



fig 2. soccer player



fig 3. Basketball hoop at school

“ONE OF THE CRUELEST LEGACIES OF APARTHEID IS
ITS DISTORTION OF SPORT AND RECREATION IN OUR
SOCIETY, THE ENFORCED SEGREGATION OF THESE
ACTIVITIES AND THE GROSS NEGLECT IN PROVIDING
FACILITIES FOR THE MAJORITY OF SOUTH AFRICA’S
PEOPLE. THIS HAS DENIED MILLIONS OF PEOPLE AND
PARTICULARLY OUR YOUTH THE RIGHT TO A NORMAL
AND HEALTHY LIFE.”

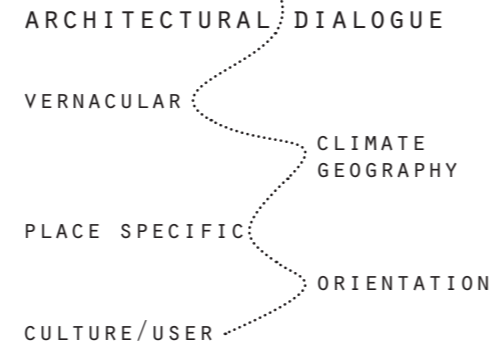
(African National Congress 1994)

THEORETICAL APPROACH

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NORMATIVE STANCE TOWARD ARCHITECTURE

LYF [TAAL]



“IT IS THE THEORY THAT DETERMINES WHAT WE OBSERVE.” ALBERT EINSTEIN

The Norwegian architect, Norberg-Schultz (1926-2000) writes: "There are not different types of architecture, but rather different situations that require different solutions in order to satisfy humanity's physical [and emotional] need" (1980: 5).

The problem that architects in South Africa are faced with is to be able to respond to these different situations and to still somehow attempt to create an architectural language that is indigenous to a larger South African context.

This problem of architectural language gave rise to the concept of "Lyf[Taal]". Architecture is a creative interpretation and reinterpretation of ever-changing elements that ultimately produce space and place. These spaces should then be able to

continually communicate with the ever-changing morphologies of society. In order for this communication to take place, architecture needs to be a living, breathing, seeing and nurturing process and product that protects the people who use it. It is the opinion of the author that there should be harmony between architecture and the user- a symbiotic relationship that benefits both.

The well-being of people is a fundamental aspect architects should aim to address. Without the user, buildings do not communicate. Without users, architecture is irrelevant and lifeless. It is thus of utmost importance that the language of architecture is clear and understandable. Only then will architecture enable a building to require no justification for its existence.

Skins and Screens

The building's envelope or skin not only contributes to its aesthetic appeal but it is a tool for architectural communication. The building responds to surrounding structures and creates spaces in-between. These in-between spaces form the introduction of every building and in most cases carry more value for the general public than the intramural. This carries significant importance to the building itself as well as the identity of its users. Finally, the architecture must communicate in a 'local tongue'¹.

The South African architect Gawie Fagan (1983:50) wrote that "context and relation to the environment in the widest sense [is] the first rule of his architectural language."

This dissertation strives toward the development of a vernacular² language with a regional dialect. Vernacular architecture and the search thereof are examples of a native architectural language, or 'taal'. Apart from developing an architectural language, other nonnegotiable elements such as sustainability and resource efficient design are an integrated part of good vernacular buildings.

The aim of this dissertation is to respond to the social and physical demands of people by creating vibrant flexible spaces that are not limited to their functional program but also representative of good architectural dialogue within its context.

¹ A description of an architectural language that is born within its local context. It is often familiar and came into being as a response to the immediate limitations in terms of technology, skill and material.

² The language or dialect spoken by the ordinary people in a particular country or region.

“AN APPROPRIATE SOUTHERN AFRICAN ARCHITECTURE WILL THUS BY ITS VERY DEFINITION, SHOW STRONG REGIONAL DIFFERENCES REFLECTING CULTURAL AND CLIMATIC VARIANTS.

(FAGAN 1983:1)

SPORT IN SOCIETY__

RAMON SPAAIJ



fig 4. Ramon Spaaij (Google images 2012)

Cultures, Commerce, Media, Politics

Ramón Spaaij is a Senior Researcher in the School of Social Sciences at La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia, and at the Amsterdam Institute for Social Science Research, University of Amsterdam, the Netherlands.

Spaaij acknowledges the widespread belief that sport has the power to make a society more equal, socially cohesive and peaceful. The proof of which is in the public-private partnerships and in the ever-expanding efforts of organisations on local, national and international levels (Spaaij 2009: 1108).

He stresses the fact that the heralding status of sport as an agent of personal and social change has not gone unchallenged and warns

that social development through sport should not be imposed on disadvantaged communities in a 'top-down' manner. One should rather focus primarily on community engagement and shared ownership. 'Sport for development' programmes should be voluntary and promote rather than enforce self-reliance and empowerment (Spaaij 2009: 1109).

It is important to establish an indigenous understanding of a place before taking an interest in the means and ends of the proposed development. One must understand ethical and moral issues as well as the practicalities of that particular region and not manufacture gross generalisations that might lead to prejudiced responses. Spaaij (2009: 1108) states that arguably, the main

limitation is the absence of an understanding of processes and mechanisms which either produce, or are assumed to produce, particular impacts and outcomes. In other words, we should understand what processes produce what effects, for which participants and in what circumstances.

Spaaij (2009: 1108) believes that sport as a programme needs to be designed. I concur with Spaaij and believe that there is a void in the above mentioned equation for social change through sport, that could be successfully filled by architecture.

"...AS PART OF THIS PROCESS, WE HAVE INCREASINGLY COME TO UNDERSTAND THAT SPORT AS A PROGRAM NEEDS TO BE CAREFULLY DESIGNED FOR SOCIAL BENEFITS TO ACCRUE."

(SPAAIJ 2009:1110)

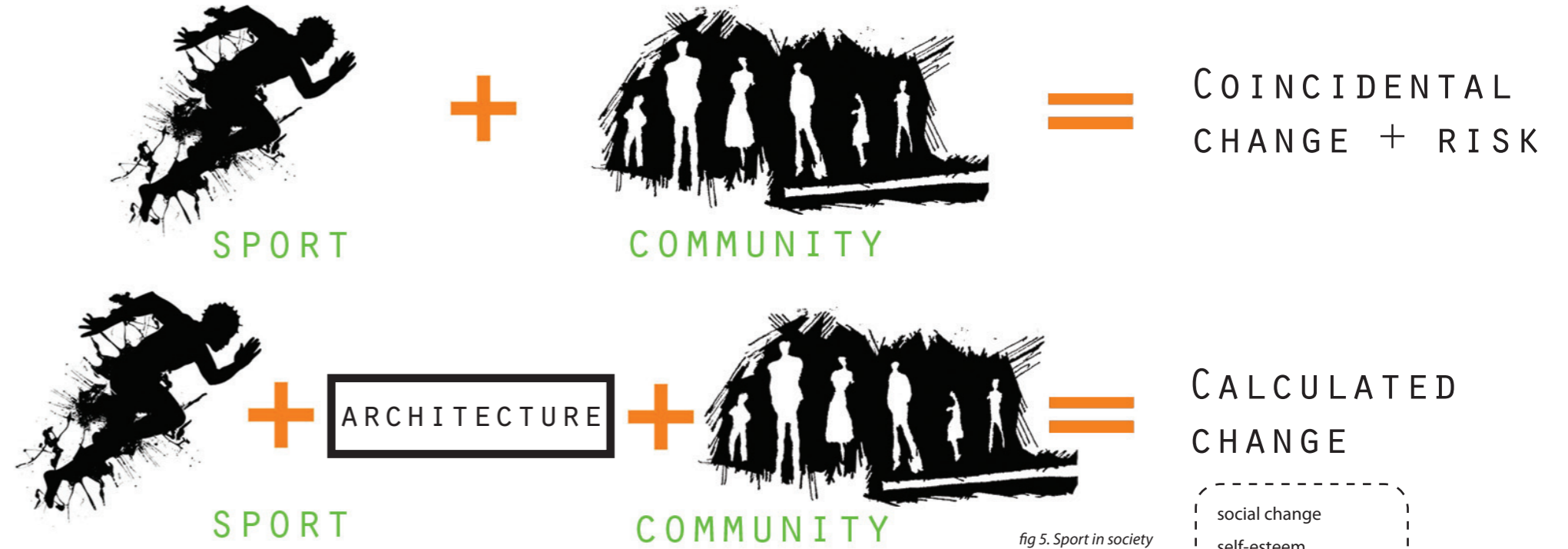


fig 5. Sport in society

- social change
- self-esteem
- peace building
- reconciliation
- gender equality
- even opportunities
- economic change
- self reliance
- physical health
- lower crime rate
- better health
- employment
- respect
- teamwork
- cross cultural dialogue
- non violence

SPORT AS OPPORTUNITY FOR COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND PEACE BUILDING IN SOUTH AFRICA

MARION KEIM



fig 6. Marion Keim (Google images 2012).

‘THERE IS A WIDESPREAD NOTION THAT LINGUISTIC AND CULTURAL BARRIERS ARE MORE EASILY OVERCOME IN SPORT THAN IN OTHER AREAS OF SOCIAL LIFE. FOR THIS REASON, SPORT IS OFTEN REFERRED TO AS THE “CONVEYOR OF CULTURE OF THE MOST ACCESSIBLE SYMBOLISM.”’

(GIEBHAIN 1995:167; HARMS 1985: 63)

‘IN FEW COUNTRIES COULD INSTITUTIONS OF CIVIL SOCIETY (SUCH AS SPORT) OUTFLANK AND MANIPULATE WHAT APPEARS TO BE A POWERFUL STATE IN THIS MANNER; IN NO OTHER COUNTRY, PERHAPS, COULD SPORTING INSTITUTIONS HAVE PLAYED SO LARGE A PART IN FORMING THE DIRECTION THAT [SOUTH AFRICA] WOULD TAKE.’

(ALLISON 2000:69)

Time, Politics, Society and Cultural Symbolic Capital

Marion Keim is an Associate Professor at the University of the Western Cape, South Africa and is world renowned for her research on community development through sport. The investigated theory by Keim centres around the role of sport in the development of South Africa and could be categorised into the past, the present and the future condition.

With regard to the past, Keim agrees with Allison that there are few countries in which sport have played such a formative role in the process of building a cohesive national character as South Africa. The very first democratic president of South Africa and world renowned humanitarian, Mr. Nelson Mandela said that sport has the potential to unite a nation. It wasn't long before these famous words of Mr. Mandela was proved to be correct when South Africa won the Rugby World Cup for the first time in 1995 and years of political strife momentarily seemed petty.

In the present condition Keim, with special reference to Harms (1982: 6), identified four aspects of sport that should be emphasised for sport to function as a tool of social integration and peace building processes between parties of different cultural backgrounds:

- 1.) Sport as non-verbal means of communication.
- 2.) Sports programmes as occasions for collective experience and direct physical contact.
- 3.) Sport as a medium which transcends divisions of class.
- 4.) Sport as an instrument of culture (Harms 1982:6).

In terms of the future, Keim identifies potential threats to the peace building process in South Africa. Ethnic prejudices, racism and xenophobia - attitudes ingrained by Apartheid- form obstacles from the past that might negatively influence the future.

Conclusion

The author concurs with Keim's theoretical argument by stating that the nature of our historic background has shown to withhold the positive influence of sport in our society. Despite this after a process of transformation, South Africa has first hand experience in the reconciliatory potential of sport and is the ideal host for a new 'sport for development' building prototype.

In conclusion, the representation of our past, present and future should become an integral part of the proposed building design. It should be a building that responds to a memory and projects towards a common communal goal.

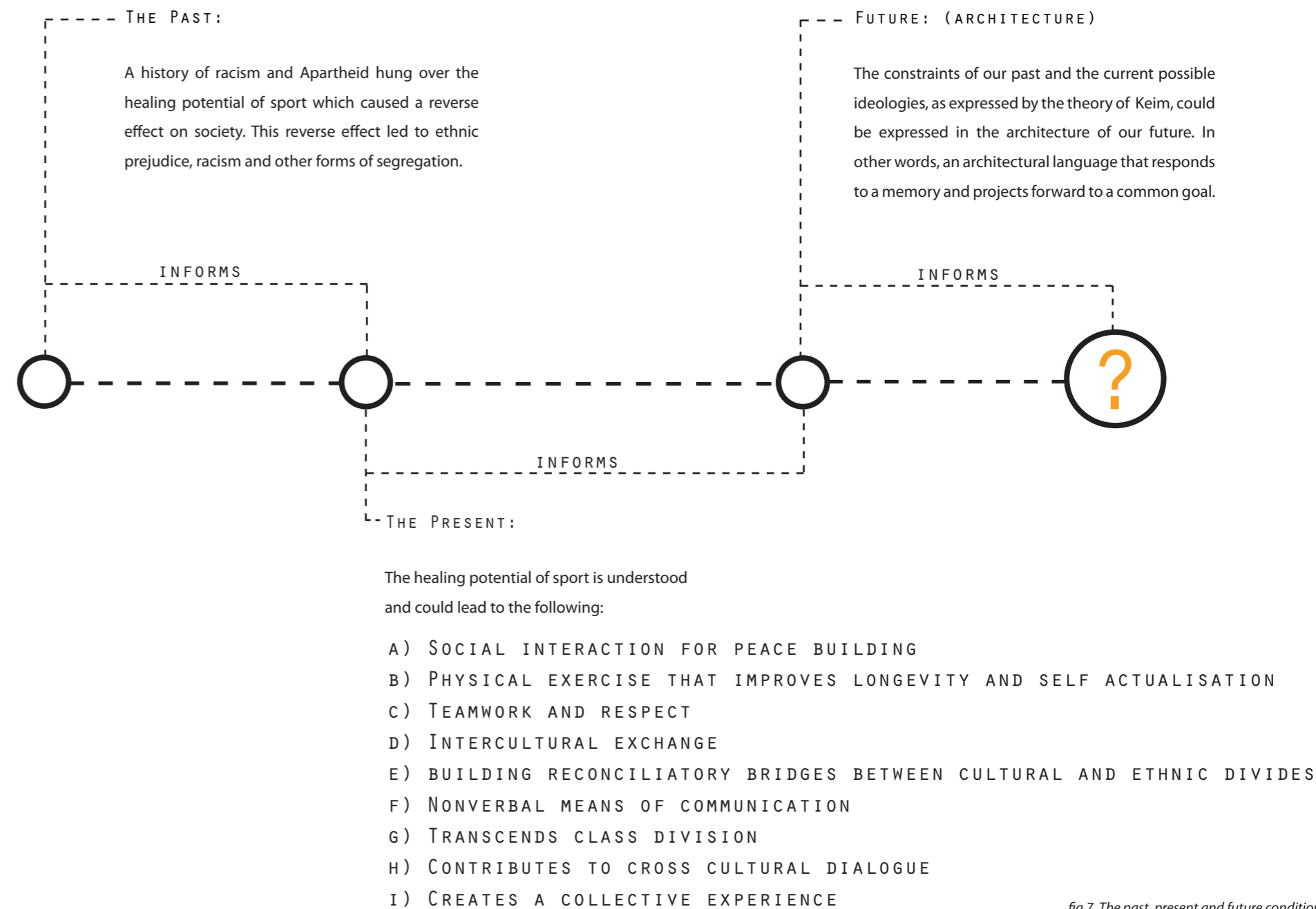


fig 7. The past, present and future condition

SPACE IS THE MACHINE__

A CONFIGURATIONAL THEORY OF ARCHITECTURE

BILL HILLIER - ARCHITECT



fig 8. Bill Hillier. (Google images 2012)

Space as Place Between Substance and Meaning

Bill Hillier (2007:305) equates the activity of building or space making as the meeting point of two worlds namely, our physical continuous material world of objects, which we occupy and move in and the metaphysical discontinuous world of expressive forms, signs and symbols that we occupy cognitively.

Hillier refers to the physical world as the 'real' world, and the metaphysical as the 'logical' world.

Space, as result of building, is thus where the 'real' meets the 'logical'. In architectural terms, 'real' refers to the physical built form and 'logical' refers to the social abstraction.

Hillier uses the example of a church that cannot be a church without a priest and congregation. We encounter a problem

when we separate social institutions from the buildings they occupy because the one defines the other.

Hillier further elaborates that a social abstraction¹ gives meaning to the building and the building² gives substance to a social abstraction (Hillier:2007). Consequently, the space and the meeting point of the two worlds is a place of substance and meaning.

Hillier uses terms more common to genetics and describes the social abstraction as the **genotype**, and the building as the **phenotype**.

"Genotype" refers to an organism's full hereditary information, even if not expressed- the genetic make-up of the organism.

"Phenotype" is an organism's actual observed properties, such as morphology, development and behaviour.

Conclusion

Buildings and social abstraction are respectively the phenotypes and genotypes that form the living organisms of our society. By using biology as metaphor, Hillier helps us to understand how humans and built spaces interrelate. The life of built space and the occupants depends on the crossing of these two worlds.

¹ The social abstraction refers to the metaphysical and logical word that gives meaning to the built form.

² Built form: the real continuous physical world that gives substance to a social abstraction.

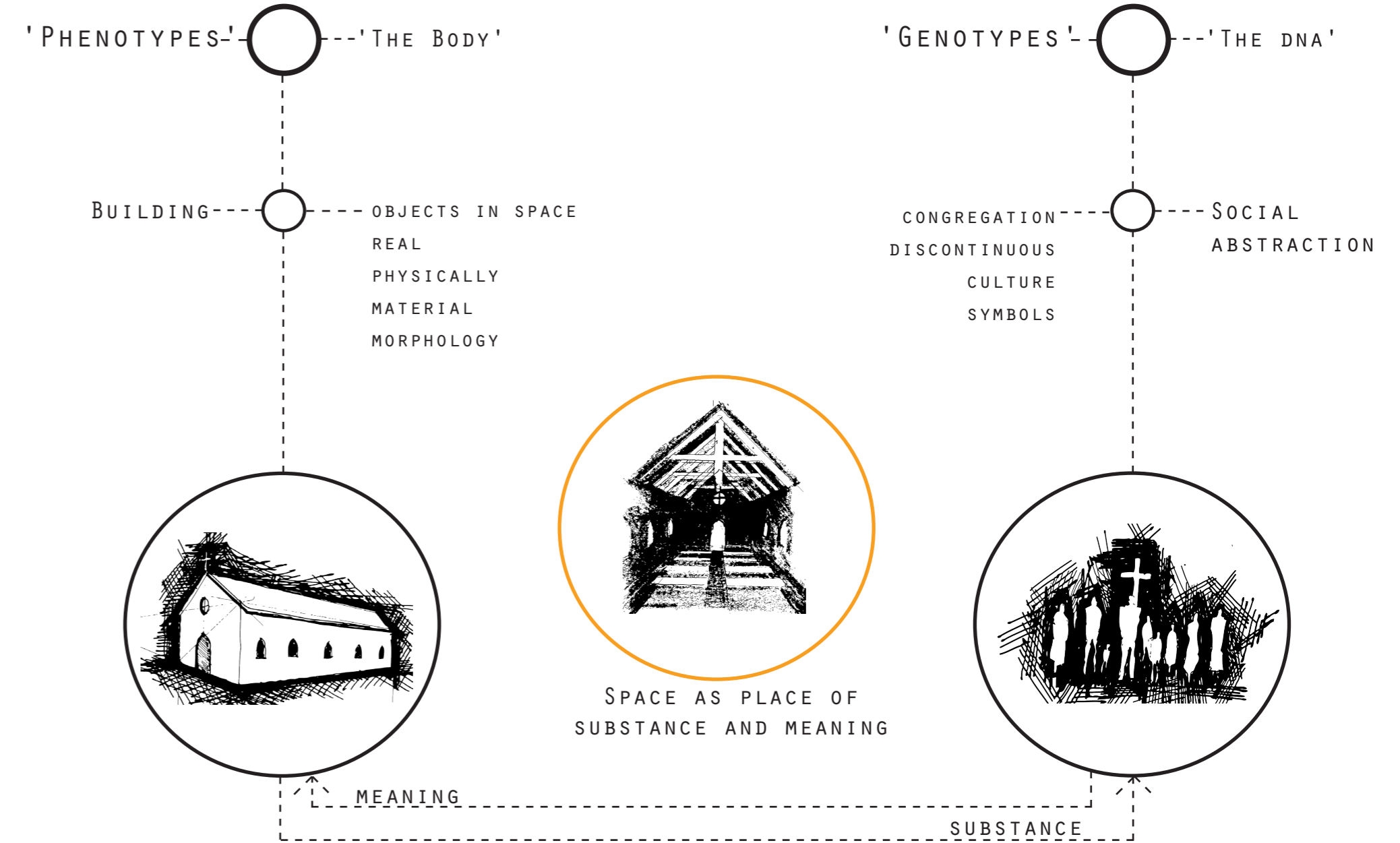


fig 9. Genotypes and phenotypes.

THE BRIDGE AS DWELLING

MARTIN HEIDEGGER - GERMAN PHILOSOPHER

(SEPTEMBER 26, 1889 – MAY 26, 1976)

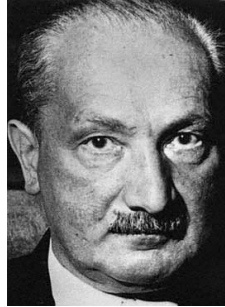


fig 10. Martin Heidegger (Google images 2012).

The Bridge as Dwelling

Heidegger contemplates the meaning of dwelling and its correlation with the idea of building. Heidegger raises two questions that does not categorise the view of building as art or technique of construction but traces building back to a domain to which everything that *is*, belongs:

1) What is it to dwell?

Heidegger states that mortal man must be of the understanding that even though man acts as though he is the shaper of language, language still remains the master of man. Heidegger thus borrows the descriptive potential of Old English, German, Old Saxon, Gothic and Greek to formulate a conclusion by means of linguistic reasoning.

To dwell is the simple unity of saving the Earth, receiving the sky, awaiting the divinities and initiating mortals. These four elements are described by Heidegger as the FOURFOLD.

2) In what way does building belong to dwelling?

To formulate an answer to this question, Heidegger uses an example of the bridge. The bridge becomes the personification of the question. "The bridge gathers to itself, in its own way, the earth and sky and divinities and mortals"(Heidegger 1971:151). Due to lack of a better modern word, gathering or assembling by linguistic research is translated as 'thing'.

Heidegger explains that people tend to think of the bridge as merely a bridge but beyond the obvious the bridge occasionally

"ALWAYS AND EVER DIFFERENTLY THE BRIDGE ESCORTS THE LINGERING AND HASTENING WAYS OF MEN TO AND FRO, SO THAT THEY MAY GET TO OTHER BANKS AND IN THE END, AS MORTALS, TO THE OTHER SIDE."

(HEIDEGGER 1971:152)

expresses something else and in essence becomes a symbol. However, being a only a symbol does not suffice. Therefore, what makes the bridge significant and how does it substantiate dwelling?

Heidegger answers that the bridge is indeed a **thing**- an object of gathering and assembling.-gathering and assembling the fourfold to distinguish a building from merely being a building and transform it into dwelling.

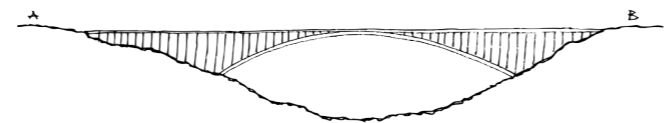


fig 10b. Bridge

THE BRIDGE - (HEIDEGGER 1971:152)

The bridge swings over the stream "with ease and power." It does not just connect banks that are already there. The banks emerge as banks only as the bridge crosses the stream. The bridge designedly causes them to lie across from each other. One side is set off against the other by the bridge. Nor do the banks stretch along the stream as indifferent border strips of the dry land. With the banks, the bridge brings to the stream the one and the other expanse of the landscape lying behind them. It brings stream and bank and land into each other's neighborhood.

The bridge gathers the earth as Landscape around the stream. Thus it guides and attends the stream through the meadows. Resting upright in the stream's bed, the bridge-piers bear the swing of the arches that leave the stream's waters to run their course. The waters may wander on quiet and gay, the sky's floods from storm or thaw may shoot past the piers in torrential waves-the bridge is ready for the sky's weather and its fickle nature. Even where the bridge covers the stream, it holds its flow up to the sly by taking it for a moment under the vaulted gateway and then setting it free once more.

The bridge lets the stream run its course and at the same time grants their way to mortals so that they may come and go from shore to shore. Bridges lead in many ways. The city bridge leads from the precincts of the castle to the cathedral square; the river bridge near the country town brings wagons and horse teams to the surrounding villages. The old stone bridge's humble brook crossing gives to the harvest wagon its passage from the fields into the village and carries the lumber cart from the field path to the road. The highway bridge is tied into the network of long-distance traffic, paced as calculated for maximum yield. Always and ever differently the bridge escorts the lingering and hastening ways of men to and fro, so that they may get to other banks and in the end, as mortals, to the other side.

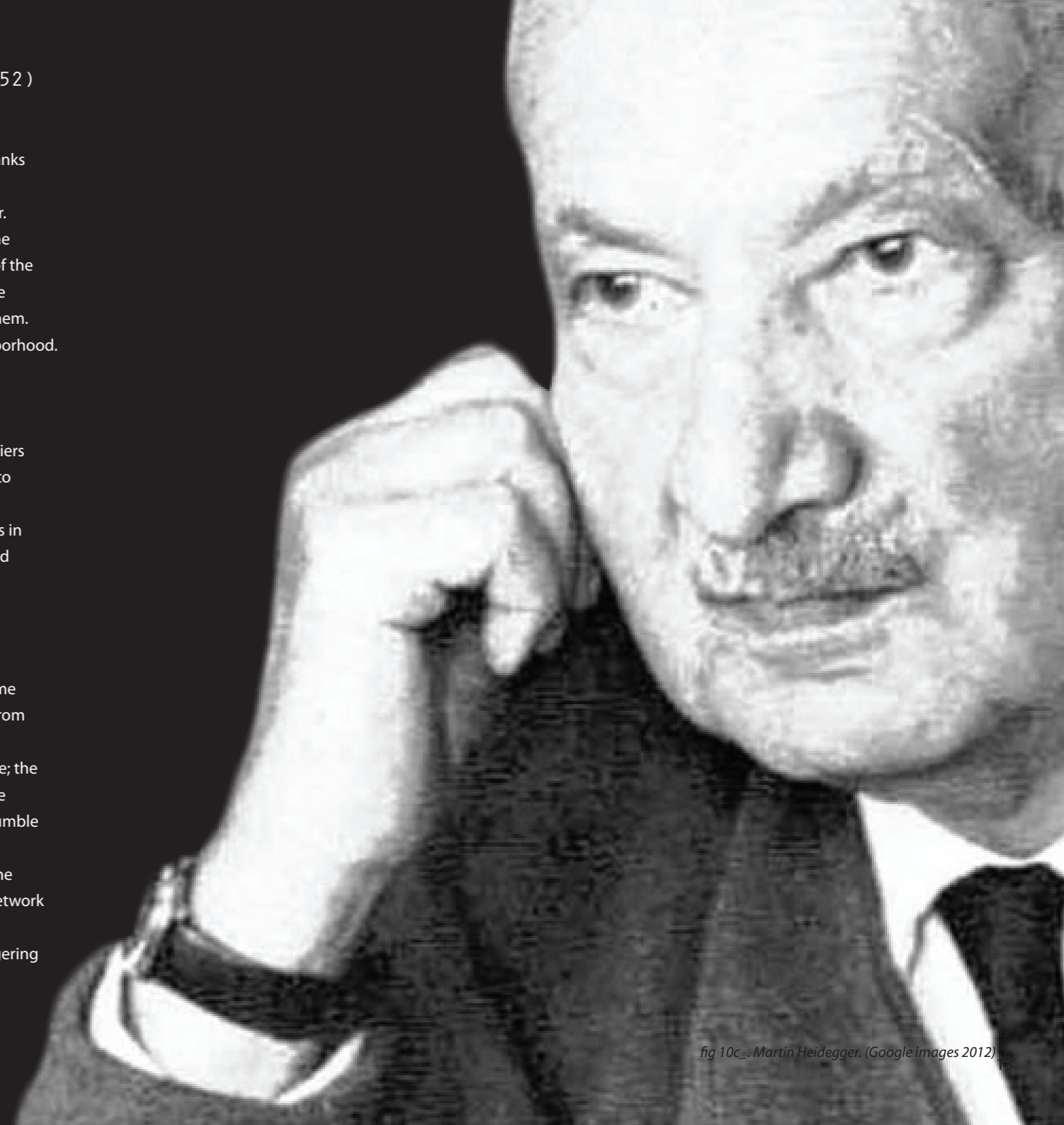


fig 10c. Martin Heidegger. (Google images 2012)

THE PROMENADE__

CHRISTOPHER ALEXANDER

AUSTRIAN BORN ARCHITECT



Fig 11. Christopher Alexander (Google Images 2012).

The Promenade

Christopher Alexander with Sarah Ishikawa and Murray Silverstein reasons that in most cases the user knows more than the architect does about what a building should be. This reasoning led Alexander to the development of a pattern language ('taal') in an attempt to empower the user to understand the various possibilities and experimental influences produced by different combinations of architectural elements.

This theory corresponds to the theory of Bill Hillier when the combination of the physical morphology allows the social abstraction (the people) to give an even deeper level of

substance to the building thus possibly creating the living and breathing architecture described earlier in the normative stance on architecture.

The main interest lies in Alexander's ideas on the promenade. He regards it as valuable because in the promenade lies the simple fact that people want to see other people and be seen. It is a place where people with a shared way of life gather together to rub shoulders and confirm their community. As a result, the promenade becomes a place where people can become the player (be seen) or the spectator (see others).

"PEOPLE GO THERE TO WALK UP AND DOWN, TO MEET THEIR FRIENDS, TO STARE AT STRANGERS, AND TO LET STRANGERS STARE AT THEM."

(ALEXANDER 1977: 169)

This theory is found to be especially appropriate to the area of investigation as it responds directly to the problem statement, the linear social patterns of the client and the programme of the proposed intervention.

The Promenade



fig 11b. Conceptual promenade.



Fig 11c. Christopher Alexander (Google Images 2012)