

Mimesis and the Spatial Experience

The human's capacity of Assimilation and their Psychological impact from an Architectural Dwelling Space

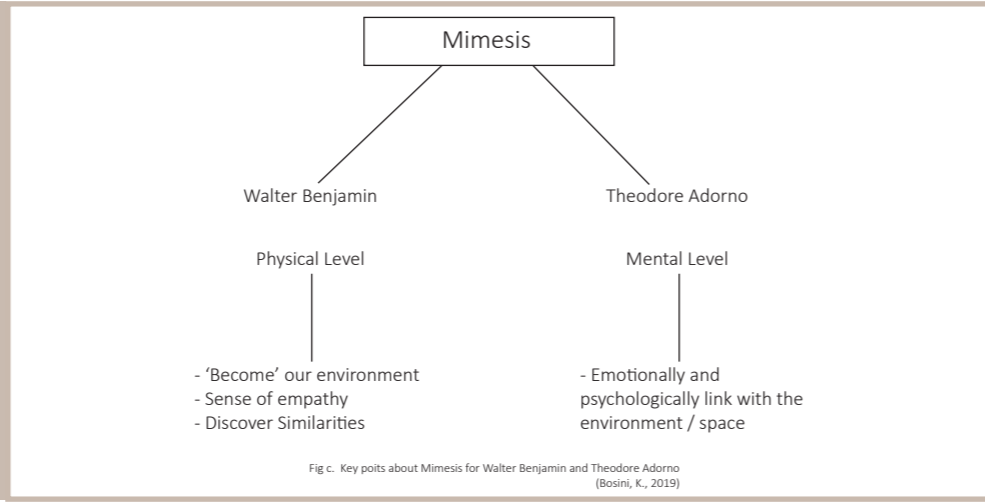
Thermal Bath at Vals, People experiencing the water feature
Photograph Taken by Fernando Guerra (ArchDaily Brasil, 2018)
Photograph Edited by me.

Research Question:

What is the impact of the human's mimetic ability in architecture, and how does architecture help the human's subconscious process of mimesis in a new dwelling space focusing on their psychological needs?

'μίμησις mimesis'

Plato & Aristotle
Western Tradition
imitative representation of the real world in art and literature
(Oxford Dictionaries | English, n.d.)
Theodore Adorno & Walter Benjamin
20th Century
"assimilation" and a form of "adaptation", and not just "imitation", in a new environment or space.
(Leach, 2006, p.22)



Abstract - Background

The representation of reality is a fundamental concept in the perception of the world and history. Analysing its historical cultures, function and meaning enables us better understanding and linking it to contemporary views. The term 'Mimesis', which origins come from the Ancient Greece, is to imitate. More specifically, Aristotle's and Plato's opinion in 424/423 – 348/347 BC, is that the idea of mimesis was inextricably connected with the way that people experience and understand artworks inspired by nature. Walter Benjamin and Theodore Adorno were two philosophers during the 20th century who addressed mimesis differently. They translated the term as "assimilation" in a new spatial environment and not as "imitation". This research focuses on the role of architecture in the fabrication of those unique individualities alongside the assimilation of a person in an unfamiliar environment. It aims analysing mimesis as a way of assimilation in real life behaviour and existence more in depth in domestic and dwelling spaces. Considering Fallingwater 1939, and Thermal Bath- 1996, the spatial dimensions and user experiences were analysed. By taking architectural phenomenological approach of Meleau Ponty's and Juhani Pallasmaa, the study investigates how architecture could play a crucial role in the creation of the sense of familiarisation in unknown spaces, through people's psychology and memories. The research outcomes concluded that psychology is equally important as functionality in the era of architecture. This research should benefit Architects, Interior Designers and Psychologists, as it provided insights on how the psychological aspect can be incorporated at early stages to inform designing of residential spaces

Aim

My aim in the dissertation is to analyse mimesis as a way of assimilation and imitation of real life behaviour and existence into a new environment, and how architecture can play a crucial role by creating that sense of familiarisation in that, through revoking known memories and feelings.

My aim is to explore that sense of 'feel like home' and the familiar that is inextricably connected with the identity and the individuality of a person. Furthermore, architecture plays a major role in the fabrication of those unique individualities and the assimilation of a person to a new unfamiliar environment, through the design and the sphere of aesthtics.

Propose an answer on how architecture could take into account not only the functional needs of a human, but also their psychological impacts in future designs.

Methodology

- Definition of what mimesis is and how the meaning of mimesis changed from Aristotle to Walter Benjamin's and Theodore Adorno's approach about mimesis (Critical Theory).
- Analyse Neil Leach's perception of mimesis in his book 'Camouflage' and how architecture plays a vital role in that process of imitation and mimesis of people in a new environment (Psyconalysis by Jacques Lacan).
- Walter Benjamin's understanding in mimesis and photography as a mean of representation of reality, memories and the 'familiar'.
- M. Merleau-Ponty's theory of phenomenology of perception in architecture and do intersections between the process of mimesis of a human in a new environment through revoking known memories, feelings and experiences, in order to reduce the sense of alienation (Phenomenology).
- Explain the parallel between human senses, memories and feelings and the impact of them in an architectural language through materiality and aesthetics carry out Peter Zumthor's personal sceptic in his book "Atmospheres" and the architectural quality (Phenomenology).
- Spatial analysis of the Thermal Baths at Vals by P. Zumthor and Falling Water by Frank Lloyd Wright as a residential building (Phenomenology).

Conclusion

- The process of mimesis is one of the most important capabilities of human beings.
- As lived and existing organisms, we have a desire, a tendency, and an automatic natural need to assimilate and blend ourselves with our surroundings, such as other people, public spaces, spaces that we hated at first, or most notably our home.
- More often, the process of mimesis and assimilation take place in domestic and dwelling spaces as is the place that we instantly emotionally link ourselves within.
- Architecture in that case is a dominant factor of the smooth process of mimesis as it is the means to adapt ourselves in the surrounding environment.
- All spaces ought to have a purpose behind the design based on the users' physical and functional needs, but also based on their psychological conditions and expectations.

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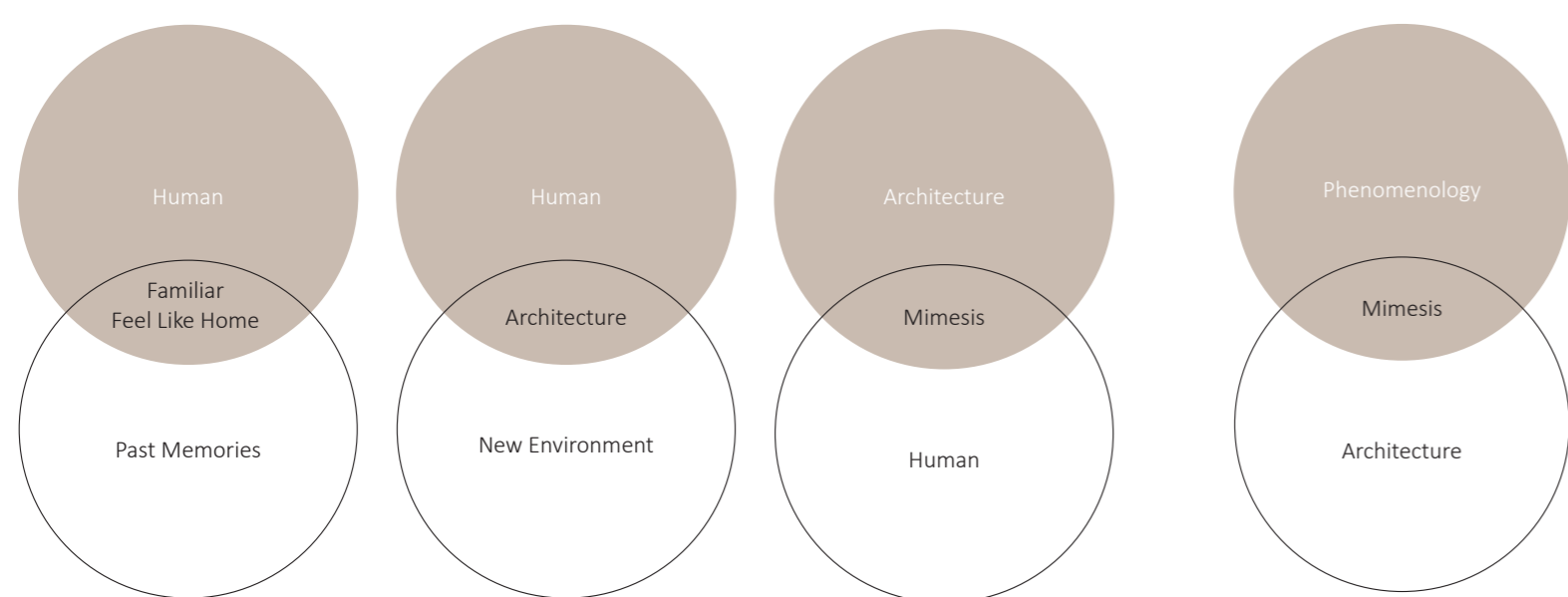


Fig. 6. Diagram about Phenomenology, Architecture, and Mimesis (Boziri, K., 2019)

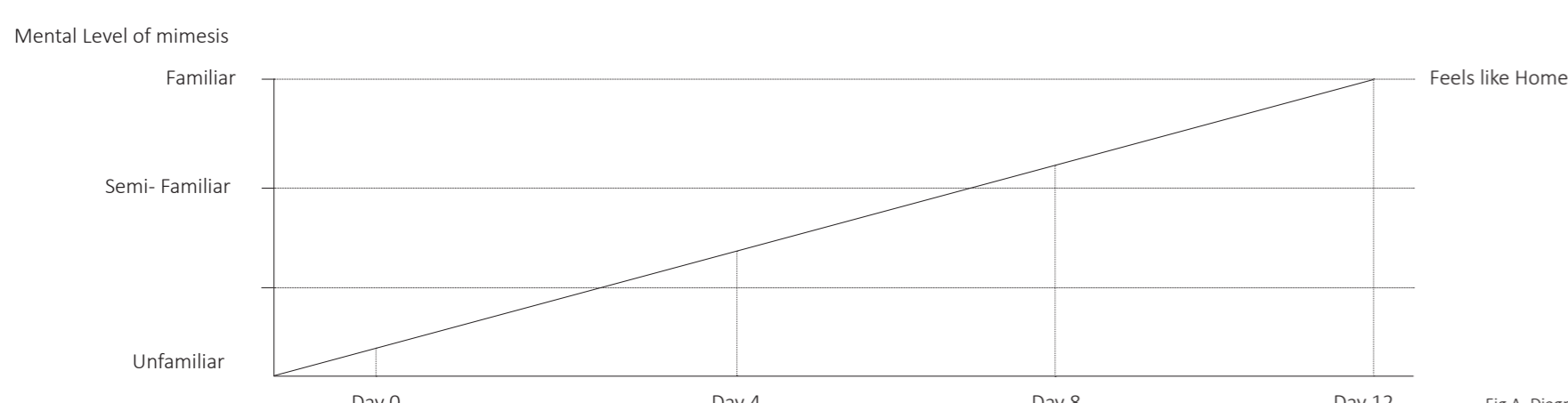


Fig. A. Diagram Mental Level of Mimesis

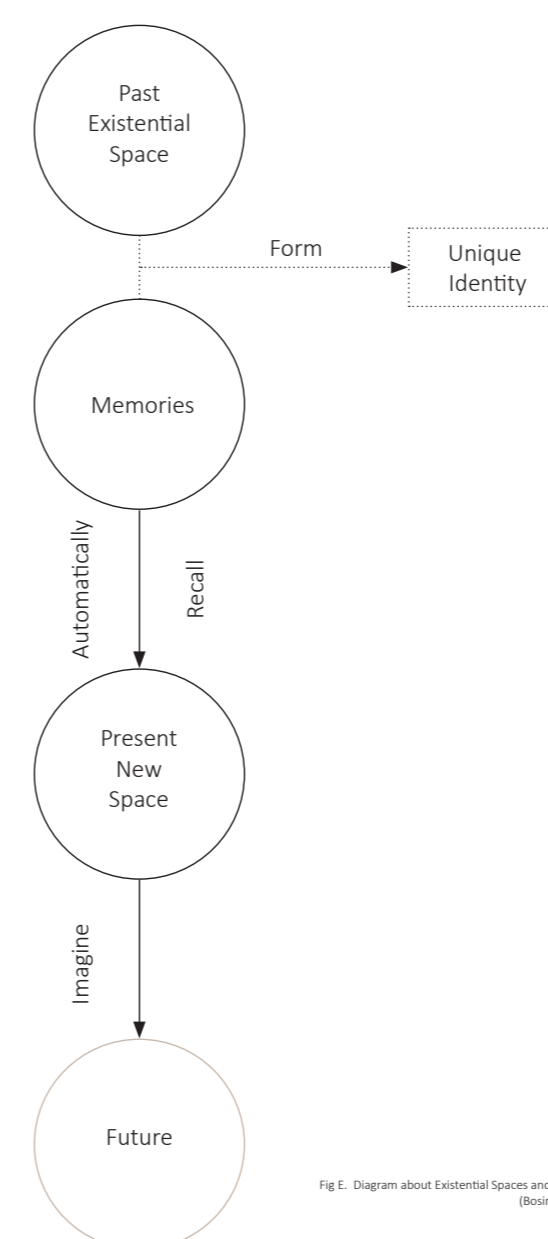


Fig. E. Diagram about Existential Spaces and Memories (Boziri, K., 2019)

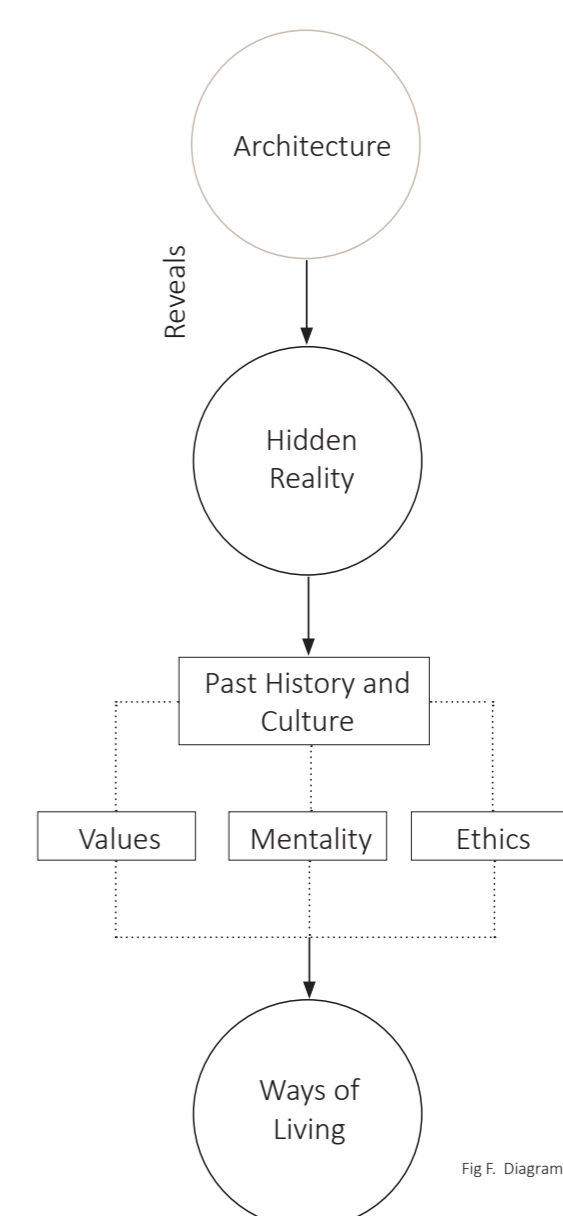


Fig. F. Diagram about Architecture and Memory (Boziri, K., 2019)