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Spirituality and Social Values Vs Material Formalism An Approach to a Human Architecture

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Abstract

Architectural schools of design overwhelmingly adapt to cultural backgrounds of societies they target. This paper distinguishes between ideologies that generated Western, contemporary architecture, and on the other hand, the values of traditional Arab communities. The paper aims at parrying architectural plastic formations that are irrelevant to the local Arab discourse. The paper rediscovers a value oriented architecture that is capable of moving spiritual feelings towards the built environment, even if its formalistic and visual attractiveness is controversial. The paper demonstrates examples of what can be called "sincere" architecture rather than stunning and sight-startling products that apparently or superficially hold value.

1. Introduction

Buildings can be seen as mirrors that reliably reflect the identity of the societies that contain and incubates them. Even the architects who trigger them have no power to apply trends aside the desires of a society or its representatives. The modernity and materialistic progression that buildings reflect in the modern Western World are not unusual for advanced, industrial, and developed nations. On another hand, what seems odd is that local Arab countries, specifically with different cultures and norms, have been adopting similar languages and reflections along the past few decades. While both thought and product

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are distant from Arab culture, the mimicry of local communities that inclined towards formalistic architecture driven by materialistic values and market influences seems to be disoriented. Local Arab architects drifted with the stream of Modernism and even with the "semblances" of postmodern movements especially in the contagious state of globalization.

The paper rapidly reviews epistemic references of modern architecture and argues the conformance of its basics with local traditions. It demonstrates examples of precedent local magnificent architecture: 'Sultan Hassan mosque' by expressing symbols that relate values to the experience of spaces. Subsequently, the paper demonstrates contemporary attempts of the author to apply designs that translate the theoretical background into practical application, hopefully, conducting socially and psychologically determined "human" environments.

The paper does not aim at the assessment of different projects in an attempt to evaluate their success or failure. If it had aimed at doing so, empirical research would have appeared to be the appropriate method. Instead, the paper is to show the distinctions between two approaches of design that have emanated from two different visions or perspectives, that of the Western discourse and our local traditional collective consciousness. In doing so, the paper shows strong dependency on a methodology of the "participant observer", in this case, the designer and user. To extract the values of local behavioral mores, the research had to strive to a more subjective and phenomenological methodology. This methodology requires the researchers' direct experience and deep contact with the projects under study.

2. Mind Bias to materialistic forms

The two illustrated cases in fig.1 present two states of the human body that are quite different. The first at the right (b), shows a position, freezed in a fraction of a second, to show how a human body can perform astounding movements. This position is a result of long concentration and hard training not only by the gymnast herself, but also it is a result of an effort of a big team of participants.

Human body in the case (b) draws attention to cleverness that cannot be usually performed by an ordinary person in daily life. On the other hand, the case (a) presents an ordinary state of the body that may not attract any attention. A comparison between the two states may help clearly point to the paper's proposition. While the astonishing case of somersault on a balance beam may be an attractive position that a human can hardly achieve, the other state of the body is no less miraculous for an attentive observer. For a supposed outsider, shape of a human body balance may be much more logical to be
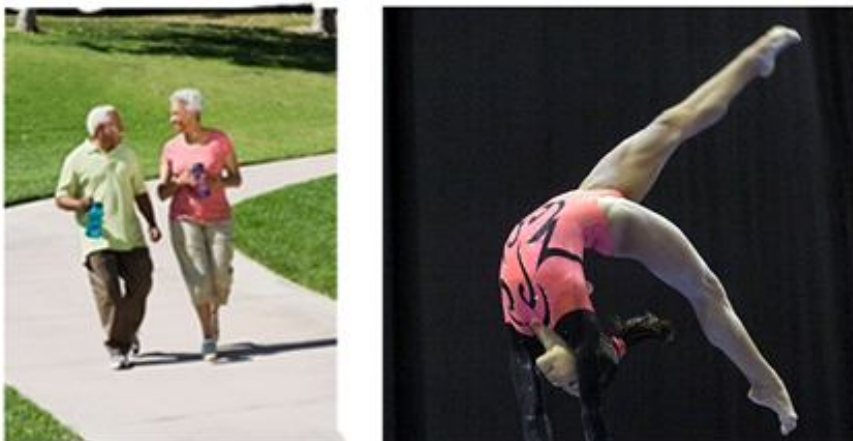

Fig.1. (a) Familiarity of normal satisfaction; versus provisional impressive pretention (b); source: Gymnastics Inside magazine.(2012) http://perfect10.rustyparts.com/wp-content/uploads/hong_1.jpg

normally settled horizontally on four legs like many animals, than erecting vertically on just two feet. Human long proportioned body would rather be laid on the ground like many reptiles than stand in a contradictory state to balance principles of masses. A pencil in an analogous shape of body cannot be stable when left standing on its extremity point. However, the human body can walk, run, bend, carry weights with one hand, and even stand on a single foot, to amaze any truthful arbitrator observer. The remarkable non logic kinetic situations have never drawn attention due to one's taking for granted the easiness of their happening.

The presented two states of the body are so vital to get along an assessment. The gymnastic made up movement had a cost that is relatively high in a sense of time, effort or even as subordinate to a sophisticated scientific knowledge of anatomy. According to the cost, what were the benefits? The gymnastic glimpsing movement drew anyone's attention to a cleverness embedding a message of superiority opposing incapacitation of others. The dangerous calculated state of the body in a totally unstable position might be conducted to be appreciated by applauses of spectators. On a scale of daily life, it may have no direct benefit or use other than splurge of an achievement that does not last for even a minute. Probably the performance presented itself as a goal to achieve. The difficulty act may deliver a message to other players of superiority. That is what architects had mainly expressed when they transformed the relaxed mode of habitual, peaceful way of living into a startling state within a contest where the winner may be acknowledged as a champ.

The paper's aim is to rediscover a humanistic state of architecture that lasts longer, provides a greater chance to social interactions, and peace of mind circumstance to achieve other needed objectives within its envelop. Although the mind usually biases towards materialistic forms, man or an architect can compensate delightful sight by spiritual tendency to human meanings.

3. Materialistic Culture Spread

What happened to conduct the human mind to believe in decorative details assuming to enhance the quality of life? Ideologies are a continuum synthesized interaction of social and economic movements that may be often supported by nations' policies. The twentieth century watched a reaction of liberating from the clerical dominance over most sides of life. Liberation presented by modernism began from roots of delighting thoughts of man's centralization and individuality appraisal. It appealed that the human mind has a sufficient efficiency to interpret himself, his environment, and the whole universe without any need to mysterious faiths or oracles. This philosophy succeeded to insulate the human, spiritual dimension in the daily life domain (Al- Masiri & Al-Turayki, 2003). Many queries generated by the modernism pattern conducted to Postmodernism that deconstructed the man and denied his sovereignty, ending by its nonentity. Deterioration of humanism for credit to the machine, the market and power defining modernism, transformed to a single dimensioned matter of the body, sex, and passion in the Postmodern philosophy.

Modernism appears to be a solid philosophy that lasted for long (and is probably still evident). It affected the world along the beginning of the last century basing upon brilliant consumptive products that convinced the human desires to facilitate life. Technology, scientific development, commodities redundancy, materialistic appearance, and ease of life were all expressions that drove human spirits away from deep sentiments and modesty. That is what the new world depended on in convincing the intellect to follow. This is what started coinciding with the announcement of the "American dream" or "land of opportunity". Marketing the products required powerful tools to a rapprochement of cultures and conceptual consensus that consequently persuades consumers to buy their needs. Globalization formed a suitable carrier of spreading the consumption culture. It can be considered the political tool to support the capitalism ascendency to control the market (Peter & Schumann, 1996). One of the effects of globalization is a reconstruction of morals that depend on liberating the individuals as isolated atoms that communicate only for the needs attempting and selfish interest. That goal, from the point of view of

modernism, is a victory for the individual against the group or community. The western mentality became the main source if not the only agent who decides the measures, domains, and limits of freedom'(Al-Masiri & Al-Turayki, 2003). The post modernism called for freedom of individual choices ignoring the manipulation of minds through an advertising industry that reached 250 billion dollars according to Benjamin Barber, the director of the Walt Whitman Center of Rutgers University (Peter & Schumann, 1996). Manipulation of minds has been a soft tool to spread a common consuming culture voluntarily. Jean Baudrillard criticized Disney land, mentioning its symbolism of malignant capitalism. To him, it covered consumption values and commodity by value legends and humanistic stories to form one of the greatest financial institutes. Louise Marin (1984) has described the visitors of Disneyland as captured like a rat in a maze, and alienated by their part without being aware of performing a part in a representation of the makeup of contemporary American ideology.

4. The local Arab reaction to materialistic epistemology

A part of the cultural liberated local parties adopted what Al-Masiri called "partial secularism" (AL Masiri, 2011). It was hard for a total secularity to be spread in the Egyptian community where religious faith is still a main constitute of the personality in depth, but an insistence to separate the religious issues from state's management remains an exclusive field of human studiousness. Once this party accepted the approach, materialism gained a step in advance in opposition to the morality and human value. Positivism and empirical methods became fashionable in science; hence values and general philosophies had no position in the paradigm of materialistic problem solution.

What is weird that local society surpassed farther than western societies in materialism regarding some aspects. Boasting and superficially judgments augmented as a natural consequence of consumption value accompanied the economic openness during the rule of President Sadat in the eighties and nineties. Owning a car or stylish clothes and residential districts became codes of socio-economic rank. According to Russel (1988), consuming appreciation in some eastern cultures exceeded other developed countries in many aspects. New glazed office buildings towers and curtain walls became dominant to imitate what was going on in potent western cities. As stated previously; the mirror of architecture is a true reflection of society; confusion is the main appearance of the Arab societies when imported a false image to the architectural product.

Neither imitating the Western, modern architecture nor importing its material components and formalistic aesthetics would reach a genuine appreciation, regarding that this takes place in a totally different milieu. Incompatibility with potentials probably fails to satisfy the aesthetic, cognitive perception, even if it passed the aesthetic, visual perception.(El Husseiny, 2004)

5. Symbolism, as a launching point to values.

Symbols, in their intelligible form, include everything. A table may mean eating; waving a hand may mean leaving or greeting, and so on. It is about forming a code that a group of people can conceive, learn and then retrieve for a certain situation. Many writers considered symbolism in their works. Jon Lang might summarize in his book *'Creating Architectural Theory'* some of the main essays of Amos Rapoport's meaning of the built environment. He mentioned some coexisting theories that explain different relationships between the built environment and meanings, conceived by certain groups. Sometimes psychological interpretation of linking forms to natural phenomena make shapes carry meanings because of empathy made by minds in relation to the Physiognomic theory and the Gestalt theory. Other times, symbolism is more related to cultural accumulations such as appreciation of sizes, spaces, materials, degree of enclosure, relationships to socio-economic status. Variability of symbolic values is also a matter that reflects individual differences according to cultural ideologies towards social communications, privacy, size of a house, or maybe the definition of a home. Symbolism of patterns of

furnishing, buildings, and landscape meet in general aesthetic appreciation from most people. Identifying oneself has taken a side of interests through houses design, landscape, and even interior design. Lang stated that many designers had an intuitive feeling in applying symbolism in their works, but it seems that difficulties opposed their efforts due to lack of a clear and positive theory of environmental symbolism. Some of the crucial questions that Lang imposed were: which symbolic values can buildings afford to use? What are the codes that populations understand and enjoy? What methods are available to ascertain them? (Lang, 1987)

Symbolism, when discussed in a positive way, mostly addresses "preferences" either socially to identify groups' culture and a way of life corresponding their needs, or psychologically when distinguishing an individual within surrounding people. The paper seeks relating architecture to humanistic appreciation that raises its value. In the traditions of Muslim's sophism, anything always has two faces, one is its material structure, the other is the embedded meaning. The relationship between both is relatively reciprocal, the more a material is materialistic, the less meaning correlates, and vice versa. Materialism here addresses the material value that decreases with time. When a thing becomes old it tends to be broken and unused, then it ends by being worthless. A material may include commodities, food, and even gestures or talks. On the contrary, meaning lasts even when its material container becomes old, or even disappears, thanks to the storage of memory in a human mind. A smile then, although its material component is too light, it may mean a powerful feeling that may last for time life. In other domains, artists lifted up their products' value when they understood the emotional, human effect in their works, especially in the cinema drama, songs, literature, and painting, while most architects were busy with high-end technology and using dazzling materials

6. Symbolism in Western buildings.

A few number of the western architectures succeeded to represent valuable symbolic values in the sense of the paper's aim. The Memorial Wall of Washington DC is one of the successful projects because its highly appreciated implicit symbolism. It has taken tenth ranking on the list of America's favourite Architecture by the American Institute of Architects. The memorial consists of two gabbros' walls that retain the earth ground behind them. Engraved names of martyrs of the Vietnam War appear on highly

Fig.2. (a): Touching the Memorial Wall; source: Wikimedia, (2005). http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/File:TouchWall.jpg. And (b) the "Memory Void" where a visitor is invited to walk on metallic faces in the Jewish Museum; source: http://www.katrinkalden.net

reflective black stones. Visitors can see their reflections on the stone wall simultaneously with the engraved names. This aims at symbolically connecting the past and present. The symbolic theme quietly presented in a park mixes simplicity and clarity. The embedded passion of sacrificing oneself for others is full of meaning. This meaning presents itself in easy architectural vocabulary that quietly expresses sorrow that does not overlook values of pride.

The Jewish Museum of Berlin is another project that obviously reflected a symbolic value. The building's form resembles a warped Star of David. An irregular matrix of windows spreads in all orientations across the building's facade. 10000 steel punched faces scattered over the ground of the "Memory void", the only accessible voided space in the Libeskind building. Circulation guides the visitors to walk through the void, producing distressing sounds by stepping over the metal faces. While the whole design succeeded to lead sympathy towards Jews' history in an atmosphere of gloom, the experience of walking on faces may lead the visitor to be partially blamed to be a part of torturing and killing children. The building has too much sophistication that orients the visitor towards a single idea that the architect probably made sure the visitor has taken. .

7. Symbolism in Islamic heritage experience

Islamic heritage of Mamlouk Mosques imbedded highly appreciated symbolism through either its architecture or ornamental details. One of the richest examples is the Mosque and Madrassa (school) of Sultan Hassan that presents a unique, symbolic experience through its spaces. The suspense of transition from outside to the central court strongly appears in a walk that prepares one to "Salah", which means prayer, but precisely in language means linking with God. To meet God, it was necessary to prepare an approach to the locus of such a momentous incident. After ascending a few stairs steps spending an easy effort that symbolizes an initiation from the man's part to enter the house of Allah, worshipers reach the entrance hall (Majaz). The entrance is a combination of a static two dimensional human scale plan combined with a monumental scale height, meaning a mixture of human relax and majesty feeling. Being covered with a dome, a person in that space, is blessed with acceptance since he is in the center of the spherical roof, or the focus of God's protection. The temperature of outer hot climate noticeably drops once entering the Majaz. While wondering where to pursue, one will notice an indirect light falling on the walls of a smaller transit hall encouraging to move towards it. When getting there, a breeze coming from the top high wind catcher caresses one's face, a tunnel where the dim light associated to the tender breeze carries hope and mercy. Changing the direction of movement is collateral to going through an inviting,

Fig.3. (a) The plan shows the path experience from the entrance to the central courtyard; source: reproduced from *"Mosques of Egypt"*. (1948). The Ministry of Awqaf (endowments)..); (b) Sultan Hassan Madrasa and Mosque; source: the authors (2012)

dynamic, intimate, and narrow corridor (fig.3, a). Changing direction in the relatively obscured tunnel one more time precedent to access the courtyard is a preparation to a big happening. Gradual exploration to what is coming does not oppose the joy of the sudden access to the courtyard with its heaven light. Entering the court from its corner is a matter of humility, especially when one recognizes how his body is small in comparison to the 35 meters height of the four Iwans enclosing the gigantic courtyard (fig.3,b). The first thing the eyes will notice is Quran verses starting by "In the name of God, the Gracious, the Merciful" written on the central water fountain dome. One just gets a complete security after a relatively long not exhausting walk. Perceived thickness of walls is a factor of confirming the protection feeling. This wall thickness, in fact, contains four hostel buildings for students of the four different disciplines of Islam. One more time God worship (praying in the central courtyard) cannot be performed without an enclosure of knowledge and education (the *Madrasa*) where students' *Iwans* of studying the 4 disciplines of Islam and hostels surround the court. Knowledge, when forming the walls of the mosque that protect religion, would be at the same time the outer skin of a religion that deals with and organizes the outside life.

8. Design attempts to insert humanistic values.

The question to be imposed now is: does any form of symbolism necessarily lead to humanism? To get out of architecture as pure symbolic pieces of arts to meaningful and functional buildings is a lesson learned from Sultan Hassan Mosque. The author adopted a similar line of design to express valuable meanings in public use buildings. The paper presents a personal experience to practice humanistic design through three examples of the author's design of functional buildings through different approaches.

The first attempt is a design presented for a primary school design competition. It is to be located in rural regions in order to fix a socio-cultural image of a sense of inferiority attached to the Egyptian peasant. The project's suitability for the target increases its opportunity since it targets children's minds in the first place. The design manifests the findings of a former study of the author investigating children's image of school buildings (El Husseiny, 1996). The paper gave attention towards some architecture items that form the school image to children: the gate, fences, the recreation court, the flag, hobbies, and the teacher are what students noticeably consider and express in their drawings. The school masses transgressed the usual rigid rectangular form to decrease formality senses that do not match the actual rural environment. The main entrance facade was green earth sheltered in a hill like feature to give a message that planting is the source of beauty of this school, and earth in its honourable value to farmers constitutes a part of the entrance wall. A single Banyan tree (Ficus bengalensis) is to be planted to give
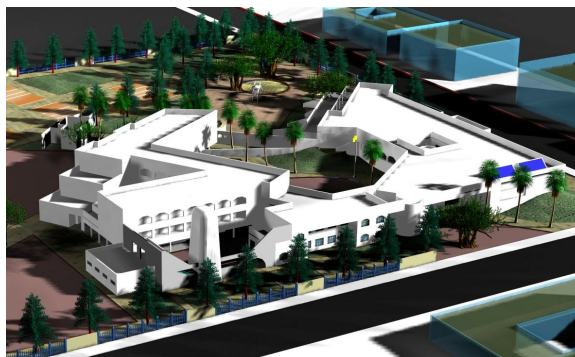

Fig.4. liberated masses of the primary school prototype in
rural regions showing the entrance façade and main
features of the building; source: the authors, (2001)

intimacy in front of the main entrance. At the same time, it plays the role of a land mark that may last for decades and will carry generations' childhood memories to be attached with the school (fig.4).

Since the fence counts as the actual school facade to a child, emphasis of his attachment to the place manifests by displaying the highly appreciated children's agriculture hobby along the main elevation. A competitive agricultural activity may help a convergence of sons and fathers, discussing technicalities to enhance plants productivity and may lead to exchange pride ongoing the subject of agriculture. It may partially help to withdraw what seems to be evident in rural Egypt: a common hope of parents to see their children as doctors and engineers rather than practicing fathers' disgraceful career of planting. Extending the green area to the internal court through the entrance gate is a continuity relationship between the school and the village community; it then ends up with an internal green hill that may help children to enjoy playing. Up the hill, children may already reach half way to go to the first floor. Instead of using the traditional staircase that is still useable by teachers, children can continue to climb rope ladders on the adjoining wall to reach the hobby rooms. Pigeonhole is a useful internal feature that can be seen from outside and provides an animate excitement by spreading pigeons in the school's open spaces. A sudden takeoff fly of birds' masses to leave the ground when children scramble to the courtyard at the recreation time, or a visiting white pigeon on a window base of the class may present captivating daily scenes. A familiar interaction with living birds integrates the village productive aviculture. Design of the buildings' facades appears in pure mass forms dismissing non valuable details to match a minimalism value to appreciate.

Another building is a factory mosque in the Abou Zeneima industrial zone, in Sinai Peninsula (fig. 5). The site was the main factor affecting the design for the significance of Sinai's land that is spiritually appreciable through the religions history on one hand, and the dramatic enclosure of the site, on the other

fig. 5. Abou Zenima Mountains of Sinai enclose the site of the project. The lines of the mountains match the mosque's strips. Numerous interior decisions were vernacularly participated by local laborers; source: authors,(2009)

hand. The project adopted a subconscious passion towards the site based upon physiognomy theories. When subconsciously perceiving masses to be alive, one may imagine the mountains, which as hosts to the newly existing building are welcoming the mosque located in the mountains' field. The architectural vocabulary represented in the horizontal strips and the fragmented inclined masses mimics the colourful horizontal layers of the mountain and its wrinkles. Exchangeable formative convergence helped to imagine a hidden conversation between facing masses. The human sense of imaginary interaction between masses of the mountains and the mosque provided a highly appreciated metaphor of intimacy.

The third building is an extension building of the faculty of Engineering at Minia Universtiy in Egypt. The building design presents it as a social building, to appreciate the social life of students in this livable youth period. An emphasis on creating interactive general spaces with human behaviour is eminent. The design provides static spaces as main components of the plan structure. Even corridors are wide enough to decrease their dynamism in order to keep students staying in the building's spaces. Partial static spaces with different sizes, arranged throughout the building, invite different group sizes to communicate. Increasing a visual contact between different floors through different open internal courts and terraces on the outside facades increased communication. The building is adjacent to cultivated lands; it directs the view to the remarkable landscape through openings along corridors and spaces. These stimuli are tools that add pleasure and help remain in the building. The corridors are windowless to increase a direct visual exposure to nature without any physical or symbolic obstruction, especially when preventing a possible impact of glass cleaning lack often found in public buildings. As the building functions for more than ten years now, it demonstrates a social appeal to human ties between students themselves and reinforced ties between the faculty staff and students, as well.

Fig.6. (a) Corridors of the building are framing landscape panoramas, and (b) terraces are designed as static spaces for large numbers of students to gather; source: the authors, (2011).

Fig.7. the building interacts with surrounding agricultural fields. The interior provided partial static spaces for probable friendship reinforcement; source: the author, (2011).

9. Discussion

Beauty is particularly relevant to goodness, compassion, sympathy. Human architecture is that architecture that relates buildings to transcendent qualities. Physical beauty or formalism, in fact, does not last for long since its perception is mostly superficial especially when routinely observed. Symbolism is one vital way to lend humanism to a building but is not exclusive.

9.1. Types of symbolism

Architectural symbolism may provide meanings to a building, but not all building types are suitable to different types of symbolism. We may summarize in the following types:

Artistic symbolism may be useful in monumental iconic buildings to be visited once in a lifetime or at long intervals of time. It represents just a message to be read, but the building does not have actual use rather than being a piece of art. It bears a lot of artificiality in order to highlight an idea. According to Theodor Adorno in his book "Aesthetic Theory", modern art's freedom from restrictions and imperial functions that had dominated previous eras has led to an expansion in art's critical capacity and an increase in its formal autonomy. As a result, art increases its responsibility for societal commentary. However, Adorno does not reconcile with politicized content being art's most critical strength: he rather encourages a more abstract "truth-content". Adorno's aesthetics locates this "truth-content" within the object of art, rather than in subject's perception, as Kantian and idealist aesthetics may assert. In the Jewish Museum when symbolized by its spaces the absence of the Jewish culture, the building itself was a place to demonstrate this absence. (Theodor, 1998)

Embedded symbolism through normal use of a functional building is much more moderately hidden to respect the user's comprehension and cultural capabilities. Although getting used to certain values may gradually weaken interest, meaning will still be retrieved now and then, but satisfaction remains inherent in the use. Experiencing Symbolism in a variety of situations may enrich experiencing a built environment than perceiving instant static messages or naive ones. Social values that relate to moral and emotional values may create continuous interactive and variable social values that last.

9.2. Truthfulness of meanings

Although the client is usually the one paying fees to the architect, sincerity of the latter towards the users' benefit probably reaches higher goals. Therefore, intention in Islamic culture is a cornerstone of any work and promised to be rewarded even if the job failed. Although intentions are internal secrets, pretending a meaning can seldom escape declaration. Returning to fig.1, intentions of the gymnastic athlete either if cleverness is hiding self arrogance or aiming to raising her country's flag high, intentions will probably show themselves by the associational gestures and words sooner or later. The difference between patriotism and selfishness is large although the act is the same. Architecture is no different from any art, when sincere internal feelings can not miss the intended value while receiving it. The Sultan Hassan Mosque's architect "Mohamed Ebn Belek" has been unknown until the accidental discovery of the name under wall plaster of an internal staircase of one of the four schools during a restoration process at 1936. Usual architects' anonymity is probably a sign of credibility. Although western architecture produced numeral valuable buildings, it could not give up the media as an essential support to its success. Daniel Libeskind's design for `the Jewish Museum' in Berlin according to Jonathan (2000) is an example of the reputability of a building former to its construction by several years. Media and publications have repeatedly presented the project at various stages during its completion. Jean Baudrillard pointed to manipulating minds as a tool of modernism in his book entitled *"The gulf war did not take place"*, he argued in the book that "news events" introduce themselves as more significant than reality (Johnathan, 2000). In terms of positivism, media event can count as a valid component of reality, but forcing an idea

through media event or publications will probably make credibility not last for long. Publicity and financial support to market an idea may help convince people's consciousness, but the unvarnished truth may easily find a way to be unconsciously credible. Therefore, the inexpensive project of the Memorial Wall, with the calmness of its site, and clarity of the idea constituted an easy open gateway to a spiritual acceptance.

9.3. Experiencing architecture produces humanism

Public buildings can depend on social values instead of short term pulsing emotional affect of symbolism. Familiarity may weaken passion of architectural symbols through daily use, but can be reversed into a place attachment when being a continuous locus of humanistic and social rapprochement. Architectural programming then plays an essential role in humanizing a place but usually does not add credit to the architect like sculpturing do. While essential activities are usually highlighted, associational activities may be more substantial to users. In the Faculty of Engineering building, students may spend more time in circulation spaces than in classes. Although the manifest behavior may seem to be the logic cause to be there, the latent behavior remains the real one. The architect's role is to choose which activities will prevail to take place and link an environment to values. Human, moral, and enjoyable values are preferable since are directly targeting feelings. For many students, friendship may add a delightful value in association to study activities and will strongly reflect to its place appreciation. Similarly, architects may regard how married couples can enjoy daily life activities at home than merely provide traditional, functional rooms. Associating memories to architecture is a fact that is usually unnoticeable but apparently is essential for appreciating a place that afforded circumstances to happen. Although the normal unnoticeable human body position in fig.1 is miraculous in terms of balance, we may add that social comfort state of the couple's relaxed talk which has not drawn one's attention to the miracle.

10. Conclusion

Western societies tended to follow thoughts of modernism in all aspects of life including architecture which faithfully expressed it. The local Arab societies, among many others, appeared confused in following the vigorous materialism stream. The paper recalled humanities and rediscovered society potentials of authentic centripetal values, which used to characterize local traditions.

Symbolism might be an approach to turn meanings into realistic buildings, and then one may retrieve the meanings every now and then, but when adjoined with function, symbolism would last for long. The authors argued that architecture should not be appreciated just as a piece of art. The paper invites architects to express values in a daily use context, and originally interact with people's feelings. By maintaining social ties, and addressing kindness, sincerity, and high morals, architecture may transcend beyond superficial or materialistic aesthetics. The task of an architect here becomes inclusive to the insight of the bonds and morals he/she can enhance and tailor through the design process, considering his/her deep attachment to those social patterns as if designing for oneself.

There is no single way to transfer theory into application. The paper presented three attempts to evoke humanities in design. The first is a primary school that employed symbolism to penetrate a psychological appreciation of positive values in a non concerned community. Implanting a seed of self confidence and internal peace may bring an unnoticed happiness to a society. The second attempt is a mosque that represented modesty of architecture to correspond to the solemnity of Sinia's mountains. The mosque as newly placed in the site had a simplified form that can be compatible with the characteristics of the surrounding mountains. The human scale building is right away from what humans used to challenge the gravity and nature using the technology they have. The third attempt is a university building that showed to be the most close to the users' hearts. The building when designed to be a social place, allowed

unforgettable memories of warm communications to happen in its spaces. Loving the events might reflect to love the place where they happen. The authors' believe is that buildings, when beloved, are much more precious than being aesthetically striking.

After having been exposed to the methodological framework, evaluation of the paper has been subject of some limitations. A dependency of evaluation on local collective conscious within the experience of space, intimate socialization and commonality of mores has been shown. Delicate subject of experiencing symbolism characterized by values of goodness cannot be rationally measured, and sincerity would never be verified. But the authors argue that general agreement of users towards meanings remains a reliable judgment and a source of inspiration for experienced architects. However, the paper relies on calling for a design trend based on intentions and sincerity when strongly based on the religious cultural reserve of the local Arab societies. Admittedly, symbolic values are not confined to local societies, but morals, being attached to humanity, are appreciated in the West as well as in the East, and demonstrated sometimes in valuable humanistic western projects.

Aside symbolism, the authors consider particular local social interaction and human warmness a prospect to consist a base to human architecture as being a specific identity. The paper points to redefine architectural objectives according to a special broader understanding of material aesthetics towards a simple correlating social pleasure to built environments. When highlighting ethics to emphasize values, social mores, and social intimacy, the paper not only invites local architecture to liberate users' spirits in an appreciation independent of superficial formalism, but also persuades western architecture to reach similar benefits according to a positive cultural interaction basis.

Additional empirical research would explore preferences of humanistic spaces to widen scopes of design approaches in different cultures for different social groups in favor of humanity around the globe.

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