EXPLAINING THE BEAUTY OF THE ARCHITECTURE PATTERNS IN THE CONTEXT OF IRANIAN IDENTITY AND SYMBOLS

Reza ASKARI KOHAN¹, Siavash RASHIDI SHARIF ABAD²,*

¹MSc in Architecture, Kerman branch, Islamic Azad University, Kerman, Iran
²Assistant Professor & Faculty Member of Department of Architecture, Shahrebabak branch, Islamic Azad University, Shahrebabak, Iran

Received: 22.03.2015; Accepted: 29.05.2015

Abstract. The beauty of Persian architecture is one of the factors that cause the persistence in the world of art. Understanding the foundations of such beauty that can pave the way for the assessment of architecture and the evaluation criteria to the right. In this study, it has been tried to use analytical methods and data collection as a library study to identify and correct understanding, its hidden and obvious effects (symbol and identity) in effect that may view the audience during many years. But, not knowing about it, in a Postulate is brought out in the case of the latencies of the judging system. It was certainly in such cognitive emphasis on features that highlight the effectiveness, the evaluation criteria and invigorated the superior work and lasting foundation for the distinction of other types of innovation. The understanding of what is very important in all its aspects in terms of the appearance of the face and under the title the semantic and the inherent and visual symbols and identity trace has been examined in this study. The purpose of this article is to understand the determinants of beauty in architecture of Iran and their relation These factors, along with community cultural and artistic values is based on its beauty in order to improve the reception of Iranian architecture. The question raised is how to define and clarify the Iran's architectural principles of aesthetics and the basics. In conclusion, while confirming this question we find that the beauty of the architecture of Iran can be divided into apparent beauty (symbolic) and inward (identifying) beauty.

Keyword: Architecture , beauty, symbol, identity

INTRODUCTION

Beauty is an endless attraction, which art is its liaison to man. Understanding beauty is a divine gift and an intellectual base that leads to identity and without it, art is a soulless shell and void of any attraction. Here, the architecture is seen as a combination of all arts, in a form that embodiment of beauty in architecture takes place as a spiritual process (identity) and ostensible manifestation (symbolic). According to this, the relationship between beauty and architecture is studied in a way that these categories are discussed in a parallel. In fact, recognizing the beauty of architecture is possible by examining factors such as social characteristics, religion and culture and visual effects like light, color, decoration and dimensions. The main question in this research is whether Iranian architecture has aesthetic principles and what is the role and function of identity and symbol in architectural beauty.

Research objectives

The main objectives of this research is as follows:

- Recognition and explaining beauty as an original asset with Islamic and Iranian roots
- Picking out the effective factors in beautifying the architecture
- Examining the effectiveness and application of Iranian and Islamic symbol and identity in architectural beauty
• Recognition and explaining beauty as an original asset with Islamic and Iranian roots
• Picking out the effective factors in beautifying the architecture
• Examining the effectiveness and application of Iranian and Islamic symbol and identity in architectural beauty

Methodology
The nature of method this study is based on analytical form, and it is a description whose purpose is clarifying beauty in architecture based on the researcher’s regard of beauty.

Literature review
In the beginning, aesthetics of architecture was an empirical or practical cognition, but gradually it became a theoretical knowledge, and finally in the eighteenth century was transmuted as one of philosophy discussions. The philosophy of architectural beauty in its early stages was not separate from supernatural and moral philosophy. Next, architecture was seen as a phenomenon and a four-dimension effect, also a complete and comprehensive art that comprises all aspects, life and human cognition. In fact, architecture by virtue of beauty is a bridge between past, present and future of human civilizations.

Research theories
The main issue of research is formed based on place of beauty in architecture, in a way that it carries many reflections including:

1. The beauty in different eras of architecture is used for concept and shaping of architectural region.
2. Passage of time and development in place of aesthetics has been effective in architecture.
3. Application of elements and features of architecture is frequently for creating sense and some authenticity and identity.
4. Expressing the problem

Concept of beauty and aesthetics
Beauty from the infinitive beautify has meanings such as becoming, befitting, good, beautiful, pretty and polished and beauty also means fine quality and mode which consists of order and harmony existing with purity and greatness in an object and compels admirations in intellect, imagination and high desires of human. Delight and its expansion are relative. By class, beauty is known to be understandable but indefinable. Yet from past to present, definitions of beauty have been presented and some plan to declare it. Herbert Reed believes that there are twelve common definitions of beauty, but the pure physical definition that I proposed that beauty consists of unity of formal relations in our sensory perceptions is one basic definition. According to another definition: beauty is a coordination and harmony that organizes our delights in a certain trajectory and causes the idea of beauty. Allama Jafari defines beauty as any aspect or a veil which is graphic and transparent that is drawn over perfection. He considers this theory as the most inclusive concerning beauty and concluded that with attention to fine work of creation, while human sense of finding beauty is satiated.

Studies of philosophy and beauty about beauty have created knowledge of aesthetics. According to this, it can be defined as such: aesthetics is a subject of philosophy that deals with nature and decisions about it. Or, its a breadth of knowledge that has dealings with describing artistic phenomenon and aesthetic experience and its interpretation. The new aesthetics originates from philosophy and art of Greece and in the 18th century, it appeared as a separate knowledge. Since then, it has grown immensely and has contained various subjects and presented multiple discussions and theories.
Explaining The Beauty Of The Architecture Patterns In The Context Of Iranian Identity And Symbols

Aesthetics and Islam

Among Muslims, authenticity and rightness is related to divine and spiritual grace. Apparent beauty is generally called adornment. Ghazal believes that the world is a world of goodness and beauty and the origin of goodness and beauty is congruent and every world is congruent. Studying the works of Muslim mystics signifies that the beauty of creation is love and love is a product of contact with beauty that love must be the guide of man to perfection. If this does not come to pass, neither that love is true nor that beauty, rather they are both tropes of love and beauty. Based on this, beauty has a symbolic and irreversible bond with spirituality. It means that, while different planes of beauty is sometimes synonymous with topics such as art, architecture, poetry and…, but the best position of beauty is a position that is alongside spirituality (fig 1).

![Figure 1. Esfahan’s Imam square and mosque, an example of divulging spirituality in architecture.](image)

Some of the main factors affecting formation and manifestation can be seen in figure 2 below:

![Figure 2. Some of the factors affecting perception of architectural beauty (Source: Author).](image)
Place of beauty in architecture

Every prominent and lasting monument in the history of art has not been able to achieve a high position and a respectable stature without having beauty indicators. In the meantime, it is architecture that as a four-dimensional work contains all aspects of life. Other arts emanate life aspects and human existence in a way that is segmented and more limited in size, and with its particular language introduces them. While, because of multifaceted nature of architecture, various aspects of human life are discussed in parallel. Since man has embarked upon architecture, he has also been conscious of mental and inner cravings and aesthetic sense. For instance, early residential cases have shown the establishment of such relativity. Recognition and understanding place of beauty in architecture is divided into two parts. Man’s attraction and appeal to the beauty in architecture is because he himself is made of beauty and for that reason he has found architecture in beauty and beauty in architecture.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table 1: Some of the factors effecting perception of architectural beauty.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quantity:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Requires theoretical knowledge of architecture and aesthetics and the ability of criticism and evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Quality:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In proportion to mental and spiritual talent</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Factors affecting cognition of architectural beauty

Regarding all aspects relating types and levels of beauty, various factors and elements can be named as indicators of architectural aesthetics. Components of architectural aesthetics can be divided to two main groups of symbol and identity, that of course other nominations such as: appearance and soul, visible and invisible, bodily and semantic, objective and subjective can be chosen for these two groups. In the first group, light, color, dimension and structure, etc can be mentioned and in the second group topics such as culture and religion are citable.

First, we will review some apparent factors affecting architectural beauty:

Light: it is the incarnation of god which its presence in Iran’s architecture including homes and mosques is emanated. Manifestation of light’s existential essence on structure has established it as the most principal center of Iran’s architectural aesthetics in mysticism and meaning. Iran’s architecture by using basic elements has created novel innovations in terms of space and beauty. In traditional building, by changing material and condition of openers, they have increased the beauty and importance of space. For instance, the light will cross the wooden lattices and colored glass and unveils varied figures and colors on the surface.
Color: Of sensible beauty features in architecture is its color and application in architecture. In Iran’s architecture by using colorful tiles on surface of walls and domes, the effort will go to losing the solemnity and abrasiveness of buildings and that they will turn into glassy surfaces and weightless material and they will add to the effect of kinds of figures (fig 3).

Figure 3. Residential home, an example of using light in architecture (source:http://bersom.com).

Color and light in Iran’s architecture are among apparent factors that have deep roots in its internal factors. Why that light is assimilated with spirituality and has been redoubled in value, is because of multiple reasons:

Light in Iran’s architecture is a symbol of moving towards the truth that indicates the spiritual sense from heavens.

Islamic vision, belief and faith in the supernatural world is the cause to see light in structures. Such as that light has descended from heaven to earth.

The four features: fluidity and luminance, light and cyberspace, unity in diversity and lighting and opening have consistently been in Iran’s architecture and have acted as the soul of construction. Islamic notion helps the architect in creating a spiritual place through creation of light and shadow (source: Author).

- Light in Iran’s architecture is a symbol of moving towards the truth that indicates the spiritual sense from heavens.
- Islamic vision, belief and faith in the supernatural world is the cause to see light in structures. Such as that light has descended from heaven to earth.
The four features: fluidity and luminance, light and cyberspace, unity in diversity and lighting and opening have consistently been in Iran’s architecture and have acted as the soul of construction. Islamic notion helps the architect in creating a spiritual place through creation of light and shadow (source: Author).

Iranian architecture has turned light to beauty with special elegance. The architect of this beauty with different appearances whether apparent and symbolic or identity in various elements has presented himself. Further, in symbolic form, these can be mentioned as the display of figures and colors of colored glass in the pool and inside the structure and semantic and identity aspect to entering a ray of light in absolute darkness that gives a manifestation of god.

**Dimension:** In domain of examining the effect of dimension in Iran’s architecture aesthetics, some points are reviewable:

1. Proportionate dimension is determined by the user’s location and its degree of importance and worths such as Iranian mosques or the reception section in the houses.
2. Accuracy in determining precise dimension because Iran’s architecture is a multi-dimensional work which is related to other arts. For instance, the effect of carpet dimension in size of spaces can be mentioned.

**Structure:** Structure in architecture can possess attributes that enhance the quality of architectural space. Among its utilities in Iran’s architecture are the dome and its structural form. This in modern architecture because of technological advance and presenting new structures are more observed. By creating inventiveness in structure, the draughtsman add to the beauty of structure and because of special expressive language of each structure and its shape form, the veracity in architectural work will also be increased. In drafts, which structure has no structural role in the aesthetics of that work, points such as integration of structure and architecture, attention to ecological patterns, economic and cultural justification and also assimilation of function and type of structure are seen.

In following, some factors affecting the beauty of Iran is discussed:

**Identity:** A beautiful phrase says that identity is a jewel that with it I am myself and alive. This gem was acquired by whether an individual or society in a historical context. Science and technology, skills, thought and beneficial valued experiences that they obtain from the others will become components of our identity in the final analysis and there lies the secret of our survival. Reviewing meanings of the word identity is reminiscent of prominent, high and spiritual position of this word. The first foresaid meaning for identity is the divine nature and its next meaning is essence and existence. The deceased Dehkhoda has also brought in the meanings: occasionally identity is predicated on external existence and sometimes it includes trivial truth. Culture and environment are the makers of identity of human life, so that each of them has an essential role in forming the identity. On the other hand, one can see that joint chapter of environmental human identity and cultural human identity constitute the identity of environment (Figure 5).
Explaining The Beauty Of The Architecture Patterns In The Context Of Iranian Identity And Symbols

Religion and culture can be called as two identity factors of architectural beauty. Cultures have various symbols. Despite the apparent differences, each culture’s symbols have undeniable similarities. This is by virtue of joint identity that they possess. For example, the similarity of carpet knitting with Iran’s architecture is very obvious. So, there are deep meanings in other symbols of this culture, and architecture in this culture contains internal meaning. Especially that in Iran, there is wisdom of many cultures and people possess many and varied historical monuments. But this diversity and its differences have common intrinsic content which organize them under one general set. Behind every form lies a concept and internal content. From this perspective, human being is seen as an individual who for expressing his/her internal content turns to outer forms and bodies and seeks aid from them to portray what is inside. These concepts do not suffer from passing transitions, but every human civilization in every time and place for improvement and evolution of its views gives a new course in line with goals and visions of fundamental identity of its community. For example, Pirnia divides the methods of Iranian architecture to two era of pre-Islam and four eras of after Islam and despite the differences that can be seen in form and content of each methods with the other, he considers all of them under five common factors (self-efficiency, gregariousness, avoiding idleness, introversion and prayer). For instance, if we compare the colossal monuments and forms of Parthian monuments with simple volumes of Khorasani architecture, we cannot see any similarity between them, but both sought to state the higher place of man on earth. However, each had their own story. Both sought to say that man has a place beyond beings and phenomenon around him. In Parthian architecture, this thought is expressed with tendency to external greatness and in Khorasani architecture it is stated with tendency to inner greatness. Heavy volumes with titanic scales such as Ivan Madaen was considered a concrete and bodily crystallization of dominance and empire of man of his surroundings and this idea in early centuries of Islam was stated by reducing mass and matter. Those that consider architecture the
provider of material needs of mankind, assume the meaning of architectural elements as a constitute of denying of its concrete benefits and vice versa. And, in their opinion, these two assumptions are uncollectible that a minaret fulfills the structural purpose and also imply the meaning. Therefore, in religion’s standpoint, everything has an exterior and an interior that although different, they are not separate. There is no exterior without interior and vice versa. When a faithful architect looks to the universe, he ceaselessly contemplates from exterior to interior and this contemplation is prayer. Naturally, such behavior is seen in his artistic work. This contemplation from exterior to interior is manifested in both practice and his art. The artist while working with the matter and its material deformation tries to make it closer to its interior form. For this reason, this quality also affects his audience. This contemplation in architecture, because of unique material existence in which the art work is created, which si is more difficult. The designer is expected to have a primarily good performance. This performance is fulfilled with materials and with regards to technical constraints and environmental requirements is fulfilled (Figure 6).

**Figure 6.** Role of religion in manifestation of Iranian identity (Source: Author)

**CONCLUSION**

With regards to what was said in range of architectural aesthetics, these conclusions are drawn:

- In architectural aesthetics, one must not focus only on ostensible beauty and ignore other levels of it. In fact, set of beauty levels of a work have to affect other comprehension senses besides human’s sensory perception and its tools and in fact, in addition to sensory perception, mental and inner cognition must also inspire beauty in man.

- Beauty must be domestic and national (risen from culture and society’s outlook) and in simple terms with identity and in other words its identity must be synchronized with the society’s, so that society can better understand and relate to it and to feel the identity after the contact. The biggest difficulty in emulation of foreign standards is creating identity crisis and alienation in the society.

- The most important section in architectural aesthetics is that different standards of beauty levels are available and recognizable by designers and planners so that there is a possibility of evaluating beauty and determining its level and also recognizing dimension of human life, which are related to beauty.
REFERENCES