

# **Environmental design-week11 Review Course Zhu ShenXu**

written by s2553129 | 30 November 2023



For me, the greatest value of this course is that it has made

me realize my shallowness and the complexity of environmental issues. The environment has always been a huge issue. I will analyze my latest perspectives on society, environment, and environmental design in this blog to summarize this course.



The current human society is filled with dissatisfaction with existing environmental issues and anxiety about potential environmental risks in the future. I believe these are the main driving forces for the development of the field of environmental design, as well as the driving forces for the development of human society. The driving force for the development of human society has shifted from "I am hungry" to "I am afraid". At the same time, environmental design has also become a necessary discipline.

Most of the existing environmental risks are not due to a lack of control over nature, but rather the expectation of more intense control over nature in the future. In these years of development, humans have conquered natural space and land through technological and cultural means, and conquered traditional social markets through capital and labor. The arrogance in human nature and the binary opposition between nature and nature have made the natural environment worse.



Looking at the field of environmental design now, what is the value of environmental design to all parties? Perhaps most people's viewpoint is to protect nature, but I don't think so. I believe that the greatest significance of nature, environment, and society lies in development. The greatest value of environmental design is to continue this development. However, when we observe the current society, we will find that many things are not optimistic.

In the process of human development from modern society to postmodern society, it has triggered self reflection. In addition to the well-known natural destruction and environmental pollution, for example, developed regions will import a large amount of agricultural products from underdeveloped areas due to cost issues. Food pressure and market demand will trigger the use of large amounts of pesticides and genetic technology in underdeveloped regions, ultimately leading to a global food security crisis.

Most of the natural damage caused by humans originates from social and production structures. What can I do as an interior

designer? I may be able to rebuild the connection between humans and nature through space. I may be able to connect interior design with other industries to reduce waste. Maybe I shouldn't use design to make garbage.

Although human development requires criticism and reflection, overall, I still hold a positive attitude towards the future of humanity because I believe in the efforts of everyone involved. I think this is also the reason why we gather here for class. This course took me into this field, but the next path will depend on me.

#### Reference:

1. Risk Society, Ulrich Beck
2. Illusion, Daniel Bursting

\* The cover was taken by me, and all the images in the article came from search engines

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# **Environmental design-week10**

## **Environmental Future Zhu ShenXu**

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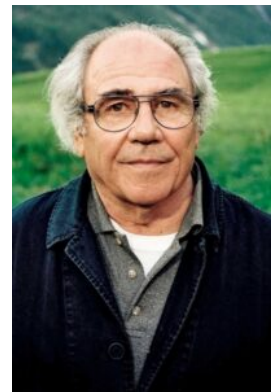
This week, we will continue to explore the future of the environment. The possibility of the future is determined by our current decisions. We have discussed the viewpoint of "Future humans, looking back on our early mid 21st Century design considerations and actions, will thank us more than condemn us.". Finally, we also proposed 5 principles for environmental design based on each individual's own perception.

I personally hold a negative attitude towards this viewpoint. I don't think our descendants will appreciate the design we have made. The emergence of this viewpoint is not only based on an analysis of the current situation and development trends of the environment, but also on an understanding of social processes and the development of human civilization.





Let's first take a look at a set of data. Since the 1960s, industrial production has quadrupled, and human control over pollution emissions is weakening. Plastic production has doubled in the past 20 years, but only 9% of them have been successfully recycled. The textile and fast fashion industries cause 20% of water pollution during the dyeing process.



We can find that the development of human society will inevitably cause harm to the natural environment. But most of the harm is unnecessary harm caused by consumerism. With the development of capitalism entering the golden age, production oriented capitalism has shifted towards consumption oriented. At the same time, guided by the theories of "marginal utility

value theory” and “effective demand” by economists such as Menger and Keynes, the West began to transition to post capitalism, which mainly stimulated mass consumption.

Philosopher Baudrillard discovered that human consumption is gradually being hijacked by symbols. Most people’s consumption is no longer based on the symbolic value of goods, just like bags are no longer meant to hold things, but rather symbols of identity, taste, and high-end.



The phenomenon also exists in the field of environmental protection, just like the wilderness in SUV promotional videos and the popularity of plastic flamingos in the United States. Most of the time, numb consumers are not concerned about whether environmentally friendly products are environmentally friendly, but rather about the symbols of their health, harmlessness, and social responsibility.

We are a very difficult generation as we experienced the 2008 financial crisis. We experienced COVID-19 in 2019. We have focused too much attention on regulating internal conflicts in human society, but we can still see war and gunpowder around the world.



If one day, the water sources on Earth are polluted, energy is depleted, and a large number of species become extinct, humans will not be able to survive alone. So, how our descendants perceive us is not important, what matters is the decisions we make now. I propose the following five environmental design principles.

1. Use existing materials for production.
2. Do not make unnecessary designs.
3. Respect location and culture.
4. Continuously innovate and reform technology.
5. Synchronize design with the rhythm of nature.

#### Reference:

1. Consumer society, Jean Baudrillard
2. Principles of National Economics, Marginal Utility Value Theory, Karl Menger
3. Reviewing why sauce flavored lattes can handle people, Yoloidea
4. Environmental History of Design: Towards a New Research Agenda; Kjetil Fallan and Finn Arne J ø rgensen

\* All images are from search engines

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# Environmental design-week9

## Reading Group: Ecological Design

### Zhu ShenXu

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This book introduces two sustainable methods, one is ecological sustainability, and the other is technological sustainability. Ecological sustainability mainly focuses on solving specific ecological problems. And technological sustainability mainly focuses on management and the operation of society.





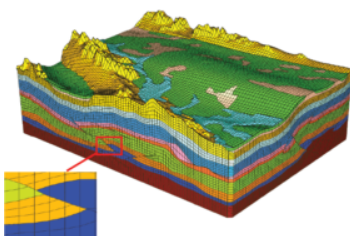
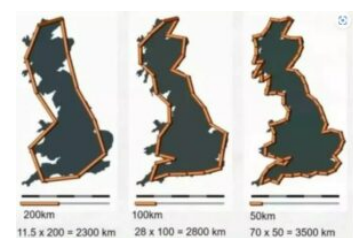
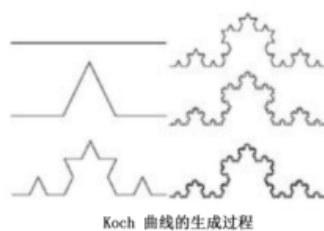
The author emphasized the value of local knowledge and its importance in ecological design. Because local knowledge is applicable to specific information such as climate, geology, biology, etc., respecting local culture can help us reduce damage to the ecological environment in most cases.

At the same time, the article also mentions an interesting point. Ecological diversity and cultural diversity are closely linked. Ecological diversity provides the soil for cultural development, while cultural diversity consolidates ecological diversity. The popularity of compost toilets mentioned in the article is a good example. Compost toilets were not only popular in rural areas of the United States and Europe, but also in many rural areas of China in the last century, there were only compost toilets. Although it can handle people's excrement and produce gas and fertilizers, its user experience is really terrible. I have used it before, and the stench inside is unbearable in the summer.

I came up with an ecological design related to my life. When I was traveling in the mountainous areas of southwestern China, the local residences left a deep impression on me. This type of building is called a stilted building (as shown in the far right picture above). Because the local area is extremely humid and there are many poisonous snakes and insects, residents will use bamboo poles to support the buildings. Then local residents will surround the first floor with a circle of bamboo walls and raise livestock inside.

This design fully conforms to the first principle of ecological design, and the answer comes from the

place. However, due to limitations of the times, these designs did not comply with the second principle, and ecological accounting relied on information for design. However, the daily activities of local residents have had little impact on the local environment. At the same time, these buildings are built according to water and incorporate natural landscapes, so they comply with the third principle of ecological design. This architectural form is actually a summary of the local residents' architectural techniques, so it conforms to the fourth principle of architectural design, where everyone is a designer. This architectural form is willing to communicate with nature, for example, people can interact with nature through rows of windows, so it conforms to the fifth principle of ecological design, making nature visible.



In addition, the research methods mentioned by the author are also worthy of our reference. The article mentions an example where a group of mathematicians once studied how long the coastline of England was. They used Koch curve to fractal the coastline. Through this method, they have calculated various details of the coastline, such as a straight line on the map that, when zoomed in, you can discover that it may be a peninsula or composed of many different ports, alluvial fans, and hills.

This method can effectively help us calculate natural resources. Then, we can overlay a Cartesian grid on top and



record human activities on the grid. By using mathematical methods to calculate the natural capacity and pollution generated by human activities, we can more accurately identify where the environment urgently needs our protection. Meanwhile, through this method, we can also better understand how closely humans are connected to nature.

So, ecological design needs to break the singularity of thinking and start from the relationship between humans and the ecological environment.

reference□

1.Ecological\_Design\_Book\_Ryn and Cowan

2.On the cultural value orientation of Tujia stilted buildings; XiangLong, LongXiangping

\* Picture 1-3 is from search engine, Picture 4 is taken by me, Picture 5-6 is from bibliography, Picture 7 is from search engine

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# **Environmental design-week8 Recycling Plastic Workshop & Debate Zhu ShenXu**

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We will continue to focus on materials this week. This week, we mainly focus on the material of plastic. We are trying to recycle plastic products through manual processing in the workshop. Then, a debate was held in the seminar on “This house believes that we must fall in love with plastic again.”





In the workshop, I only made simple modifications to the plastic bottles I brought, due to limitations in materials and tools.

According to Vitalist Materialism, plastic as a substance is also dynamic. Plastic is not pollution. Plastic is actually a very stable material. It is not easy to decompose and is acid and alkali resistant. This is the ideal material for making containers.

So, I think recycling plastic bottles as plastic bottles is a good solution. However, we need to try changing its functionality. So I decided to transform it into a box.

My handling method is very simple, I cut open the plastic bottle. After cutting out the lid, a link and a small buckle were cut out to allow the plastic box to open and close freely. As for the usage method, it depends on imagination. It can be laid down to make a flower pot, and the bottle cap can be used for drainage. It can also be used to store items.

The method of recycling plastic is not only environmentally friendly, but also ethical. We do not directly deprive plastics of their right to vitality, but rather stimulate new vitality through recycling and reuse.



Next, we debated 'This house believes that we must fall in love with plastic again.'.

Although plastic is difficult to degrade and plastic particles that fall off during use may pose a threat to human health, we have to acknowledge the irreplaceable nature of plastic. For example, during the pandemic, plastic masks exhibit excellent corrosion resistance and antibacterial properties.

In addition, plastic only pollutes the environment when it leaves the industrial chain and flows into nature. Just like the lead in televisions, it is equally toxic, but we can avoid pollution by completely recycling and reusing this lead. The same goes for plastic.

I think a quote from a classmate is very interesting. Inger Anderson from UNEP says we can't recycle our way out of the crisis; We do need to use what exists, but recycling is not the answer as needs hub infrastructure.

On the contrary, we can view waste plastic as a new resource



and develop it. This approach can also be applied to most human generated waste, such as kitchen waste, construction waste materials, and heavy metals in waste light tubes.

Reference□

\* Pictures 1-8 are taken by me, Pictures 9-11 are from search engine

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# **Environmental design-week7**

## **Vitalist Materialism Zhu ShenXu**

written by s2553129 | 30 November 2023

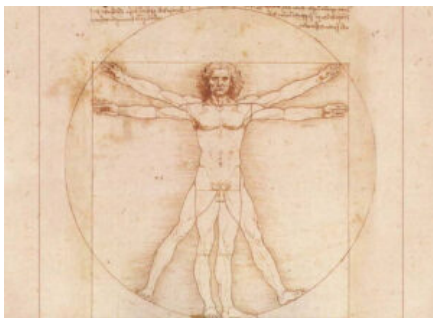


Vitalist Materialism is a radical form of environmentalism. The author holds that matter has vitality, and man is also a vital substance. Therefore, people are also part of the material world. This theory downplays the boundaries between man and the environment, thereby driving the development of environmental design.





The vitality of matter refers to the ability of objects to have an effect. The vitality of matter is usually expressed in the function and ability of objects. For example, a stone can be just a stone, but at the same time it can be a tool for digging holes. Even if we don't move it, over a long period of time, the dust held back by this stone will create a small mound.



In this theory, assemblage is very important for understanding non-identity. Non-identity refers to those who are not governed by knowledge and are “different” from the concept. A assemblage can be understood as an existence that acts on us. We as epistemologists are plagued by a disturbing feeling. No matter how accurate our analysis, there are still uncontrollable factors in nature.

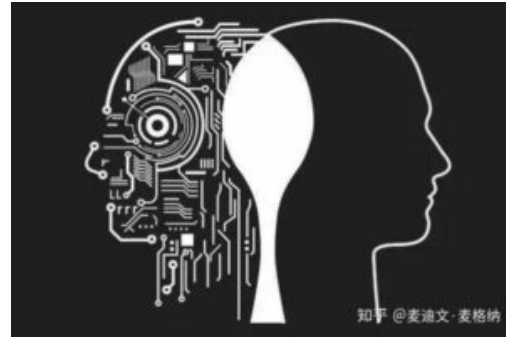
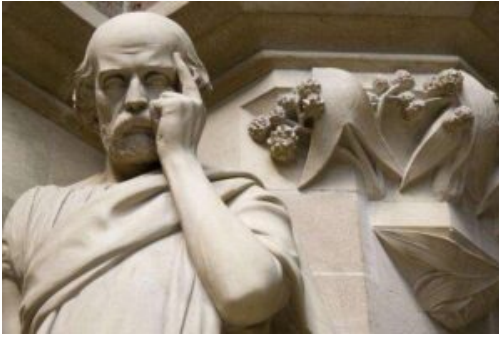


Objects do not leave no room in the concept. So life will always be beyond our knowledge and control. We need to accept it. Only then can we stop being angry at a world that refuses to give us “reconciliation.” By understanding the assemblage, we can better understand the non-identity of the way to exist, so as to feel the vitality of matter.

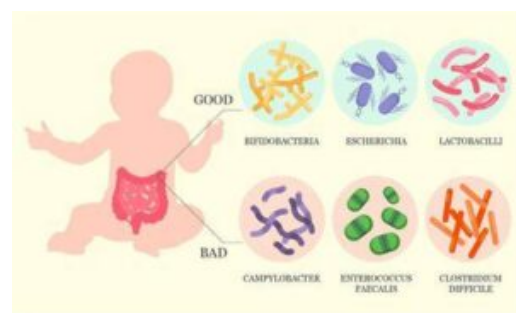
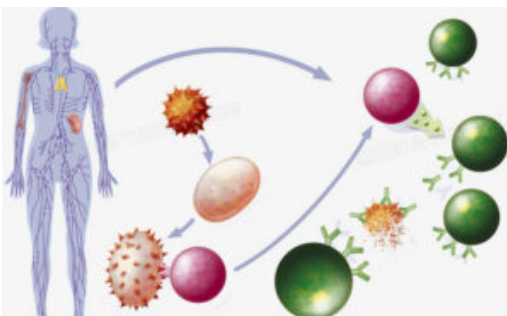
As human beings are part of the vital matter, our power is also a material power. This means that human actions and abilities are also manifestations of matter, and not merely the function of the mind or soul. Therefore, the vitality of matter exists not only in non-living objects, but also in human beings.

Through this understanding, we can better realize the importance and influence of matter. At the same time, promote the interrelationship between human beings and the environment.





This doctrine is radical because it challenges the traditional boundaries between subject and object, and between human and non-human. It presents a new view that matter has its own power and agency, and is not merely passively utilized by human subjects. This view breaks with traditional anthropocentrism, which holds that all things have their own value and rights. Following this hypothesis, human beings may be dominated by matter. Humans will exploit and oppress non-humans. It challenges traditional notions of ethics and morality.





We can also see many examples of the vitality of matter in our daily life. For example, the human immune system relies on the bacterial community in the body to function properly. The activities of the human body are not only controlled by humans themselves, but are composed of other organisms and substances that interact with humans.

reference□

1.Vibrant Matter □Simms and Potts

\* All images are from search engines