

## The Marriage of the Conscious and Unconscious in Architecture

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Psychology plays a pivotal role in defining and redefining the environment and spaces in a meaningful way to make people feel happy. Therefore, when people think about the role of psychology in architecture, they talk about environmental psychology. It is very popular among organizational psychologists and interior and industrial designers to create an evidence-based workplace that will reduce stress, increase productivity and enhance the better interpersonal relationship and organizational culture. Similarly, education psychologists stress the effect of the physical environment on teaching and learning process as well as the outcome. It has been proven that a wide range of physical aspects, like the colour of the wall, layout of furniture, spaces, ventilation and lighting spaces all play a role in the mood and emotions of the people who utilize it [1]. However, the authors argue that architectural psychology is much more than defining the utility of spaces. Every constructed structure narrates a story of the person who designed, who intended to build, whether it is clearly known to the architect or the person who intended to build. The objective of this paper is to help the readers to look at architecture from the perspective of depth psychology. Borrowing Freudian and Jungian concepts of psyche, symbols and the enigma of the unconscious that engulfs every human action, the paper makes a clarion call to all architects to become a depth psychologist.

Architectural psychology, though an important field of study, is often clouded by environmental psychology, entirely ignored and neglected. Architectural psychology is the study of individuals and the psyche to explore the covert and overt needs, desires, meanings, to give direction and purpose to an architect in construction, to maximize the satisfaction of those who commission, view or dwell [2]. Therefore, architectural psychology is much more than environmental psychology that defines meaningful spaces to the clients; it is the exploration of the conscious thoughts and desires, inner expression of the psyche, the enigma of the unconscious and the understanding of the symbols of archetypes of the collective unconscious.

Architecture etymologically a Greek word *arkhitekton*, which is a combination of *arkhi*, and *tekton*, meaning master and builder; further used in Latin as *architectus*, and in French *architecte* and later became *architecture*, and adapted in English as such. Architecture can be defined as the art and science of designing as well as building space, structure, and environment to accomplish a purpose with aesthetic features to give a sense of excitement to the viewers [2]. The first-century Roman architect Marcus Vitruvius Pollio in his Book *De Architectura* talks about three principles that define architecture [3]. a) *Firmitas*, which involves the design, materials and the durability of a structure; b) *Utilitas*, the purpose and function of the structure; c) *Venustas*, aesthetic nature of the construction that gives a unique position in the minds of the audience who view it. In order to fulfil these requirements, an architect should be a natural visionary, who can translate the client's needs into a creative structure, one who gives shape and meaning to the client's needs, one who is able to understand cultures, architectural styles and other factors to blend them into a formidable structure, and above all one who can understand the inner psychic cravings of the client.

A number of architects fail to employ the power of architecture fully when they fail to be a visionary. Today, homogenized box-like structures dominate the residential houses everywhere and the uniqueness of an architect or the inner psyche of the person who lives

in it is seldom revealed by the buildings. Some people consciously build huge houses to showcase their economic superiority or to pronounce their unique identity in their neighbourhood. However, more than focusing on the palatial structural space, or constructing an eye-catching building, the inner psychic craving of the dweller need to be dealt with by every architect, to label any structure a meaningful architecture.

### Designs in nature

It is a well-known fact that architects often get inspiration from nature for their designs. The human mind is closely associated with nature; the designs seen in nature, borrowed from nature, soothe the eyes of humans giving an enormous amount of satisfaction to the human mind. Biomimetics or biomimicry is looking for inspiration from nature by copying and imitating various elements seen in nature to resolve human problems. Getting valuable clues from nature, architects imitate, recreate complex structures by using modern construction methods and materials [4]. Architects use these for many reasons: a) to have eye-catching designs; b) to create energy efficient structures; c) to have structural designs that would last longer; d) to use a meaningful combination of materials for sustainable architecture. Beijing National Stadium nicknamed *Bird's Nest* built for the 2008 Olympic Games, by the Swiss architecture firm Herzog and de Meuron, is a fine example of biomimicry. Helix Bridge in Singapore, made of stainless steel, uses the Helix structure of DNA. Helix model has been used for centuries by architects to build attractive staircases and, a typical example is the 16th century Double Helix Staircase at the Château de Chambord castle in France [5]. Eastgate Building in Harare, Zimbabwe, is said to be inspired by the structure of termite mounds.

La Sagrada Familia Basilica in Barcelona, Spain, is a notable example of biomimicry [6]. The Sagrada Familia is designed in a unique style, imitating nature. The interiors are designed with tree-like columns and branches like tops. The interior lightings are added in such a way to inspire the devotees to get a feel of forest to take them to the mood of prayer. It was started in 1882 as a church building under the architect Francisco de Paula del Villar and in 1883 Gaudí became the architect and changed the whole design and style. It was declared a cathedral and later a basilica even before it is fully completed. As of 2018, nearly 70 percent of the work is completed and expected to be completed sometime between 2026 and 2032.

The designs seen in nature and animals are the product of billions of years of evolutionary modifications, and they are reliable. Biomimicry is, therefore, used in designing and manufacturing various useful objects and, one such invention studying mosquitoes by Japanese scientists, is a painless injections needle [7]. Taking cues from bird's wings Airbus *Sharklets* and Boeing *winglets* are designed for fuel efficiency. Thus, biomimicry gives an easy advantage for architects and inventors. A similar field of study is bionics that too takes the time-tested nature at human stride to design engineering systems and technology.

Another important element in nature that architects consciously utilise in design concepts is fractals. A fractal in Mathematics is an object or quantity that displays self-similarity in all scales, a never-ending pattern seen in every aspect of nature and its spectacular designs. Mathematician Benoît B. Mandelbrot is generally considered to be the father of fractals who coined the term fractal to describe curves, surfaces, and objects that have very peculiar properties [8,9]. Although fractals are simple mathematical calculations, they have found their niche in various architectures. By repeating fractal-generating equations many times, beautiful stunning unique patterns can be created. Lideta Mercato mall in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, by Spanish architect and Professor Xavier Vilalta is a very recent example for fractal architecture. Lideta Mercato Mall is designed based on fractal geometry; it resembles the beautiful, bold patterns found on Ethiopian women's dresses [10]. When architects consciously get inspiration from nature, they unconsciously heed the inner cravings of humans and eventually answer them in the architecture. The designs found in nature, when modelled and modified by architects into house and dwelling designs, it answers the majority of the unanswered, unexpressed beauty concepts of the clients, as well as satisfy the architects themselves.

### Depth psychology and architecture

Depth Psychology is an umbrella term used to denote deep-rooted inner motives of human behaviour by Freudian and Jungian psychology. The term was coined by Eugen Bleulerin, an early proponent of the theories of Sigmund Freud [11]. Both Freud and Jung had no knowledge of the complex nature of neural networks in the brain and the various nerve impulses in the central nervous system for every human activity and the complexity of their origin. The conscious mind is that where neural connections in the brain are alive and active whereas what classical psychologists call unconscious are the broken neural networks by which no data is retrieved and, such data remains hidden. Broken neural connections are caused by a variety of factors. The reason how and why the brain selectively chooses certain neural pathways, avoids certain routes need to be explored further; until then unconscious remains unconscious.

Depth psychology explores the deepest points of every experience, the underlying unknown causes behind neural networks leading to human behaviours. Specifically, depth psychology is all about exploring the mysteries of the unconscious as it manifests through devious dreams, impulsive images and surfacing symbols of the mind, sporadic slips of the tongue, hilarious touches of humours, consequential coincidences and instinctual interactions, all that in life that a person is not personally in control or, unaware [2]. Moreover, it explores not only the individual unconscious schemes but also interprets the internal intentions further into societal, cultural external expressions and the way all that affect the psyche (mind) [12]. In fact, to explore this complex human phenomenon from a depth psychology perspective, an interdisciplinary or a multidisciplinary approach needs to be employed; literature, arts, philosophy, religion, mythology, culture, rituals and many other disciplines that analyse any primordial praxis that transfuses the inner self with inconsistent interpretations as well as meaningful messages, need to be integrated in this endeavour [2].

Every person is a bundle of thoughts, ideas, concepts, likes, and dislikes, desires and a lot more covert and overt complex behaviours. The way Freud and Jung applied depth psychology to explore the puzzling inner self, the mysterious psyche, the enigmatic unconscious, the symbols and archetypes of the collective unconscious is an added advantage to an architect to fulfil the wishes of their clients, whether clearly defined, partially explained or not articulated at all. An architect, who fails to read the inner psyche of the complex human personality, will fail to build meaningful, satisfying buildings. In this way, an architect is a depth psychologist whose prime task is to understand and explore the inner self of a client and exhibit it through the symbols of the architecture. Personal architecture, a house or a dwelling, therefore, is an explicit symbol to reveal the inner personality, not only of the person who designed but also the one who commissions. Thus, the knowledge of depth psychology becomes an important tool for architects to assist the clients in creating symbols of their personality.

### Practical guidelines

The concept of the unconscious in traditional psychology is viewed as an antagonist in the mind who is in conflict with the conscious self. In this clinical, pathology model, the traumatic memories and painful emotions together with the repressed thoughts are brought to the conscious for modifying a person's behaviour. However, in the understanding of architectural psychology, the unconscious is viewed as a normal cognitive process and function in which some of our thoughts and memories go out of our conscious retention, recovery process. The role of an architect is to identify these forgotten or buried memories regarding the likes and dislikes, wants and fulfilments and other childhood images, forgotten archetypes and developed symbols into conscious mind, to showcase it in the construction being commissioned by the client, for utmost satisfaction of both the architect and the client. Of course, some basic knowledge of psychology, inner dynamism of human brain, cognitive processes, and depth psychology are highly recommended as a basis for understanding client's needs. Most of the techniques used by depth psychologists in therapy can be easily converted into architectural psychology as assessment tools. Besides, the following simple techniques can be utilised to understand the inner self to assist the client to build meaningful structures.

One such effective technique that architects can employ easily is Socratic Conversation. It is a kind of dialectical method in which an architect asks a series of warm and gentle, but also challenging questions in view of exploring the inner thoughts and meanings. Argument of refutation or denial, cross-examining and interrogation, testing, and scrutiny for the sake of negation, all done in view of exploring the so-called unconscious mind, to understand the real inner self of the client [13]. Another simple, yet a powerful technique is Early Memory

Exploration. This is a subjective interpretation done on meaningful early memories (including childhood) using intuitive mind in various ways, mainly by projective tests, writing life-history, drawings or in eidetic imagery. Eidetic imagery is done by asking the client to develop a picture in the mind which can be scanned as a potential stimulus for self-revealing effects [14]. Depending on the creative and innovative ability of the architect, different other techniques can be employed in a variety of ways.

### Conclusion

To be an authentic architect, one needs to explore the covert and overt requirements of the clients, whether they are articulated arbitrarily or inarticulate inner aspirations, unconscious inner psyche or consciously expressed needs, desires of both expressed and hidden. The architect must be adorned aptly to whip the neural networks, to stir the childhood memories, to bring out what is imprinted in the brain and connect the current memories (conscious) with ancestral memories that are transmitted through genes, revealed through symbols (unconscious) and plaster both conscious and unconscious aspirations to make the client happy. It is because in and through architecture, a marriage of the conscious and the unconscious mind takes place. Architects take a lead role of an officiating priest to marry the conscious and the unconscious of a client through the symbols of the architecture they create. For that reason, some basic understanding as well as the application of depth psychology is very essential, without which, no meaningful architecture is possible. Just like a psychologist, an architect needs to work closely with every person who desires to have a meaningful structure, dwelling, or a house. All students of architecture, therefore, need to learn psychology to understand the inner dynamics of the customers. A clarion call to all architects and the aspirants... become a psychologist, a depth psychologist.

### Recommendations

Based on the discussions on architectural psychology, the authors formulate the following recommendations for integrating psychology and architecture, as well as, building up architectural psychology as a vibrant multidisciplinary field to serve humanity.

1. Psychology, especially depth psychology should be integrated into formal education curriculum in engineering and architecture courses so that aspirants can receive right orientation in the specific field and become competent once they graduate.
2. Psychologists and architects need to work hand in hand in a multidisciplinary approach with the intention of creating psychometric tests to assist the architects in understanding the client's inner self and unexpressed needs. In addition, development of architecture based projective tests is the need of the hour, to design meaningful, satisfying structures.

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