An act of listening that generates reflection, instability, that may establish doubt, but that, at the same time, transforms reality. The recognition of such "voices" is not only necessary, but rather legitimizes transformative action. It is necessary and urgent to recognize knowledge diversity and its applicability in local, regional, national, and global contexts.

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