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An interdisciplinary approach to the design studio: poetry as a complementary feature to the creative process

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Abstract

In this study, we aim to display the results of an interior architecture studio experience, which was structured on an interdisciplinary approach by linking literature and design. In order to establish this interdisciplinary ground and utilize the potential of fruitful creative connections by establishing an association between distinct fields, poetry was selected as a tool to provide inspirational grounds for students to achieve 'other ways of seeing. Thus, we structured this study on the idea of potential contribution of literary text and related design concepts evoked, to the creative process of interior architecture education.

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1. Introduction

Our main goal in this project was to stimulate design ideas through inspiration and clues derived from poetry, the poets' lives, and a variety of interpretations on them. We applied this project in the Izmir University of Economics, Turkey, the second semester of the second year Department of Interior Architecture and Environmental Design. The project adopted an interdisciplinary approach in which poetry was an intermediate instrument and an inspiration source in a residential interior architecture project. Based on the theories and research addressing interdisciplinary connections in creative decision-making during the design process, we analyzed interpretation and concept-formation in the initial stages of design. We categorized the characteristics of the sources for the concept and sought means of supporting these decisions for the main purpose of enhancing academic creativity.

We made use of an innovative method of teaching and learning interior design with literature. The students chose the users of the houses they would design according to an initial research on poetry of the given poets and their lives in the design studio. Several 'facts' about the poets' lives and the poems were open to interpretation, however; there was ground from which to build the concept. This distant connection between different fields marks the interdisciplinary nature of the project, and it was believed that it would enhance creative thinking by allowing innovative interpretation.

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2. Interdisciplinary Approach as a Method in the Creative Process

In order to enable the distant connection mentioned above, ‘difference making,’ was a necessary ingredient of the creative thinking process (Okada et al., 2009, p. 199). As people are restricted by what they know, it is difficult to bring to life something that is truly original. As the amount of knowledge increases throughout the years, it becomes more and more difficult to produce creative design solutions. Creativity levels tend to diminish due to increased levels of ‘knowledge’ in social rules and regulations, effort in emulating reality, as well as trying to obey architectural rules and conventions in design students (Hasirci and Demirkan, 2003).

Less flexible than art education, design education embodies several conventions. In an interior design studio, rules related to construction methodology, fire control, universal design in addition to drawing conventions oblige one to concentrate greatly on the technical aspects, and less on creative decisions (Dacey, 1989; Suwa, Purcell and Gero, 1998). Consequently, effort needs to be given to attain the delicate balance between gaining expertise and allowing original thoughts to flourish.

Establishing links between ordinarily distinct subjects is one of the best methods to support creative thinking (Hasirci and Demirkan, 2007). First, awareness of this need is critical, and can be achieved in different ways (Suwa, Purcell, and Gero, 1998). Brainstorming, developed by Osborn, depends on the same technique of linking seemingly unrelated ideas for originality (1953). Torrance states that, ‘when there is no practiced or learned solution to a problem, some degree of creativity is required’ (as cited in Shaughnessy, 1998, p. 443). In creative thinking, not only differences, but also similarities between ideas in different fields are focused on to generate new ideas.

This interdisciplinary idea of bringing together similarities and differences applies well to the design field. As Nesbitt, states, ‘in the process of associating architecture with other disciplines after the 1960s, there has been much concentration of space as a direct text and/or reading of it through literary texts about the production of knowledge related to space’ (Nesbitt, 1996, p. 16-17). In addition to producing knowledge in the theoretical realm of spatial design, the use of poetry can be put forward as an influential and interdisciplinary tool to stimulate students’ potentials in developing creative design solutions. In this respect, this tool is considered to serve as an innovative method of teaching and learning interior design on the basis of interdisciplinary approach. We asked the students to concentrate on three of the poems of a poet. This kind of an interdisciplinary approach has been employed in other schools. For example, Tschumi mentions that a series of literary projects were organized in the studio using Italo Calvino’s ‘Invisible Cities,’ Franz Kafka’s ‘Burrow,’ Edgar Allan Poe’s ‘Masque of the Red Death’. Also in New Jersey School of Architecture, upper level Architectural Design Studio was premised on the theme of Architecture and Literature, in which the students were searching the sources of inspiration in literary texts. For more information see B. Bolak, ‘Constructed Space in Literature as Represented in Novels as a Case Study: The Black Book by Orhan Pamuk’.

As explained by Eribon, the interdisciplinary approach is important in the sense that each discipline develops within the framework of an episteme, the totality of which forms a grid of knowledge suggesting a link in part with other sciences contemporary with it (Mills, 2003). Pavel (1985) associates interdisciplinarity to both the growing willingness to share methodology and the need to have recourse to research in some other discipline. The necessity underlined by Pavel for social sciences in general is also valid for the realm of architectural knowledge. While it is discussed among literary theory that spatial elements should be used by forming literary images in order to strengthen the narration, it is also possible to search for a reverse relationship in order to enrich the epistemological realm of design. In this respect, interior design education is an efficient medium within the aim of an interdisciplinary method in terms of constructing effective solutions leading to knowledge through literature. The

scale of the field also allows for this, as it is in an intermediary position tying design to the human being. The unique position of the field enables more possibilities for this interaction, compared to for instance, city planning.

3. The Design Process

In most studies on the design process in education, there is a lack of a comprehensive approach to this realm of knowledge, due to the concentration on the terms creativity or cognition, and an ignorance of other significant processes such as, interaction with other fields, discussion, and accessing and transforming information from the environment. This limits both the understanding and the generalizability of the results derived from a study.

Issues of creativity and decision-making are the subject matter of cognition. Cognitive abilities involve 'discovery, recognition, and comprehension of information in various forms,' (Guilford, 1968, p. 108) and also the intellectual activities that enable us to learn and understand the world around us (Candy and Edmonds, 1999). 'Cognitive learning' requires an experience and interpretation process to have taken place, and memory to play an important role. The way in which information is received, organized and developed is significant for cognitive learning (Morgan, 1977; O'Neill and Shallcross, 1994; Akin, 1984; Von der Weth, 1999; Daniels McGhee and Davis, 1994; Guilford, 1967). Evolving from the initial stages to the final improves the constructive memory as there is need for accumulation of information from one stage to the next (Chiu, 2003). In cognitive learning, changes in information processing, meaning given to things in the environment, visual and sensational information received, and thus, behaviour takes place. Mere exposition to a variety of information can be sufficient for learning process (Christiaans, 2002; Cropley, 1999; Demirkan and Hasirci, 2009; Morgan, 1977).

Furthermore, associations between objects in the environment and experiences are very critical. Individuals involved in creative production have often reported to adopt a scheme, motif, or plan early in the process (Firestien, 1993). This system or skeleton is detailed throughout the process as it proceeds. It is constantly evaluated, transformed, and revised at different levels of elaboration (Firestien, 1993; Guilford, 1968; Eisentraut and Gunther, 1997; Plsek, 1997; Kristensen, 2004).

Design, that inherently involves a creative problem-solving activity, necessitates the making of decisions in order to fulfill certain objectives. Generally, someone in the process of designing has to be flexible and adapt their problem-solving technique to the requirements of the situation (Eisentraut, 1999; Lubart, 2001). The way in which this cognitive activity is carried out in design is actually similar to the individual's usual approach to other problems in life. A unique, designed product is the result of this whole process of creative problem-solving (Akin and Akin, 1998; Akin, 1984; Kokotovich and Purcell, 2000; Lubart, 2001).

According to Plsek (1997), even 'everyday living' is a creative activity. Careful 'observation' of the world is followed by thoughtful 'analyses' of how things work and fail. The reserve that we end up having as a result of these activities help us 'generate' original ideas by way of 'combining' and 'associating' different concepts. This is done in different ways such as, applying analogies. In order to be able to make good decisions, we 'harvest' and 'enhance' our ideas before we reach a final 'evaluation' of the topic followed by the 'implementation' of them. The real life experiencing of the idea that is put into trial follows the implementation, and the cycle begins over again. Preparation, imagination, development, and action are the four phases of the model.

Additionally, drawings as a design tool at each of these stages are used directly for thinking and indirectly for making. Making takes place following a thinking phase that makes use of several drawings at different levels of development. The separation of the two phases helps in planning large and complex things by considering disparate elements (Jones, 1992; Isaksen and Dorval 1993).

Recognizing, identifying, and supporting of these empathetic activities at different stages of the design process are necessary for two reasons. First, although any creative design process begins with a significant user-defining

stage, often it does not extend into the following stages of design, and loses importance and effectiveness during the course of the process (Verstijnen et al., 1998). Also, design students are frequently so caught up in employing design principles that, they unintentionally lessen the role of the user in their designs. Especially in the long run, negligence of the users' characteristics and needs may cause various problems, and may influence the 'co-evolving' nature of the previous spaces explained by Dorst and Cross (2001, p. 427). Second, comes the importance of 'user-identification.' In the design field, the branches of design that are as much functional as they are aesthetic, and deal with a user group and/ or client, the issue of identifying with the user is critical. However, it has not been investigated to a great extent.

The design studio gives the opportunity of experimenting with various ideas using various creative ideas that are either reproductions of previous memories or combinations of them, considering the requirements of the curriculum. Hence, with this study we aim to stimulate the process of creative decision-making as a cognitive process during a design task by linking distinct fields, and to investigate ways to improve the creative characteristics and quality of decisions that are made in the design studio, assuming that this will result in the conception of creative spaces, with results that extend into professional life.

4. Purpose of Research

Promoting the need to read and feed off on various sources was a significant aim of the study by supporting the stages of the creative design process with a link to another field in a way that necessitated thinking 'outside the box.'

Linguistics has greatly affected the field of design in general. Verbal abstract concepts can lead to creative visual design ideas (Oxman, 2002). Kristeva (1980) generalizes the theoretical agenda of the post-war period with emphasis on the power of language by stating that the sixties witnessed a theoretical ebullience that would be summarized as the discovery of the role of language in all human sciences. It might be proposed that the discipline of design, which has a strong visual component –the production itself–, has also developed a relationship to the linguistic sciences. Language resembles spatial design in several ways. Basa (2000) draws a parallel in the way that language has 'syntax,' 'semantics' and 'grammar' while spatial design has 'building,' 'theory' and 'structure' (p. 182). In this respect, there is a parallelism between linguistics and spatial conception.

Thus, both poetry and literature can be the tools of such an interdisciplinary design method. However, poetry may sometimes be considered as more affluent with regard to literature for creative design purposes, which can be supported by Bachelard's statement that is '... a poet will always be more suggestive than a philosopher... Pursuing the dynamism that belongs to suggestion, then, the reader can go farther, even too far' (as cited in Basa, 2000, p. 182). The use of poetic image is inseparable from spatial practice as employed by Bachelard. In this sense, interior space is much more related to reflecting the above-mentioned poetic feature. Despite this parallelism in terms of the language, there is a contradiction between the language of poetry and that of design. However, this is utilized as an advantage to stimulate friction that leads to creativity. Poet Schuster explains this friction as poetry being the opposite of spatial design, since poetry is 'destabilizing, disorganizing, and collapsing' (Grillner and Hughes, 2009, p. 64). Ralph Waldo Emerson addresses 'the reciprocal effects of poetry and literature on the human need for creative expression and stimulation of the imagination' (Antoniades, 1992, p. 104) that could be channeled into the design process with rewarding results (Grillner and Hughes, 2009). Thus, the reason for selecting poetry for an interdisciplinary experience within the design studio is the belief in the potential of poetry to provide a medium to encourage and arouse the creative design abilities of the students. The tools of imagination as a road to creativity are presented to students as inherent in the literal text of poetry. In this sense, creative thinking in design is very much related to poetry.

5. The 'Poet's House' Project

The second year aims to be the introductory year to the department, and acts as a base for the future challenging years. Here, for the first time, students come into contact with the significant idea of 'concept building.' We aim to enhance the studio environment by desk critiques, group work, and seminars and the basics of the field of interior design are given in this studio with an emphasis on innovation, functionality, feasibility, aesthetic values, and presentation techniques. In the studio we aim to provide the students with an intellectual base as part of the creative process, as well as an awareness of design and being an interior architect. A project with a focus on literature also has this type of scholarly purpose.

In this project, we asked the students to create a new interior design proposal for a house built for a poet, whom they chose from the given list that included Attila İlhan, Cemal Süreya, Edip Cansever, Nazim Hikmet, Gulden Akin, and Lale Muldur -all prominent Turkish poets. Having read the poems, we expected the students to come up with an interpretation that led them to a profile of the poet they chose. As the next stage, we asked them to conceptualize the atmosphere of the space with regard to the information they derived from the poems, the poet's life scenario, and other resources.

Students' designs necessitated an evaluation of the existing house and surrounding, in addition to a clear understanding and interpretation of the poet's needs as a user. Thus, they were responsible of reading the poems and interpreting them, taking this interpretation further and turning it into a concept and designing the interior space of the house, which included design of the whole volumetric space. We did not accept changes on the outer shell of the building; however, we expected the students to take into consideration the surrounding of the house and approach to it, the door and window design, and balconies and terraces. Students were expected to submit two A0 size sheets, one focusing on the concept, scenario and plans, and the other on the technical aspects, sections and elevations, details, and material specifications in addition to their model.

5.1. *The method*

Although an interdisciplinary approach aims to stretch disciplinary boundaries, it needs boundaries of its own to protect its free-ranging activities (Fuller, 2009). Concepts are the 'general ideas' formed to identify, to organize and to distinguish something abstract. Concepts, established under the authority of a discourse arrange and pattern the related field. In this respect, the boundaries of the act of borrowing within the studio process are defined within the studio aims. Departing from Barthes' suggestion as the reader as the 'sole producer of meaning' in a text (Bachelard, 1994, p. 91), the aim of the interior design studio was to use the effectiveness of stimulating students to create peculiar meanings from the texts of the poems. Thus, in an intertextual relationship as described by Kristeva, the meanings of the texts being 'quoted' and transformed into the means of spatial language are employed in the design project in a new meaning (1980). This would also be effective in 'establishing links between ordinarily distinct subjects' as a tool for supporting creative design thinking.

In terms of producing meaning from the texts within the aims of a design studio practice, Antoniadis describes two modes of 'direct inspirations' in reading literature in order to establish a channel to spatial work: 'static literal interpretation' and 'dynamic interpretation.' In his statement, Direct Inspiration occurs through literal interpretations of the environments described in the literary work. The structure of the studio is based on dynamic interpretation, in which 'the architectural product is free of the direct depiction and focuses instead on the abstract communication of the 'aura,' the 'spatial ambience,' and the overall 'essence' of the literary piece' rather than a static interpretation in which 'one makes a direct visual interpretation of the form and space elements of the environment as described in the literary work' (Antoniadis, 1992, p. 104).

Antoniades mentions that through the design exercises that depend on metaphoric departures, utilized by architects throughout this century as a channel to architectural creativity, within design education, it is possible to test and to develop students' fantasy and imagination. He classifies 'metaphors' into three categories: 'intangible metaphors,' 'tangible metaphors' and 'combined metaphors' (Antoniades, 1992, p. 30). Considering the use of metaphor as 'conceptualization,' which is a significant tool in the creative mechanism of the students, the production of the conceptual idea was encouraged at the beginning of the project. In this respect, the students were encouraged to employ 'Intangible Metaphors,' 'which include 'an idea, a human condition, or a particular quality (individuality, naturalness, community, tradition, culture).'

There was an effort on the instructors' part to hinder students from using 'Tangible Metaphors' as a direct use of the material or form of the inspiration source, however, there were still projects that could not escape this.

5.2. *The Poets interpreted*

In the selection of poets, first, we chose Turkish poets to raise awareness about the native poetry culture, and considering that the representation of the homeland culture would better inspire the students. Antoniades (1992) explains this as helping students 'produce works that will be in tune with the intellectual and spiritual life of the place they come from or the particular place for which they design since poetry is the power of the collective emotion of a people, the collective critical attitude of a place, the birth of life from within' (p. 114). Second, we showed effort to not include poets with extreme views, and also to balance men and women poets for gender equilibrium. Poets with different writing and living styles were chosen to support creative ideas in the studio.

The application of the data that students derived from the reading of poems rests on two grounds: One is the inspiration from the poems; the other is the inspiration from the life scenario of the poets. Both recourses resulted with the employment of either tangible or intangible metaphors or the combination both.

We observed several philosophical approaches in the projects. The students, who were more capable of using the tools of imagery employed intangible metaphors in their projects through conceptualizing the idea derived from the poems. In this approach, the inspirations from the poems were effective more in terms of spatial solutions. Student works represented repeating ideational patterns in the poems, such as the concepts of observation, femininity, mystery, innocence and sincerity, in the form of spaces as well as that of furniture on the one hand, and the use of materials and colors on the other. For example, in Project 1, the student utilized the concept of 'Observation' found repeatedly in E. Cansever's poems as a space organizing tool. The student connected spaces with architectural elements or furniture having openings to provide a visual connection between them (Figure 1). The aim was to create an environment in which one could observe almost all spaces from any point within the house. Also, there was not only visual, but physical connection, as the user would be able to use the furniture such as shelves from both spaces it connects on two sides. Moreover, the student built a substructure in the large empty space to bring definition to and to frame the gaze, and then to allow it to wander freely in the space. Various levels within the space aim to provide variety in definition without barriers, such as walls or panels.



Figure 1. Concept of ‘Observation’ in E. Cansever’s house as a visual connection element

The student also places the user at the very centre of the design through transforming the interior into an act of observing his own life since observing becomes the main activity of the user. Departing from the idea of one’s loneliness and lack of communication, and concentrating on one’s self in the boundaries of the house, the student transforms observation into the language spatial design through an extreme emphasis of framing and reminding the user of the boundary between himself and the object that is observed. The observed part soon becomes the place of observation as soon as the user changes his position in the interior, because the framing takes over different versions to remind the user of the observation activity. Thus, the user observes different parts of his life from inside the other parts where the outer boundary is kept as a setting. In this respect, the idea of observation both separates and links spaces through the volume definition and the use of its furniture, which serves this philosophical setting. In this proposal, a similarity between two fields is seen: the concept of observation taken from the repertoire of the language of poetry is transferred into spatial language through the use of furniture as a tool of spatial observation.

The indirect inspirations also resulted in the use of several forms, which are reminiscent of the use of particular elements in the poems. In this respect, some projects interpreted femininity as one of those elements in terms of the forms of spaces as well as furniture. For instance, the emphasis of female body and of a softer feminine context in C. Sureya’s poems oriented some students to producing curvilinear forms (Figure 2). In Project 2, although the structure of the house provides a rectilinear and rigid frame, softer lines in the interior both respect the structure, yet defy it with the curvilinear connections between spaces, transitions between forms, and lack of stringency. The structural as well as non-structural elements such as furniture and interior finishes carry these characteristics where the house itself is set as a masculine boundary whereas the contrasting interior spaces and furniture are set as feminine.



Figure 2. Curvilinear forms in C. Süreya's house representing female body

The intangible metaphors led to the generation of volumetric decisions or the furniture as the structural elements that develop those volumes, but also in material decisions. For example, the idea of 'mystery' derived from the overall essence of the poems of C. Sureya was interpreted as the use of translucent materials by a student from which one can guess yet not fully see what lies behind. What becomes 'mysterious' to the user is the space itself through the use of concealing materials as a tool.

Students often utilized the conscious use of a colour scheme in order to strengthen the conceptual idea as an effective tool. Students conveyed some moods such as straightforwardness, sincerity and innocence through the exaggerated use of a few colors. In Project 3, the student used achromatic colors, mostly white, and transparent materials to reflect the straightforwardness and sincerity in A. Ilhan's poems. Within the use of a complementary color scheme, the student also used black and added yellow as an accent color to express apparent contrasts and striking directness in his use of words (Figure 3). In another project, a student used white for reflecting the widespread meaning referring to innocence, and red for reflecting eroticism inherent in C. Sureya's poems. The colors in these cases become quite accentuated to reveal the idea inherent in the poems.

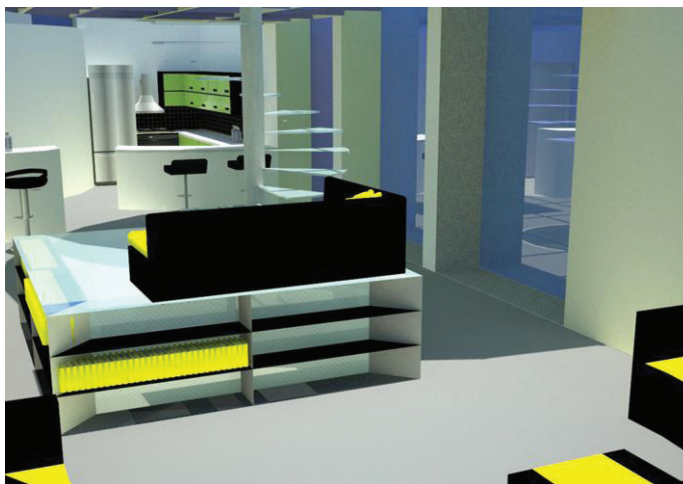


Figure 3. Use of white colour together with black and yellow as well as transparent materials in A. İlhan's house to reflect the straightforwardness in his poems

In the use of materials, students called upon the tangible metaphors. For example, the largest surfaces within the house, the flooring of one of the projects for A. İlhan is ebony, which was inspired from the poem 'Abanoz' ('Ebony'), although the content of the poem has nothing to do with the material. Another one-to-one inspiration from the name as well as the content of a poem was from C. Sureya's poem entitled 'Uçgenler' ('Triangles'). In this respect, in Project 4, the student generated the plan through various interpretations of triangular forms (Figure 4). The student developed the idea in not only generating the plan scheme, but also using interior architectural elements that formed a triangle in order to divide and define spaces. Moreover, the design of the ceiling and the position of lighting equipment accentuated the idea. In some projects, students used concrete spatial elements, repeated continuously in the poems of a poet, as interior design tools. For example, in one project there was a prominent large mirror to represent C. Sureya's poem entitled 'Kan Var Butun Kelimelerin Altında' ('Under All Words is Blood') becoming a focal point in the space. The student used the semiotic potential of mirrors that reflect life and emulate it as in the poem, to also functionally create a spacious area. C. Sureya uses the metaphor of Euclidean triangles in an ironic way to represent the different edges of life coming together in a geometric form that is metaphorically life. The student, here, transforms the metaphor of triangles to a regular use of triangular approach in spatial as a metaphoric reminder of life, which becomes a formal representation of the poem. Thus, the student produces acute spatialities which are also revealed in Sureya's poems as acute lives.

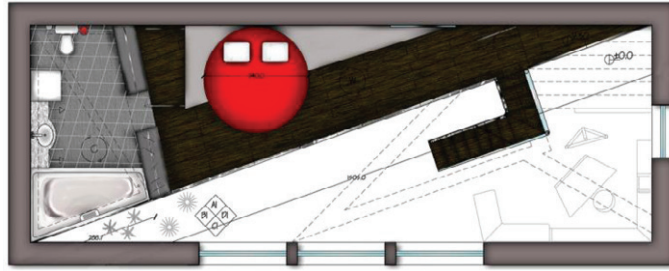


Figure 4. Generation of the plan through triangular forms in C. Süreya's house representing the poem 'Triangles'

There were also design approaches, which included the 'combined metaphors.' In this respect, nature and technology were two 'concepts' that were helpful for the students to develop the spatial environment through the accentuated/dominant use of materials and colors according to universal design connotations. The poets' appreciation of nature was interpreted in the use of natural materials such as wood with the least amount of treatment and visual connections to the outside through the full use of vast windows on the front facade, while their appreciation of technology was materialized through the use of glass and steel with smoother finishes. In a project for E. Cansever, the staircase represented technology through its glass steps and steel balustrades which led to smooth connections between spaces. In the projects for N. Hikmet, who was a follower of Soviet futurism, the employment of materials that represented technology was very apparent. Therefore the students, who wanted to evoke technology, especially in the design proposals for N. Hikmet, used transparent materials and achromatic and/or metallic colors together (Figure 5). The emphasis on the technological environment as a conceptual idea is tangible in the sense that employment of glass and aluminum rather than traditional residential materials such as wood represents technological environment, and intangible in the sense that the student praises the technological life style as N. Hikmet does in his poems through the reflection of technological environment and doubling the effect. In Project 5, the student formally softened materials in the project through the use of non-orthogonal geometries accentuating the potentials of technology in interior treatments. The traditionally built walls of the actual house, its structure, and its down-to-earth quality brought out the stark contrast between the more organic and the artificial.



Figure 5. Use of transparent materials and metallic colours in N. Hikmet's house to represent technology

Reading poems involved not only comprehending and interpreting the poem, but also understanding the poets' lives. In this respect, the students were more inclined to refer to tangible metaphors, which were produced using the scenarios as the basic tools to solve plan schemes functionally. For example, C. Sureya's emphasis on the pleasures of social drinking impelled one of the students to design an over-accentuated drinking space at the centre of the plan arrangement. Similarly, in Project 6, a house designed for E. Cansever, the fireplace and the seating arrangement are intertwined in such a way to the point of becoming inseparable, and to enrich the enjoyment of spirits for the poet (Figure 6). When seated, the user faces the fireplace, as well as having visual access to the view outside with the angled layout. Teak floors enhance the feeling of warmth created by the fireplace allowing for a pleasurable environment to enjoy wine and company. This approach shows that one of the interior elements; in this case fireplace together with the staircase, can affect the life scenario of the user through the exaggerated plan arrangement of that interior element. The student used clues from the poet's life scenario, but there is still a dynamic interpretation. For instance, the student interpreted the joy of life through the employment of fireplace in representative terms, and that of the staircase as a metaphor of revealing that joy through the dynamic element of circulation.

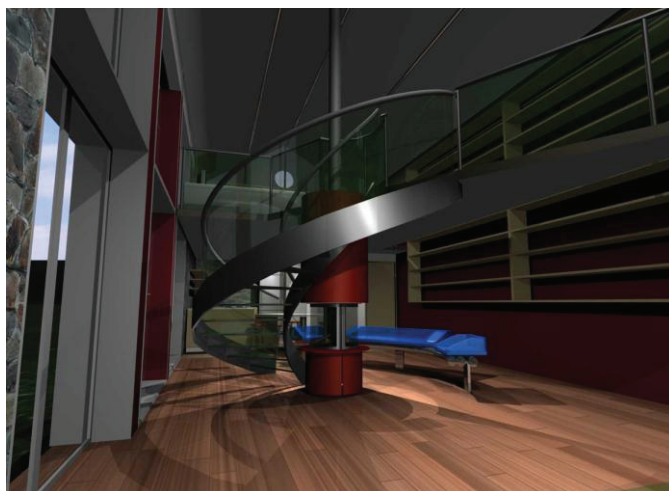


Figure 6. Fireplace and the seating arrangement intertwined in E. Cansever's house

Some projects utilized some actual architectural components, such as furniture, staircase, mezzanine slab and some abstract architectural components like scale in such a way to make the poet continue his/her daily rituals. In Project 7, the student established resemblances, such as the interpretation of the gallery as the deck of a ship or that of the bedroom as a ship cabin, through the employment of scale component. Thus, one can treat a residential interior element out of the context of that residential unit. Since A. Ilhan stated that he generally wrote in ships, patisseries or hotels, in one project, furniture for his house was designed in such way to resemble that environment. In this respect, the furniture on which he performs writing activities was treated in a 'French style.' The student also gave this spatial feeling of a compact and defined character through the use of scale in these terms. The student handled the bedroom in a small scale in order to make the poet feel as if he was staying in a hotel or a ship cabin. In this respect, the student designed the staircase in a narrow scale to reinforce the feeling of being in a ship. The mezzanine slab was like a deck of a ship, making the user feel as if he was the captain overlooking the sea (Figure 7). Regarding the emphasis on 'sea' as an important element of nature in A. Ilhan's poems, another student treated the pool as a sea by extending the window as a balcony, which represented the 'deck' going over the sea.

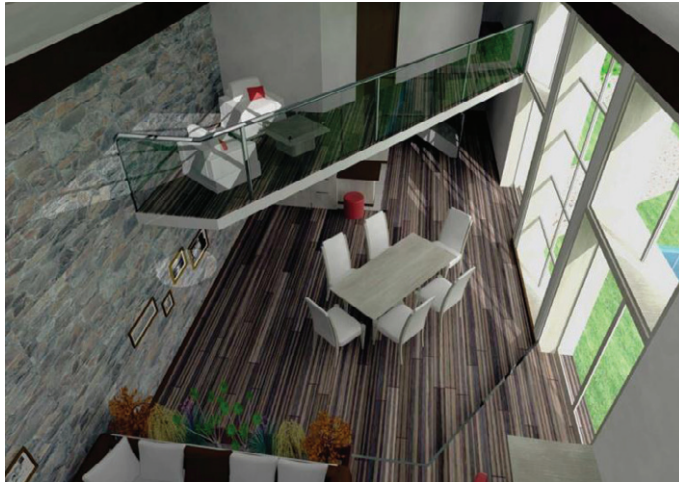


Figure 7. Mezzanine slab in A. İlhan's house representing a deck of a ship

The life scenarios of the poets also helped the students to arrange the volumetric quality of the space through the use of intangible metaphors. In Project 8, according to the interpretation of the student, the life of A. İlhan, who spent most of his life in Istanbul, Izmir and Paris, gave clues about how to design a house for him. In this respect, the student interpreted these cities as a metaphorical triangle in the poet's life. The student separated the house into three vertical and horizontal parts, which he called 'islands in the house,' compartmentalizing, yet combining the characteristic qualities of each city under a single design language. Furthering his concept of 'island,' the student also presented the house as the poet's island. The life cycle of the same poet going through these cities also influenced the plan organization of another student. Treating A. İlhan's voyages as a triangle in the same way, the student realized the triangle of the poet's life into a 30°-60°-90° triangle, which the student asserts as the most determinate geometric shape (Figures 8-9). Some other spatial elements such as the design of the furniture or the use of materials were kept simple in the design that the triangular plan arrangement is accentuated.

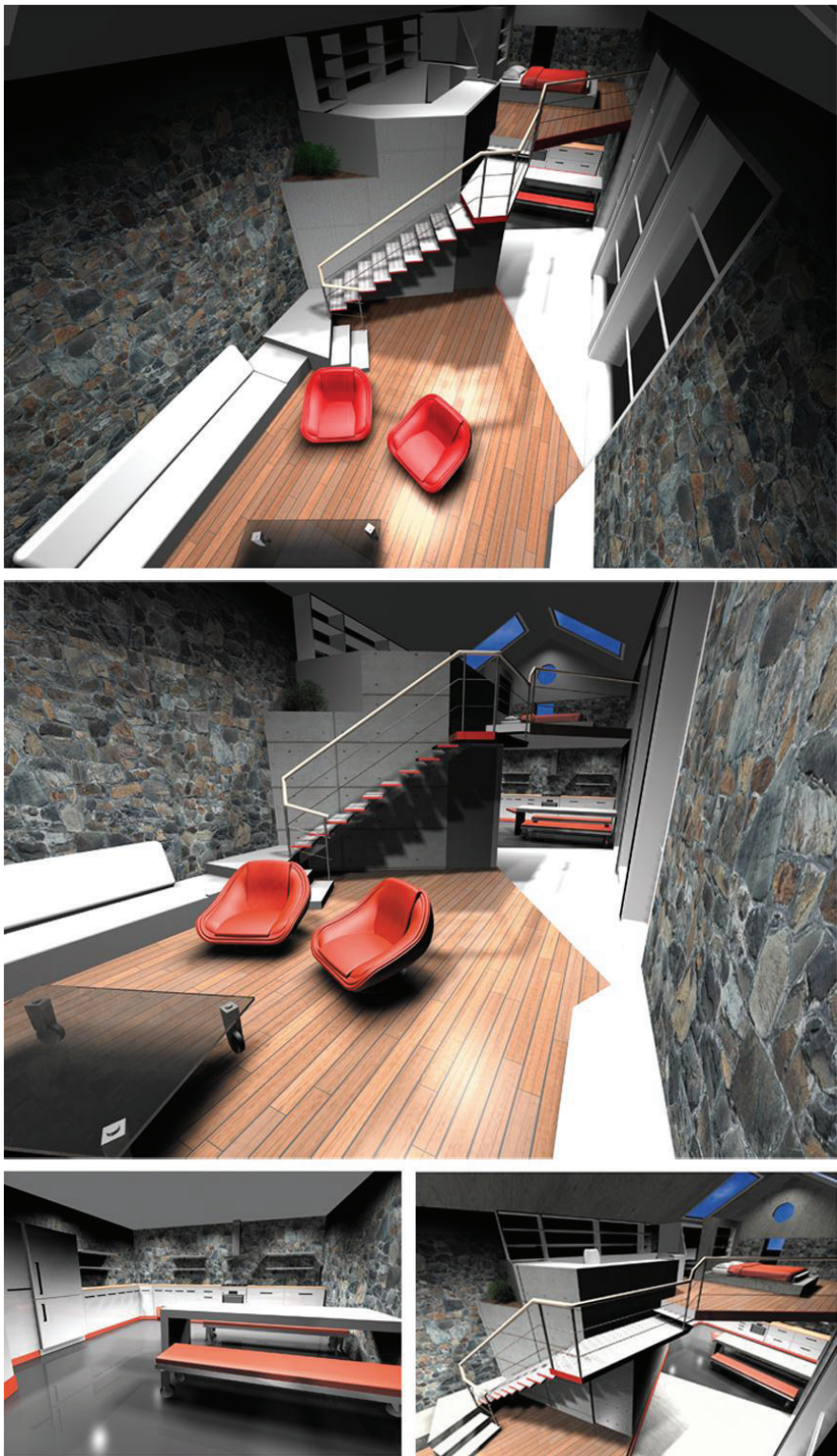


Figure 8. Organization of 30°-60°-90° triangles in A. Ilhan's house representing his voyages in Project 8

As seen in the examples above, the life scenarios of the poets affected the actual architectural elements of the projects, such as the formal configuration of each space on plan, the furniture type and arrangement, and the form as well as the scale of staircases and slabs more than the employment of surface elements such as materials and colors as representatives. Only in one project, a student represented the melancholic days of C. Sureya's life student through the dominant use of dark colors (Figure 10).



Figure 10. Dark colours to represent the melancholic days of C. Sürreya's life

6. Discussion and Conclusion

This study shows how cross-disciplinary exchange is valuable in the way that it offers other modes of philosophy to one's 'home discipline.' Such work embraces the goal of advancing understanding (e.g., explain phenomena, craft solutions, raise new questions) in ways that would not be possible to reach through the boundaries of a single discipline. Thus, one of the reasons of having recourse to interdisciplinary approach is the need to find answers which cannot be provided through the frontiers of a single discipline; and the other is that the increasing the variety of options provided through the disciplinary boundaries of other disciplines. In this respect, regarding the potential of linguistics to 'transport us to other realities'; it became a model for the construction of interior space in design studio proposals. We selected the fruitful field of poetry as a 'complimentary feature' to the creative design process. The association of different concepts, resulting in more original results enhanced the creative process that followed the trail of preparation, imagination, development, and action.

The students have stated that, this project has enabled them to first become aware of literature and poetry. Several students admitted to having read poems, and owning a poetry book for the first time by means of this project. Since the poetry-design studio relationship is not a traditional method within the boundaries of design education, the students were impelled to think creatively through 'innovative interpretations' that included the employment of 'metaphors.' The effort students spent in trying to connect the fields of design and literature and to interpret it obliged them to be creative by linking disparate opinions. This method has not only taught students about design considerations, but also about literature. It has made the students identify different sources of information they could use from the poet's life, poems, and photographs showing them conducting various activities, and focus on mainly

one of these that they thought would be the most rewarding. This required for a cognitive attentiveness on their part. Students have fully tried to understand the poems, in the end having more than one layer of meaning in their hands.

The students have gone through a process of empathy and identification with the user, trying to grasp the various parts of their lives. For these reasons, giving interior design students a project as such in their preliminary years is believed to have expanded their way of thinking and provided them with a developed intellectual background. Future directions for this study may be to try other fields as resources that might enrich the design concept, instead of focusing solely on the basic requirements of the field that might be limiting cognitive and creative thinking processes.

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