

Empathy, Architecture, and Indonesia at Nation Building in the 1950's

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ABSTRACT

In Architecture context is a glorious substitute, although in reason, context can deliver architecture to a more humane product, but is it possible to adapt the context without empathy? Does the designer experience the process of empathy in the architecture of the designer? By studying how empathy works and seeing its impact on an event, can provides new narratives rather than just seeing the user purely as an object of observation. Political decisions, a view of culture, and an understanding of local traditions can be used an important inform in defining a quality of space. the presence of empathy can contribute to decisions taken by the perpetrator on the object of empathy. How can empathy be used in architecture? how empathy affect human decision? This Paper will study Empathy Thoroughly both from it's origin and how years of discourses have change it, anlyze how it can be used for architecture. Later, the understood concept will be reflected towards the 1950's of Indonesian urban and architecture.

Keywords: Architect, Empathy, Human, Indonesia, Architectural.

1. Introduction

Empathy often gets criticized and with the opinion that corners it as a naive 'idea'. Empathy is considered a mystical thing, too romantic, and has no definite scientific basis. In Architecture context is a glorious substitute, although in reason, context can deliver architecture to a more humane product, but is it possible to adapt the context without empathy? Does the designer experience the process of empathy in the architecture of the designer? By studying how empathy works and seeing its impact on an event, can provides new narratives rather than just seeing the user purely as an object of observation. Political decisions, a view of culture, and an understanding of local

traditions can be used an important inform in defining a quality of space. the presence of empathy can contribute to decisions taken by the perpetrator on the object of empathy. This may explain the many impulses present in the formation of a human decision towards and object.

How can empathy be used in architecture? how empathy affect human decision? This Paper will study Empathy Thoroughly both from it's origin and how years of discourses have change it, anlyze how it can be used for architecture. Later, the understood concept will be reflected towards the 1950's of Indonesian urban and architecture.

2. Material & Method

Empathy Through Years and 'Eyes'

Edward Titchener [1] use the term 'Empathy' as a translation to the concept of 'Einfühlung' while the concept are following the one that coined by Theodor Lipps [2]. Titchener believe that empathy is a process that allows human to humanize the target objects :

“process on humanizing objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them.”

Nowak [3] believe that the root concept of 'Einfühlung' taken from the philosophy of Johann Gottfried Herder in the 18th century. Herder assume that when someone perceiving nature phenomena, he/she can also feel the similarity between the object and humans. He assured that this particular phenomenon makes human can regard nature as part of his/her environment. Generally, according to Herder, it is empathy that allows human to be connected with nature. Through his writings "Treatise on the Origin of Language" [4] herder argued that Einfühlung are needed in interpreting text, culture, and history. Moreover, through "This Too A Philosophy of History For The Formation of Humanity" [5], Herder assured about the possibility to interprets using Einfühlung. In modern understanding, empathy can be understood as one's capability to perceive and understand another human being situation based on his/her feelings (Carrie, 2011). By it's definition empathy can be addressed as one's capability to understand, being aware, or to feel what other person are feeling. Pallasma [6] explain that empathy can make a person understand or feel the emotion emitted by an object.

Referring to German understanding of Aesthetics [7][8][2] empathy which came from Einfühlung, can be regarded as states when someone can understand, and feel the emotion of/from an object. This is possible to happen once he/she projects themselves towards the targeted aesthetic object. The re-emergence of empathy in the 19th century however, can be regarded as a response -or critics- towards Aesthetics understanding under Immanuel Kant Influences [9]. The century where philosophers tried to explain aesthetic judgement in formalist manner.

Vischer [5] saw empathy as the reason of why human decide their likings toward an object. He explain that while empathizing, one will go trough a series of process which later will determine the compatibility between the human and the situation he/she is in. The compatibility then later will affect their depth of feelings towards an object. As the feeling get deep enough, the human will be able to project their mental state into the object. Wolfflin [8] on the other hand, emphasize how human use their physiology as referent to identify the symbol perceived from observing an object.

Lipps [6] sees empathy as a phenomena where ones can resonate with an object through it's perception. Even though the understanding of empathy mainly focused on aesthetic objects in the 18's, Theodor Lipps adds that empathy is a process that happens when human starts to acknowledge the emotional state of an objects through sensory events. Lipps categorize the target of empathy into 4 kind : Human psychology, the psyche of animals, nature, and arts.

Davis [7] in 1996, from his take on empathy asserted that the phenomenon is not in the form of a state. Empathy is process that will lead to responses, a reaction caused by the stimulus perceived by human. Davis split the process of empathy into 4, antecedents, things that precede the other stages. Followed by ‘process’ which will generate interpersonal outcomes as response to the prior, and will be ended with interpersonal outcomes. This 4 stage of process must follow the one prior in its order.

More or less, The 4 stages of Davis’ empathy can be seen as parallel to the models which coined by Robert Vischer. In “Uber das Optische Formgefühl : Ein Beitrag zur Aesthetik” Vischer present a model of observation process that lead to empathy. The process started with perceiving stage (simple seeing and scanning), followed by immediate and responsive sensations, immediate and responsive feelings, which will ends up with empathy.

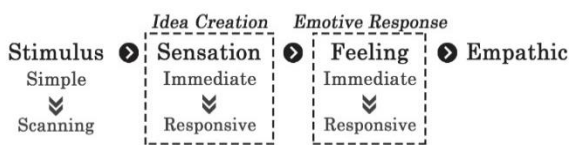


Figure 1. Robert’s Einfühlung Model
Source : Author’s Analysis

Vischer Asserted that when we see, we go through two kinds of seeing, first is ‘simple seeing’ when someone is not fully aware nor being focused into an object, the following is scanning, the state of seeing where one start observing an object that caught it’s attention. In a way the process of seeing are similar to the Davis’ antecedent, where the process will be triggered by some sort of stimulus. However, in

modern understanding [6][10] the stimulus that can cause the following stage did not came just from visual stimuly, but also through touch [6] or any Sensory [10] The contemporary understanding is plausible however, reminded that Vischer [7] believe that empathy is a chain reaction caused by human bodily sensors.

The prior process then followed by sensations, where human starts creating ideas. Vischer splits the process of sensations into two, Immediate and responsive. Robert Vischer explains the prior sensation as the stage where our whole body response to the stimulus, which involve physical response and sensory stimulation. The following, responsive sensation is the response to the prior, where our body start to produce idea such as ‘pleasant’ or ‘unpleasant.’

The idea created by prior stage then processed by our brain to produce some chemical reaction which called feelings. Similar to prior stage, Vischer divide Feelings into Immediate and Responsive feelings. Immediate feeling is the stage when our body start to check it’s compatibility with the prior sensations, which then latter will cause the responsive feeling, where human start to have more conscious emotions toward the targeted object. Vischer explain the following feeling parallel to the feeling of joy when human when hiking, or the feeling of safe under a roof. In short, it is the process of ‘feelings’ that leads to aesthetic judgment. However, Vischer asserted that there is the third kind of feeling, a deeper one that allows human start to project themselves into the targeted object.

The third feeling is Einfühlung, or empathic feeling in contemporary. Einfühlung is the state

when human starts to replicate his/her own mental images and project it into the targeted object. At this stage human will be able to understand the emotional value that the object contain. In contemporary, empathy also said to be allowing humans to acknowledge the experience of the designer through the creative process [6] However, in addition to Vischer theory about empathy, Davis [10] take on the outcome of empathy also need to be considered. He emphasize that the outcome of empathy, will arguably contribute to any judgement that human will take. Davis said that empathy is the reason why we sympathize, felt guilty, or even feeling Happy for others.

Parallel to human psychology take on empathy, the 'outcomes' can be understood as how we can perceive the atmosphere of a building like Zumorth said, or why such a park or a landscape could make us happy [6] The notion can be regarded to Lipps [2] take on how we can actively participate with an object that we perceive. Such as how we can feel being in the set of a landscape that we see from a paintings. In another words, empathy will actively define the outcomes of our emotive response towards an object. Empathy will affect the action that human take in relation to another being as his/her empathy target.

Through Imagination with Similarity

Although the process of empathy are pretty much clear, the big question is how can someone reach empathic feeling that it is regarded as a deeper kind of feeling? According to Vischer's [7] model of empathy, it can be said that human reach empathy at some certain level of feelings. Vischer [7], Wolfflin [8], and many other German philosophers, acknowledge humans similarity with the object targeted

contribute on how us human imagine projecting ourselves into it.

Vischer acknowledge that horizontal and vertical line from an object will make human feel easier and more comfortable in perceiving it. The reason lies under the physical structure of human eyes neuron which hold tight in the form of straight line. Wolfflin [8] however, said that the form of an objects symbolize the shape of human physiology, thus it enables one to easily simulate the condition and project his/her mental image into the objects. in a manner, it can be said that what happens is that human go through some short of simulation that enables a replication which later will allow ones to reach empathy.

In the much later take on empathy. Vittorio Gallese [11] asserted that human brain have a set of mechanism that likely contribute to the simulation said above. The mechanism that allows human to go through an internal simulation. The so called 'embodied simulation' are ones that can be considered parallel to the prior understanding such in Vischer's 'imagination' [7]. The 'embodied simulation' however, are possible thanks to to Mirror-Mechanism [6][9][11]. The mechanism activity allows human to replicate a situation that he/she perceive as if themselves that undergo the situation :

"Mirror mechanisms are sensorimotor circuits that fire not just when we perform an action, but when we see or hear someone else performing an action, such as playing the piano or lifting a tea cup. Effectively, parts of our sensorimotor circuits respond as if we were performing the action, excluding those motor circuits

by which we would actually perform the action”.(Mallgrave, 2016)[9]

Mirror mechanism enables embodied simulations, which enable humans to replicate the situation that he/she perceive through sensory senses and make the person him/her self feeling as if they undergoes the situation themselves [6][11]. However, if we pay attention to the replicating process, it can be understood that our brain use our prior memories as a reference to what we perceive. According to Gallese [11], the sensory circuits replicate what someone perceive exactly as ‘how’ when he/she actually doing it, ergo the replication must have enough ‘data’ to be replicated, enough memory as references. The understanding of how similarity contribute to the simulation can be related to what Håkansson said :

“Cues in the target’s situation remind the empathizer of similar experiences in his or her own past and evoke feelings that match the target’s situation. For instance, if we have a distressing experience, and later observe someone in a similar situation, cues in the other’s situation that remind us of our own past experience may evoke a feeling of distress in us again”.

In short, it can be said that for one to be empathic means that he/she must have enough information to be used. The similarity between empathizer and targeted object will define of how empathic someone can be towards the target. Ergo, empathy can not be regarded as a binary state anymore, it is not about being able or not, it is about how empathic can human be toward its object. One’s capability to empathize are in the form of spectrums, and how deep the

empathy depends on the presence of their similar experience.

To extend the notion however, another take on similarity such from David Hume (1957) that regards similarity as similar experience and feelings, or Hoffman (2000) that saw culture, worries, and emotion as part of similarity, can explain how different people might have diverse understanding toward an exact same object.

Cinemas, Nation, And Architecture

Since being free from Dutch restraints and rules, many parts of Indonesian society are slowly looking for identity and forming their new, freer lives. This can be seen by the presence of so many new things in Indonesia.

The emergance of building spirits, can be seen through few things. In Masak’s ‘Sinema Pada Masa Soekarno’, he said that in the range of Indonesian cinema during Soekarno's (1950-1966) guided period, many Indonesian filmmakers began trying to use film as a medium to represent Indonesia's situation. Many movies tried to show how much Indonesia have grown, some showcase how younger Indonesian people have grown in the matter of thinking way. Representing how ‘modern’ Indonesian have become.

Architectural building can be seen from scene to scene in the movie, from Airports and how busy Jakartan come and goes, The trafic and public transport that help the citizen commutes, and even Housing that regarded as one of the most popular Indonesian architectural style.



Figure 2. A Scene From 'Tiga Dara' showing Jengki House

Source : Tiga Dara Movie

The Architectural style shown above called 'Jengki Architecture'. It is one of the most popular architectural styles in the 1950s to 1970s in Indonesia. The name Jengki architecture itself was popularized by Josef Prijatomo, through an article in Surabaya post in 1992. According to Josef (1996), the name Jengki can be associated with the popularity of the name "Jengki" in the 1950s in Indonesia.

However, according to the book 'Retronesia : Years of Building Dangerously' Jengki architecture can be found in almost all part of Indonesia. from Palembang, Pangkal Pinang and certainly Jakarta, where it originally emerge. however, the style itself has been reinterpreted differently, thus the diverse form and shape. According to Tariq Khalil, the diversity of jengki architecture is due to the demand and 'tukan' or the house builder capability to interpret.

3. Results and Discussion Empathy For Architecture

The first elephant In the room that need to be adressed is How Can Empathy Be Relatable to Architecture? How can empathy be used for Spatial Understanding? This question can be adressed to the understanding of German

Aesthetics of empathy. Vischer [7], Wolfflin [8], and Lipps [2] illustrates how empathy is present and determines how one can judge an aesthetic object. The thing that needs to be underlined is how this refinement, presents empathy as a tool that influences a human's determination of the level of satisfaction of an aesthetic object. The lower the empathy for an object, the more difficult it is for someone to feel satisfied with an object.

When referring to that understanding, it can be understood, that through empathy, a human will determine which one good and not for him, which is fun and which makes it uncomfortable, what is appropriate and not for his life. Regarding space quality, Juhani Pallasma through "Empathic and Embodied Imagination: Intuiting Experience and Life in Architecture" revealed that in designing, humans often carry out simulations related to the building being formed in their minds:

"The designer places himself in the role of future dwellers, and tests the validity of ideas through imaginative exchange of roles and personalities. Thus, the architect is bound to conceive the design essentially for him / herself as the momentary surrogate of the actual occupant."

If the opinion of the Pallasma is considered as a stage that might occur to each architects who experience the design process, this can be good news, the implication is that he has successfully empathized.

A designer must be able to ascertain which personification should be used in the simulation. Ensure what the character needs, so the constitution the subjectivity of each persona

can present space quality that is not too biased. With empathy for prospective residents as the main character in the simulation, should the quality of the space presented can also be closer to what the candidate occupants needs.

In architecture, regarding the utilization of empathy as a tool to shape the quality of Spaces, When looking at how the process of being empathetic; it can be realized how simillarity will affect one's judgment on the quality of an object.

The Presence of Empathy in Indonesia around the 1950's

At the surface, how Indonesian film maker decided to showcase how Indonesia have grown can simply be seen as representation of proudness. However, according to Masak (2016) The current leader of Indonesia at the time feel the other way about how The movies have been inaccurate in representing Indonesia. As explained in the dissertation of Tanete Pong Masak (2016), a sense of nationalism and passion has made Indonesia become a major driver of the film industry. There are 76 companies that produce 317 films. This is truly an extraordinary event that hasn't happened in the history of film in the archipelago, even until the 21st century. This uproar gave rise to grandiose dreams in the term Djakartawood, which was truly optimistic, but also naive.

Djakartawood's dream is spread in various mass media. The first edition of the Cinema Magazine in 1955 proclaimed the roar: "We are proud to have Djakartawood, which for us is like Hollywood for Americans. Djakartawood is a film world that grows with reliable producers, screenwriters, movie stars. Djakartawood's growth does not only affect

people Indonesia and the world of Asian cinema, but it will also be an important part of world cinema."

'Djakartawood' terms is used to craft Jakarta so that it can be compared to Hollywood. as recorded in history, People in Indonesia has been exposed with a lot of movies, especially the one that came from Hollywood. it is well known that Soekarno was a big fan of Hollywood movies.

Now the fact that Soekarno could not agree with film makers regarding the representation of Indonesian might have posed some understanding. Which one is right? Soekarno or Film makers? Do the representation accurately depict Indonesian? or it were meant to craft Indonesian into thinking that what represented in the movie is how they should be? or maybe it just simply different views from different people? to remember that one's empathy will be defined by his/her lifelong experiences.

Some of the movies keep showcasing 'Kebayoran Baru' as how modern city is. Indeed, Kebayoran Baru were meant to be the most recent and modern representation at the time. To look at Jengki Architecture and how popular it was can be understood as how Kebayoran Baru has succeeded in representing modern Indonesian architectural style. but is it because it is popular that it was included in the movie? or is it because the movies that the architectural style has gone popular?

The architectural style mentioned can also be analysed deeper through the understanding of empathy. as mentioned by Tariq Khalil (2016) [12], this particular architectural style have been reinterpreted so many times that it became

so diverse. Khalil also said that the owner plays important role of how the style being interpereted.

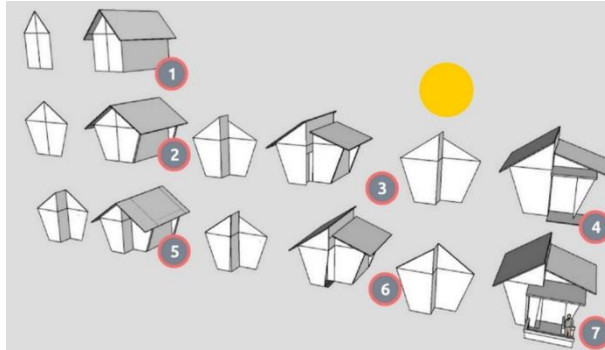


Figure 3. Transformation Of Jengki Architecture
Source : Author's Analysis

Different part of Indonesia meant different kind of jengki architecture. even though the source of the information of how to design it came from similar source (the builder involved with original Jengki architecture in kebayoran baru). The inputs from the owner plays a role in defining what best for the house to be crafted. now this samples of how experience has affected human aesthetic judgement.

4. Conclusion

In architecture, empathy can be used to cut down and understand potential users by empathizing with them. Used as a tool to understand how the construction of the experiences of prospective users will determine response to a target. Empty can be used to find which one is suitable and not, or comfortness for prospective users. In the end the space presented can give satisfaction to the users in the future.

The next utilization is to reconstruct the way empathy works. One important factor in the presence of empathy is simillarity. When referring to Wolflin [8], Lipps [2], and Hoffman

(2000), it can be understood that in fact simillarity can be an analogy of a collection of memories and experiences of a person from the past.

Body Shape, Feelings, Experience, Culture, Anxiety and Emotion, are part of memory that is owned by someone, becomes a construction that is built through cultivating memories and years of experience. By turning back the process of empathy then the judgment of a human being can actually be formed. It describe that the experience of space and memory of something in a person's environment, can slowly give human the idea of new appropriateness, into a collection of memories as experience. In the end, continous exposure to 'new' experience, can set a new construction of understanding, becoming a new standard for a decision: forming a new simillarity through intensity.

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