

Nigel Coats의 실내공간에 나타난 복잡성에 관한 연구

A Study of Complexity in the Interior Space by Nigel Coats

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Abstract

인류의 역사가 시작된 이후, 인간의 창조는 자연의 모방이라는 큰 울타리 안에서 이루어져 왔다. 신의 작품이 위대한 자연이라면, 인간의 작품은 극히 단순한 그것의 모방에 불과한 것인데, 인간은 인간의 제한된 두뇌 활동으로 이해하기가 불가능한 복잡한 자연을 인식하기 위하여 단순화(simplification)라는 방법을 사용하여 왔다. 이 과정에서 기하학(geometry)은 극도로 발전하게 되며, 인간의 자연 인식을 위한 보편적인 수단으로 자리잡게 된다. 중요한 사실은 기하학이 수단으로서 뿐만 아니라 인간에 의한 창조의 목표로서 위치하게 되었다는 사실이다. 즉, 기하학은 자연의 모방 이전에 이미 인간의 상상력을 지배해 왔고, 그것은 가장 보편적인 창조원리가 되어왔다는 점이다.

그러나, 최근의 과학과 기술의 발전, 특히 컴퓨터 기술의 발전으로 그 복잡한 자연은 단순화의 과정을 거치지 않은 복잡한(complex) 상태로 인간에게 이해되어지기 시작했다. 그중 하나가 19세기에 시작된 복잡성(chaos) 이론인데 실내공간의 디자인에 있어서도 이러한 자연의 복잡성(complexity)이 새로운 창조 원리로서 자리잡게 되었다. 대표적인 실내 공간 디자이너로서 Nigel Coats를 꼽을 수 가 있는데, 그의 무정부적인(anarchism) 디자인 성향은 자연에서 발견될 수 있는 특징중의 하나라고 할 수 있다. 그가 추구한 복잡성(complexity)은 일본의 동경과 같은 고 밀도(high density)의 적극적 소비 도시(active consuming city)에서 발견되는 지극히 인간적인 도시생활을 만들기 위한 software의 제작이며, 이는 자연이라는 신의 창조물에 좀더 근접한 모방이 된다.

본 연구는 Nigel Coats의 작품에서 발견될 수 있는 이러한 무정부주의적 성향이 어떻게 자연의 본질적인 복잡성(complex) 모습과 관련이 되는가를 통하여 현대 실내디자인의 새로운 방향이 이 시대의 과학적 발전에 따른 복잡성(complexity)과 연관함을 보여준다.

키워드 : Nigel Coats, Complexity, Anarchism, Narrative, Nature

1. Introduction

It is widely believed that social reformation often comes from new scientific discovery of nature, which is an advanced understanding of nature. The complex nature has been recognized to the simple one under limited intellectual abilities of human and it needs to be simplified to be understood. Therefore, its simplification to geometry is the only way to perceive the complex nature for human.

Interior design is also affected by the modification of social environment and even by its cause, new scientific discovery of nature, and sometimes conversely affects the social arrangement.

There is an application of this new understanding of nature to the interior design recently with its social changes. One of the

designers who's spaces are close to the figure of complex nature is Nigel Coats and it is thought that his design and what he is trying to say is related to the new understanding of nature.

Nigel Coats is an architect who has been practised in London. His narrative design is often collaborated with his artist friends and his students who joined the NATO, Narrative Architecture Today. However his design is in the interior field, his idea in his space is often applied to the urban design. His anarchic and complex design did not start from the theoretical things but it is enough to form a new institution of interior design.

This study is about new institution of the interior design by Nigel Coats and looks at the relationship between his spatial language and advanced understanding of the complex nature.

Therefore, this study will discuss how much the interior design of today can understand and imitate the complex nature, through his institution.

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The study was conducted through the content analysis for the research of the Nigel' s space and the figure of nature. To look at the relationship of his spatial language and the advanced understanding of complex nature, this paper raised some useful ideas on the relation between human' s creation (artefact) and God' s one (nature). Then this explains why human have to follow the natural principle and why he has to imitate the figure of nature when he creates something. In addition, this will refer how human came to understand the complex nature. After that, this study introduces Nigel Coats and his background. These are for the 'II Literature Review' part. In the parts of III Narrative, IV Collage, V Anti-Geometry, VI Anarchic Architecture, VII Software City, VIII Japan, this will discuss about the relationship between Nigel' s spacial language and the natural figure which can be recently found through the modern technology and science. Throughout theses studies, the complex interior design of today is thought to be affected by the scientific discovery. The meaning of complexity, here is a description about the real figure of nature as well as the one about Nigel' s space which is very opposite to the puristic and minimal Modern interior design.

2. Literature Review

2.1. New Understanding of nature

Nature is only thing in the world for the human, except for his artificial creation. Human creation always has been based on the nature, because the nature is orly thing for human to think with and to learn from. Therefore, the imitation of nature has been a tradition for the human' s creation since he makes something. The classic architecture which Greek and Roman architects did started from an imitation of nature. The Corinthian style order is from a botany and Ionic style order is from the hair style of women of those days. The matter if God exist or not is not important in this issue nor affect the principle of human' s creation. Because, whether or not the God exist, the nature is an only thing for his creation. Therefore, there should be some principles from the nature and it is only rule for human to follow.

The 26th paragraph of The Genesis in the Bible stated that "And God said let us make man as our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the

earth." This explains that human is a part of nature that God created, is an imitation of God and is commended to create artefacts as the God did the nature, imitating the nature, God' s creation. To understand complicated nature, human has been used to simplify the nature because of the limited intellectual ability. Then human came to be based on the simplified representation of complex nature in creation. It is geometry and has dominated human lives and even his imagination. Actually, the geometry does not exist in nature and even in his creation but human always has been under protection of geometry to communicate with nature and even with each other.

With an advancement of new technology, human became to understand the complex nature more closely. For example, new science has revealed natural topography <Fig1> has an exact order, which is not understood before. But this order is not fixed one, instead, it is integrated with repetitive transformation.¹⁾ In architecture, recently, the simplified understanding of nature is rejected and more exact one became an issue. Some of principles of nature are applied to architecture and interior design, and the study on the principle beyond the form of nature is actively progressed. Collage, self-organizing, anarchic and non-geometry are crucial thing which can be found in architecture and city as well as nature. So, while our forefather used the simplification of nature to imitate the complex nature, Nigel used the real figure of nature, complexity of nature. Because, the modern science and technology allows for him to do so.



<Fig 1> Natural Topography & Its Calculation

2.2. Nigel Coats

Nigel Coats was born in Malvern Worcestershir and studied architecture at Birmingham University and Architectural Association School of architecture under Bernard Tschumi. He was the first student who graduated from AA school without conventional architectural drawing.

Tschumi introduced some writings on Henri Lefebvre' s post-Marxist critique and Coats' notion of space borrowed from philosopher like Hegel and Kant.²⁾ When he was teaching at AA

1) Hiroshi Ninomiya & Kazuko Ninomiya, Landscape of Floating Island, AA File, 1995, The Architectural Association, London, p.30

2) Rick Poyner, Nigel Coats The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoli, New York, p.17

school, he organizes NATO, narrative architecture today, with his eight students. Most his projects are done under collaboration with NATO and some of artists. Their architecture is closer to the human real life and complex nature.

One of the important architects who are pursuing those advanced imitation of the nature is Nigel Coats and he started from real situation in a city. What he began was an exact observation of how things are working in a city and then, he realized soft things which living city made. And then, he tried to find software that makes the soft things. Finally, he makes physical city and building by using the software. Namely, he first concentrated on the incident then made planning for the physical things, not vice versa. However, the important thing is that even if he did not intended to imitate the nature, the city he thinks is the closest one to the nature. He thought that the artificial city did not produce any artificial city life as most modern planners, architects and designers failed to produce what they expected from their blue print.

3. Narrative

Nigel Coats organized 'NATO' (Narrative Architecture Today) with his eight students at AA in 1983. To make the narrative, they began from the way things are working and what they feel in a city life,³⁾ and their working is from practice to production, from building to drawing from vision to video, from talk to magazine.⁴⁾ These works enabled them to trace the real city life and to know it is not separated but connected. Namely, everything is overlapped, keeping its own figures. The narrative is about theses.

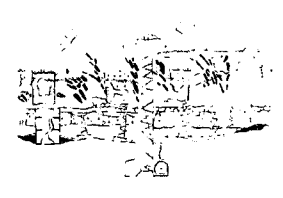
The dictionary definition of 'Narrative' is 'spoken or written account of event' or 'telling of story. Originally, it came from a Latin word 'graraus', meaning for 'knowing' so it has been understood as a kind of 'knowledge. But, from the point of linguistic view, it is a completed or unified form of more than two situations or events and it is also linked with causation and logic.'⁵⁾

His narrative architecture is well described in his drawing. <Fig2,3,4> Diverse elements whichever are architectural one or

not are illustrated in his rough drawing, composing a building. In addition to a figures of his buildings, his 'narrative' is also presented through the things that their building produce: people who are arguing with each other, background with some writing, arrows which indicates spatial flow, sky, roughly described street furniture, crashed cars, advertisement and etc. Those things are composing a story of architecture with a building. However, most of all, the important thing is that there is poor continuity among each elements. Those seems to exist isolated but surely making a story with others and everything is woven together to make active representation of his 'Narrative'.



<Fig 2> Drawing, Nursery Design



<Fig 3> Drawing, Albion Street



<Fig 4> Drawing, The House NATO

Nigel's application of this word, 'Narrative' to his architecture is about human plural situations or events that his form is making. Each element of form which makes space in his projects has diversity and they are from different source, culture, race, time and etc. And the more important thing is that those elements show active representations, making a different situations or events with each other. But, as Nigel used the word, 'Narrative' which has a meaning of unification, they are under one storyboard. The users of his interior design experience those active elements. The experience is not a spatial one directly but material (elementary) one. To understand this, 'Ando Tadao's wild concrete' is good example. He stated that "My concrete is for having people know how warm and smooth their flesh is, when they touch the cold concrete". Nigel's intention was to let people experience the attribute and meaning of element that is easily found through the real city life, while Ando tried let them

3)Rick Poyner, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.35

4)Rick Poyner, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.30

5)KyungYong Kim, What is Semiology? 1994, Mineum, Seoul

feel something from the material.

The story of nature is similar to the Nigel's. Each of elements in nature always keeps its figure over other elements and never mixes itself with others. The nature as a whole is composed of heterogeneous element. Those elements are making different situations or events. But those are always under one story. The world which human experiences through the nature composed of diverse situations or events. And the physical nature plays important role to produce human's plural events or situations under one story.

4. Collage

Another important point is that how the elements are linked together. As this paper mentioned before, Nigel's space is composed of diverse identities. On entrance facade of his project, cafe' Bongo,⁶⁾ the flight wing with jet engine after twentieth century is placed on the Corinthian style-column of Greek without any certain relationship. And also, those do not make harmony with the whole building, a part of which Nigel's space occupies.<Fig5> In the interior space, there are classical sculptures on the something like a flight wing which several steel pipe columns support.<Fig6> These inharmonious placements are about collage technique of late twentieth century.⁷⁾



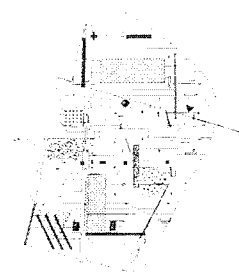
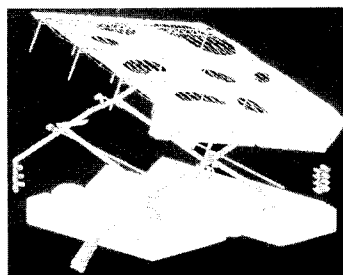
<Fig 5> Cafe' Bongo, Exterior, Japan



<Fig 6> Cafe' Bongo, Interior

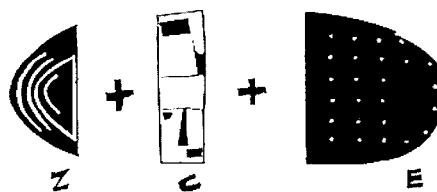
Colin Rowe, the author of 'Collage City' theorized this collage technique into architecture and some of architects as Ventury, Stirling, Gehry and some of their students start it from the existing old urban fabric. New layers were juxtaposed on the existing city layer.⁸⁾ This technique developed to the 'superimposition' of Tschumi and Koolhaas. Tschumi put the

new organized layer on the existing plan of city and put another again vertically<Fig7>... Koolhaas did horizontal one in his Parc de la Villette. Diverse lateral bands with a certain program are located one by one facing each other without mixing together and small elements called confetti are arbitrarily located. Then the element for the circulation and large existing site are located.<Fig8> In his recent project, Congrexpo, there are two conflicts among three programmes or pattern without harmony.<Fig9> Each of elements is representing their own identity by themselves and these are all about the collage technique in architecture.



<Fig 7> Le Fresnoy, Bernard Tschumi

<Fig 8> Parc, de la Villette, Rem Koolhaas



<Fig 9> Congrexpo, Rem Koolhaas

In Nigel's project, his intention is the juxtaposed placement of diverse elements, which keep their original self organizing identity to make a story. And there is no refinement or continuity among those diverse elements.<Fig10> In his project, Giant Sized Baby<Fig11> Town he started with a rule in composing new city with old one. When the new is facing with the old, the joint may be ragged but it is more ideal to show raw joint (disjunction) which the energy and express flow.⁹⁾ And this is also, collage technique in urban scale.

The crucial thing is that their collage-composition is another characteristic which can be found in the natural order. In nature, basically, there is no continuity or context. This is also the very 'self organizing' feature of the nature.¹⁰⁾ Each element in nature

6)Cafe' Bongo, Tokyo, Japan

7)Hiroshi Ninomiya & Kazuko Ninomiya, Landscape of Floating Island (AA File), 1995, The Architectural Association, London, p.30

8)Charles Jencks, The architecture of Jumping Universe, 1995, Academy Editions, London, p.79

9)Rick Poyner, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.34

10)Charles Jencks, The architecture of Jumping Universe, 1995, Academy Editions, London, p.77, p.79

is organizing themselves and growing within their own rule, keeping its original identity.



<Fig 10> Bohemian Jazz Cafe, Interior



<Fig 11> Drawing, Giant Sized Baby Town

5. Anti-Geometry

Most of his architectural drawing is by free hand. He never uses ruler to make it geometric form. As a result, No geometric form and no regular arrangement are found in his real projects as well as paper ones. If any, it is far from rigid geometry that can be found from other architect's conventional project. For example, there can be found a kind of geometry such as wing of flight at 'Cafe' Bongo <Fig5> or classical column at 'The Metropole' <Fig12> Even if they has geometry, they are far from simply minimized one but they are perceived as an object. And their arrangement is unexpected and exceptional like flight wing on the column.

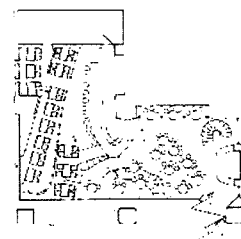
The meaning of his anti-geometric disposition can be argued through the relationship between the geometry and the nature in the history. The primary spatial revolution of architecture was affected by perspective or axonometric. Those was possible only through the geometry and since that time, designers' imagination has been hold by geometric form and organization. Therefore, it has dominated designer's mind and even imagination. However, there is no geometry in the nature.¹¹⁾ Basically, most of designer have believed that the geometry was an only way to represent the nature. Sir Christopher Wren stated that "There are two causes of beauty-natural and customary. Nature is from geometry consisting in uniformity, that is equality and proportion.... But always the true test is natural or geometric beauty. Geometrical figures are more beautiful than irregular one s." Due to limited understanding of complex nature, geometry have been only way to perceive and to calculate it but with the advancement of computer technology, the nature is more closely calculated and understood to the real nature. Many architectural

11)Jeffrey Kipness, (Architecture) After Geometry-An Anthology of Mysteries, AD Architecture after Geometry, 1997,Academy Edition, London, p.43

forms that are closer to the one of nature rather than the one of geometry are applied to its design. Its organization is also, coming to resemble the one of the nature.



<Fig 12> Drawing, Restaurant Metropole



<Fig 13> Plan, Cafe Bongo

Nigel's anti-geometric form is closer figure to the nature rather than other conventional one. The organization of his projects is also anti-geometric and similar to the one of nature. However, his or any other designer's form which, this paper stated, is close to the nature never become the very nature nor exactly resemble to it. It just becomes closer and closer to the nature with the help of advanced technology.<Fig13>

6. Anarchic architecture

In nature, the things that can be calculated or understood with human's brain are called 'order' and the rest are called 'disorder'. Anarchism has a closer meaning to the disorder. Since architecture imitated the nature, just simplified image or system of nature that is calculated or understood by human has been accepted. However, with the advanced technology, people got to know that some parts of the disorder also could be calculated or understood, if they use some developed technology, such as computer. Therefore, social arrangement began to accept disorder and the interior design also started to concentrate on it.

Nigel rejected the spatial Purism and Minimalism of modern architecture, doing collage of elements and their allusion. Instead, he collected diverse range of living culture including high and low culture like street fashion, magazine, advertising, music, television, visual art and new leisure technology, even sound as well and let them expressed through his physical architecture.¹²⁾ His architecture is also organized complexly without any geometric order. Therefore, the confusing anarchism in design is applied to the organization of space as well as the form.

12)Rick Poyner, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.11

However, his intention is not only about the form and organization but also about the movement of user in his space. People's movements become anarchic and the unexpected events are happen through his anarchic form and organization. Most of his projects are constructed through the collaboration with artists and it is about 'Art and Craft Aesthetic'. It always needs trial, error and retrial. He never want his projects to be kept permanently, instead, he wants his space to be changed even by someone else with the progresses of social environment. These are all about making unexpected events through the anarchic form and organization.

His anarchism, basically requires anti-planning in design. For example, zoning restrictions of conventional urban planning of Modernism is declined for him.¹³⁾ Making zoning according to the function to protect inherent programme of each zone's function make a social problem. Many industrial zones has been separated from other function's zone but the industrial zones came to be suffered from vacancy of people, when it is not used. However, most of all, the problem of planning should be described. In spite of city planner's or architects' intention to make city into rational and abstract one, using geometrical purity, the city has kept its own irrational, rich, dirty and erotic attribute.¹⁴⁾ The well planned purified city by modern architects and planners did not produce any artificial situation they expected. Instead, the city has produced natural thing until now. The city life is not made by artificial planning but by natural thing.

What Nigel did is that the natural design which seems to be designed by God. He, instead of planning through which designer expects a certain incident in his space, tried to insert that incident which people needs directly, from the living city life. Therefore, the design starts from the incident for the living environment to planning, not from the rigid planning to the incident. To do this, he begins with the way things are working. Art, Pop music, fanzines, street fashion, nightclub, magazine culture of The Face and i-D are pursued.¹⁵⁾ And instead of rebuilding, he preferred refurbishing to keep existing vitality.

7. Software City

13)Rick Poynor, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.30

14)Rick Poynor, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.96

15)Rick Poynor, Nigel Coats/The City in Motion, 1990, Rizzoly, New York, p.35

Nigel rejected Le Corbusier's utopian manifesto, "the death of the street" that the street in a city is just for super efficient network among three area-living, working and relaxing, keeping exact zoning.¹⁶⁾ However, the street is a only thing to vitalize the city and human basic life and the culture with its energetic things are occurred along the street. The soft element that indicates vitality of city is made by software beyond physical building and city. And utopian geometric-purity in urban form is also rejected. Beyond the physical meaning of city, there is something invisible but productive one. What Nigel Coats is proposing is not simply soft city but software city. And his interior space is an actively consuming one.

8. Japan

Like most of eastern-Asian cities, Japanese cities became high density ones and are almost typified so. The high-density condition enables element of city to be interfered by other elements. Therefore, everything is woven together and affects each other, keeping their own identities. Japanese shops on the street open their facade to the street to attract customer and they always extend their display to the street without government's permission. Blinking neon sign, love hotel, always jammed traffic and street-kiosk restaurants are important things to make active representation of city. And in the high land value of Japanese cities, most clients want something spectacle and, in most cases, never want to preserve existing buildings. Then, instead of harmonic urban context, inharmonic new form is more frequently found.

In Japan, that heterogeneity of their cities enabled the Japanese architects to make surrounding wall along its boundary to escape from the confusing situation of city life and they concentrated inward to the minimal and Zen garden. Ando Tadao's early house project, 'Azuma House' from which he got a good reputation for the first time in Japan describes this problem. This house is inserted between two Japanese traditional houses and like most of his house project, it is surrounded with continuous walls. A courtyard separates building into two parts. Thus this building protects inhabitants from the anarchic situation of city life and makes a small space (courtyard) for the family to gather. And the building is absolutely minimal which is different from the real city life.

16)Le Corbusier, Towards New Architecture, 1960, Rizzoly, New York, p.96

Nigel's anarchic design is successful in Japan. And the spectacles of Nigel Coats' projects are enough to attract Japanese people. He, instead of making walls to avoid confusing city life as most of Japanese architects did, joined the confusing situation. His architecture makes new cultural intercourse, adding new form to the existing city. He took for it granted that his completed design could be changed by some other architects according to the social requirement. His building is always ready to be changing accepting new things.

9. Conclusion

The creation of human has been a simplified imitation of complex nature that is thought to be a creation by God because of the limited intellectual ability of human to understand the nature. Due to advanced technology of modern society, the complex nature became to be understood and calculated as a more complex one. In interior design, many designers have imitated the nature in terms of organization and philosophy as well as its form.

Nigel Coat focused on complex and anarchic design which is close to the nature through a real city life, rejecting modern notion of simplified understanding of nature. His Narrative architecture is to make plural situations or events of people through his heterogeneous architectural elements and objects in a story like nature. Each of elements are juxtaposed like collage technique, keeping their characteristic and this is self-organizing characteristic of nature. Anti-geometric form and organization like any natural figures are also found in his project. This anarchic form and organization are producing anarchic movement of people as the disorder of nature makes unexpected situation of people. The artificial planning of modern interior design and urbanism was not accord with the utopia they expected. Instead, Nigel tried to find something natural and human incidents and then produce physical thing which make them. What Nigel wants to make in design is an active consuming software through which his heterogeneous objects or elements produce soft things in design. And this is a closer way to the way that the nature works.

So, it can be said that the interior design is affected by the scientific discovery, advanced understanding of the nature.

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