

The Examination of Emotional-Mental Attachments & Senses Architecture in Reviving Urban Identity & Improvement of Urban Spaces (Regarding To Juhani Pallasmaa's Phenomenological Approach)

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Received: March 8, 2015

Accepted: May 10, 2015

ABSTRACT

Nowadays the quality of urban spaces are not only overlooked with immethodical constructions, but the existing ones have been destroyed. The industrial revolution and the rapid growth of technology which is a product of urban culture have turned itself into an anti-urbanism phenomenon. Civilization has started to demolish the whole city except for a few houses that it has been kept like museum. The aim of this study is to examine the role of people's emotional – mental attachments to revival of urban identity and improvement of urban spaces, regarding Juhani Pallasmaa's approach to architecture of senses. To achieve this purpose, first there is an overview of the definitions of place, sense of place and emotional-mental attachment indices .Finally, effective factors on the perception of form, architectural space and urban space are studied with a view to Pallasmaa's phenomenological approach. This way of looking at architecture of senses can create a challenge in urban designing and emphasize the effect of a professional-designing product on general beliefs and culture of people. The research approach of this study is "phenomenological understanding" which due to the nature of research has a "descriptive manner ". This paper is following a descriptive and documentary method and by using data-collecting devices (library and documentary studies) has tried to analyze briefly the components, principles and facts connected to urban space and emotional-mental indices.

KEYWORDS: Sense of Place, Architecture of Senses, Juhani Pallasmaa, Urban Space Improvement

INTRODUCTION

After World War 2, most places were afflicted by profound changes. Regarding space, new towns lack walls and centralization. Urban texture has become "widespread ", cohesion of "city walls" is lost and the solidarity of urban spaces is damaged. As a result, roads and neighborhoods have lost their identity and the city's totality is illegible .Today's environment is characterized by monotony. If there is variety, it is the result of the elements from the past. "Presence "of most new places is weak. In fact modern environment rarely shows amazement and exploration which was the cause of old cities attraction and, the efforts made to destroy the general monotony are often cheap fantasies. In total, the evidence refers to the loss of place[1]. If there are no activities between the buildings lower limit of social relationship, that is passive relationship (visual and audio), will be eliminated. In this case people who are placed in space are in total isolation or at high level of relationship [2].This is when social activities are not done in space. Urban space is not just a physical concept, but it covers "citizenship interactions" and "urban activities". In other words it depicts that aspect of city where urban activities are done or social interactions can be revealed. Francis Tybaldz[3] believes that urban space is part of urban texture which people have physical and visual access to it and public urban spaces are the domain of urban designing.

1. The phenomenon of place

The duty of architecture is to turn an area into a place. This means it brings potential content of the environment into action and create a center where strong emotional and mental relationship between people are constructed and it is a place where events happen as a life [4]. A place is a piece of environment which is described by senses and that is the very feeling which gives us a better understanding of the place. There is a subconscious in the deepest levels of human awareness that is joined with place where human origins lie and it is the center of health, security, relationship and a point of direction in the end[5].Experiencing a place is individual and mental in which a person shares their feelings with many others, and this common sense, which is the person's physical presence in place and unconscious experience of it is called a sense of place. The first level of the sense of place is knowing the place, by being in the place and ignoring its qualities or meaning. Most people experience a place by just being there and their relations with some places is just through activities. These do not pay much attention to the place itself and experience a form of place which involves not really seeing the place and taking part in activities. Therefore, they have no attachments to it and geographically feel alienated[5].

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2. Sense of place from phenomenological viewpoint

From the viewpoint of phenomenologist the sense of place means to link to place through realization of symbols and daily activities. This feeling can be created in a person's living place and deepen and expanded through time[5]. Individual and collective values affect the manner of sensing place and people usually take part in social activities according to their manner of place sensing [6]. Sense of place not only causes coordination and proper function of architectural space and people, it is the reason for people's feeling of security, pleasure and emotional realization and helps them to have an identity and a sense of belonging to place. From the phenomenological viewpoint the most important concepts related to expression of place are the terms of place –loving , place experience, and place character and sense of place means non-material characteristics or place personality. In today's interpretations, sense of place is something that people create in a special time period. It is the result of repetitive customs and events and describes the atmosphere of the environment. In phenomenology of place, experience is the main pillar of perception. Phenomenological experience means mental purification and achieving the essence of things through person which affects the sense of place. This profound experience, in Alain Gasso's point of view, is a factor which turns every physical and environmental situation into a place [7].

The character of place is also an important factor of sense of place. Simon thinks that place refers not only to a geographical area, it also shows the main character of a site which distinguishes it from other places. In this way various dimensions of perspective, gather together to make a distinguished environment and a sense of special locality[8]. But Nor berg Schulz thinks place is no more than an abstract space. It is an entirety made of real objects and things and contains materials, shapes, texture and colors. All these elements together define the character of environment, which is in nature considered a place [9].

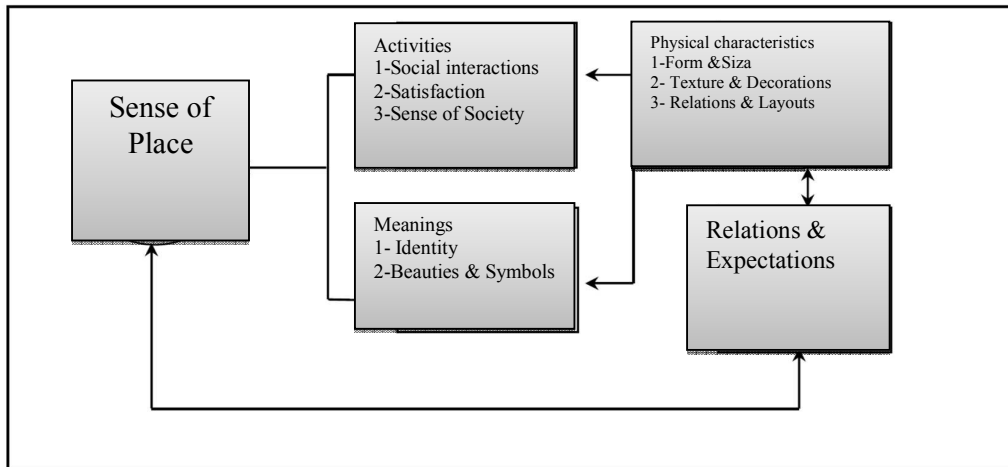


Fig1. A sense of place and the factors affecting it, Reference: Falahatzadeh, 1385

3. Social attachment to place

A set of fables and personal and collective narratives which happen simultaneously with place are effective on creating an attachment to place[10]. This sense leads to a link between person and place in such a way that the person knows themselves as part of the place and pictures a role in their mind for place according to their experience of signs, meanings and actions. For him this role is unique and different and thus the place becomes significant and respectable. A place forms an attachment due to the possibility of occurrence of social relation and collective experience[11].

Part of everyone's character which makes their social identity is a place that they identify themselves with it and introduce it to the others. This can be called identification with space and in this regard social processes are more important than physical quality in forming attachment to a place [12]. In psychology of environment attachment to place refers to cognitive relationship of an individual or a group with the surroundings and in terms of identification, place attachment is identity relation with social surroundings where the person lives and it is made in a cultural environment. Cross, believes that, relations with place, and place attachment, is done through forming various kinds of person-place relations. He identifies various connections with place and its process as follows [13].

Table 1. Communication place, Reference: The author based on the Cross, 2005

Relation	Kind of Link	Process
Biography	historical & familial	being born and live in a place, place is part of personal history, formed through time
Emotional-mental	exciting, intangible	feeling sense of attachment, just felt instead of being formed, describing it is difficult, often unexpected
Ideological	moral & conscientious	living based on ethical guidelines about human's responsibilities to place, religious and non-religious guidelines
Narrative	Mythical	obtaining information about a place through stories, including making myths, familial history, description of events
Adaptive	Cognitive	choosing a place according to favorable features and preferences over lifestyle, comparing real places with ideal ones
Dependent	material	limited due to lack of choice, dependent to person or opportunities

1.1. Emotional-mental attachment indices

Memory is never stamped on mind without an event and when it occurs and time passes what remains in mind is the place where it has happened[10]. Personal attachment increases with elongation of person's residence in a place and is extensively related to the person's interactions with others[5]. The process, which is formed based on emotional-mental attachments towards the environment, is of familiarity, feeling, excitement and memory [13]. Researches show that collective memory criteria which play an important role in forming collective attachment are divided into two main categories of "events and social interactions formation " and " recording and transferring memories" , each of which is divided into two parts of " social and political structure" and " spatial and physical structure "[14]. The effective sub-criteria on "possible formation of social events and interactions "related to social and political structure of the city including social and environmental security, ethnic variety, social classes, occurrence of historical events and celebrations; and sub-criteria related to spatial and physical structure includes the existence of various kinds of public places and hangouts on the scale of neighborhood. The effective sub-criteria on "recording and transferring memories and the history of neighborhood", related to social and political structure of the neighborhood , includes stability and continuity of residence , and sub-criteria related to spatial and physical structure includes monuments and neighborhood preservation, existence of memories, signs, and names [14].

Local events and elements which are old are recorded on collective mind of people of the neighborhood. This changes it into a special feeling together with excitement and memory which in the end, causes an emotional-mental attachment. Therefore, memories of generations are stamped on old neighborhood spaces where there has been continuation of residence. That wall and this corner, that path and this alley are not just walls and corners, but a place where our collective memories are stored; storage for our culture, our current customs and our people's imagery[10].

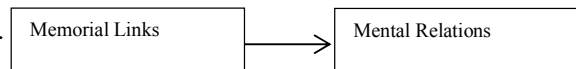
Another important element in this respect is the role of rituals and legends or in other words, traditions in causing an attachment and perdurability in a place. Relph[5] believes that the destruction of traditions is the cause of place's death. For instance, Ashoor's ceremony which is held annually not only causes providing the residents' attachment to place, but we see that those who used to be residents in the neighborhood prefer it to their new one for participation in the ceremony. Dissimilarity between components of a neighborhood is a structural and physical factor that causes memory and in the end emotional-mental attachment to old neighborhoods which in turn causes particular reading of every neighborhood and structural and physical differentiation between neighborhoods. Mental images and memories of each person of neighborhood components with their special differences might be different. However, these different components are significant in giving the neighborhood personification and identity. In the meantime, the role of distinctive points of neighborhood cannot be ignored. The weight of memories of these points becomes apparent when other components of the neighborhood, unlike new ones, have established strong spatial and physical relationship with these points. These prominent points can be a shrine, mosque, neighborhood center, tree etc. Spaces like mosques or the center have stamped more memories on the collective mind.

Social structures

- Neighborhood people friendship
- Events and incidents (memories)
- Having collective rituals
- Organizations
- Emotional-Mental relations
- Same level social classes
- Neighboring relations
- Public institutions

Physical structures

- Neighborhood centers
- Neighborhood introversion
- Memory Makers
- Signs
- Historical Monuments
- Names



4. A look at phenomenological approach of Juhani Pallasmaa

4. 1. Phenomenology as unpretentious and pure looking

I believe that architects, like poets, must be sensitive to images provoked by things .We should learn to look unpretentiously. According to Pallasmaa, phenomenology deals with shared and fundamental feelings of humans and their imaginations. Referring to Husserl and Heidegger, Pallasmaa discusses that phenomenology intends to explain and reveal phenomena with approach and direct attention to awareness without having theories and subjects of natural sciences or psychology as presuppositions [15]. As we will see, Pallasmaa is more influenced by thoughts of Merlo Ponti and Ashlar. He thinks that Merlo Ponti's thoughts are more progressive and generative than Heidegger's [16].

4.1.1 Architecture of senses

4.1.2 Superiority of sight over other senses

Pallasmaa starts his argument by mentioning the story of the superiority of sight and seeing over other senses in western culture. In his opinion, in ancient Greece conviction was obtained based on seeing and visibility to the extent that Heraclitus believed that eyes are more accurate witnesses than ears. Plato also considered vision as the greatest gift of God and Aristotle endorsed that. This is how knowledge and wisdom is likened to sight and clear vision and illumination is a metaphor for truth [16]. This perception existed in Renaissance as well and there was a kind of hierarchy dominating the senses, so that in cosmic body sight is related to fire, hearing to air, smell to vapor, taste to water and touch to earth. This supremacy continued by the invention of perspective which is based on scenery². Thus, we can say that the western culture has always been influenced by a sight-based paradigm, and based on vision-based knowledge, truth and reality. In Pallasmaa's opinion, most problems in architecture rooted in this superiority of sight over other senses and lack of attention to them [16].

4.1.3 Retinal architecture in the history of architecture

Pallasmaa believes that construction in traditional cultures has been more body-based like a bird that builds its nest by its body movements which are more related to tactile and muscular sensation and not just sight [16]. Pallasmaa's reference is to those architectures in which topologic geometry and cognitive position is dominant. Perhaps a successful example of this kind of architecture is native architecture of Iran, especially clay architecture in central parts. But Greek architecture, like Greek philosophy, is founded on visual pleasure which is fulfilled based on visual systems in construction [16]. According to Pallasmaa, in recent decades architecture and construction have become projective products lacking existential purity instead of possessing existence-spatial experience. The picture of city and architecture Pallasmaa presents is a description and dominance of vision-based ideology over city; a city that rejects body and makes the multi-sense perception impossible. This is where human body becomes mechanical, like other machines going round the city.

4.2 Multi-sense experience in architecture

Pallasmaa aims to introduce sensual architecture by mentioning some of the senses and his personal perceptions of the domain of senses in architectural experience. He points out that the experience of architecture is a multi-sense experience and in fact we experience architecture through all of our senses.

4.2.1 Sight and the importance of shadow

Referring to Merlo Pontti, Pallasmaa thinks we touch the sun and stars by seeing; he says even eyes can touch [17]. On the other hand, eyes are for differentiation and distance while the sense of touch is related to intimacy and sorrow. Eye touches distance but touch sees closeness. Intense shade and darkness blurs the clarity of vision, obscures distance and stimulates imagination. Imagination and dreaming is stimulated by shadow and darkness rather than by lighting. We may have experienced the mystery of ancient city streets with their changing light and dark and found them more interesting than illuminated modern streets. We think more deeply in the dark and shadow than clarity and lighting. Imagination and fantasizing is more related to dark than light.

4.2.2 Sound and vocal confidentiality

These descriptions suggest special characteristics of hearing and its differences with sight and accentuate its existential features. Voice and sound talk about closeness and intimacy, draw us closer to things and shorten distances. Seeing is much farther than hearing, ear much closer than eye. So the experience of a building or a space is not only based on its visual features perception, but on audio features perceptions as well. It can be stated that each space, room or city sound and noise of its own. Passing through a bazaar in an Iranian city these differences and distinctions are well perceived, because each shop and corridor has its own sound pattern. However, Plasma does not like this sound pattern and the common echo in city and contemporary buildings. According to him, wide streets of cities do not reflect sounds and interior spaces of buildings absorb echoes [17].

4.2.3 Scent and smell of space

Pallasmaa explains that we might not remember the shape of our grandmother's closet but we remember its unique smell. So the most durable memory of every space is, its fragrance; every house has its own unique smell. The shape and appearance of a space is likely to be removed from our retina but our nose helps our eyes to remember [17].

4.2.4 Touch of space

Skin can read texture, weight, density and heat of material through touch. Skin feels and understands. Gravity is measured by soles. When we walk barefoot on the beach we sense the texture of sands, the heat of stones and slow breathing of earth. The pattern and texture of the sidewalk and the place where we once played tell us about the past. We look at the old bricks of a wall or tiling of a decorated surface, but for understanding it we go closer to touch it. Skin touches and perceives whatever eyes cannot.

4.3 Body and movement: practical experience

In fact the reason why we remember special places is that they have affected our bodies or we have experienced them through our bodies. For instance, the memory of towns and villages we have seen is not just visual memory but physical one. The memory of visiting Mazola is not just memory of its beautiful landscapes but the memory of its ups and downs, its rough roads which we felt with our soles, our nose smelled its fragrances and our ears heard its market's buzz. The memory of Mazola is a physical-based one. So we encounter the town through our body. My feet measure the length and width of squares, my look penetrates through the façade of the mosque and entering it, my hands feel the heaviness of its door. Therefore I experience the city through my body. My body perceives the environment wholly and not just a small part of it [17].

Therefore we perceive space in our actions. Door is sensed by entering and exit, window by looking out and corridor by going through it'll these suggest the importance of experiencing architecture through body, movement and three dimensional action. Accordingly, Pallasmaa considers the experience of architecture and building an existential confrontation. The experience of a space or a house is a discourse: "I put myself in space and space settles in me" [16]. This way body and space are interlaced and become one in understanding space in a way that in the end we encounter with one body-space, an interwoven and united entity. Thus architecture arises from confrontations, experiences, remembrances and true desires of our existence [18].

4.4 Situational Architecture

Pallasmaa suggests that he is not happy about the term "Regionalism" ⁴in architecture, because this term refers more to geographical and ethnic themes. He prefers to use the term "situational architecture" or "special-culture architecture" [16]. By proposing situational architecture instead of regional architecture is to free this ideology from physical and geographical requirements and attach it to biological and existential dimensions. Situational architecture is based on a situation or, in better words, to the way of being-in-the world of human and it covers mental and ontological dimensions. Although the lived situation is a geographical and objective case, it covers existential experiences.

So, architecture is profoundly dependent on existential and lived dimension of human. Pallasmaa refers to Louis Baragan's works and considers them as successful examples of this kind of architecture. According to him, Baragan reflects deep structural features of Mexican culture and turns them into a unique surreal and metaphysical art. ⁵

4.5 Six themes for millennium architecture

4.5.1 Slowness

As Kristin Harris says, architecture is a strong resistance to the fear of time [19]. Architectural works, like time museums, is able to suspend it; grand architecture embodies time. Pallasmaa believes that architecture needs slowness in order to join itself again to tradition and history which are in fact the latent and hidden wisdom of architecture; in order to provide continuity sense and take root in culture. We need that architecture which denies transience, speed and fashion; Architecture must slower our experience of reality rather than accelerating the change and creating a sense of doubt; so that it can create a base and ground to understand and perceive changes. Instead of paying too much attention to modernity, architecture must emphasize ancient and eco-cultural dimensions of human spirit and answer it. Pallasmaa's intention of proposing slowness is reference to ancient, durable and antique feature of architecture and art which is neglected in the current hectic and chaotic world [16].

4.5.2 Plasticity

According to Pallasmaa, buildings have lost their identity and relations with physical language and reduced to visual-based objects. So architecture has become the art of print images. This reality has led to flat, plane and retinal quality in architecture which makes buildings perceived like unreal and immaterial things whose surfaces become shallower and cheaper [16]. This approach makes architecture a paper profession which is understood through lines on paper and not through body and senses. This non-physical-based architecture ignores existential features of body and only thinks about attraction. But architecture must talk about materialism, attraction and logic of its construction, and like plastic arts should try physical participation. Visual architecture is one that invites senses to participate and involves body; Eyes permeate its visual surfaces, skin feels its states and texture, ears hear the sound of its engagement with people and nature and body muscles are recalled to act and react experiencing it.

4.5.3 Sense-having

Architecture is rooted in body and all senses. Furthermore, true experience of the real world is weakening and virtually has prevailed on our understanding of the world. In this situation architecture's duty is creating a stable and reliable base for understanding the world to provide the possibility to return or revert to it. Such reversion cannot be founded on a sentimental return, but it should be done by deep understanding of the phenomenological essence of architecture [16].

4.5.4 Originality

Acknowledging philosophical problem of terms "essence" and "adventitious" and the uncertainties associated with the conception "originality", Pallasmaa has spoken of the possibility and importance of originality in architecture and realizes it like a quality of deeply rooted in layers of culture [16]. We are cut off from the sources of tradition in a

world that is full of non-original things; however, architecture materialize and preserve the history of culture like a conservative art.

The conservative aspect of architecture does not refer to its blind resistance to change and diversity, but its duty is to inform and highlight the historicity of culture and human. In Plasma's opinion, architecture informs us of the duration of time and human nature, reinforce our existential experience and resist to alienation. Therefore, originality of architecture is not a fruitless return to the past, but a re-reading of historicity of human and regarding to timely aspects.

4.5.5 Idealization

We have spoken about the idealization of architecture: the main point is that it is not architect's responsibility to accept employer's will and wish without criticism. An architect must deal with an ideal world rooted in an ideal life. In fact, those architects who consider ideal employers and introduce an ideal society materialize the ideal possibilities of ideology and human existence.

4.5.6 Silence

High art, like high architecture, create silence. Silence is not necessarily the absence of sound but a mental state: experiencing a building is indeed listening to its characteristics and features, especially its silence.

A powerful experience of architecture eliminates external noise and turns my awareness towards inward, to myself. I just hear my heartbeats; I just listen to my existence. Architecture's duty is to create, preserve and protect silence. High architecture is silence which is turned into material; high architecture is embodied silence [16]. Therefore, silence is not merely a physical situation, which means it is not basically rooted in lack of sound, but it is based on an ontological situation in which an existential balance between human and environment.

4.6 Phenomenology of city, tactile city

Explaining the basics of phenomenology of city and its perception, Pallasmaa relates city to its metaphysical functions, social organizations, cultural structures, identity and meaning. City is a residence for memories and imaginations and brings them together under a comprehensive atmosphere. If house is a haven for personal memories, city is for collective ones which are formed by interactions and exchanges with others [16].

According to Pallasmaa, "a contemporary city is an eye city. Fast and mechanical movements have taken away our physical and intimate contact with a city"[16]. This way Desecration and visual-based character of contemporary cities leads to eye-based cities where body is deprived of existential contact with environment; on the country, a tactile city is a city of perception and not driving away or rejection. In fact, our encounter with a city is rooted in embodied experience of the city: "We reside in a city and the city settles within us". Pallasmaa completes his argument this way [16]:

"I encounter a city with my body; my feet measures the length of porches and the width of squares, my glance unconsciously projects my body on the façade of the cathedral and it roams on its cornices and reliefs in order to find the dimensions of dents and bumps, my body weight realizes the bulk of the door and as I enter the dark and hollow space behind it my hand grasps the door handle which has been polished over the years and generations use. City and body complete each other and mutually define and explain each other." [16].

A city is perceived in a multi-sensed way; we hear the city has its own sound and noise which is related to width of streets, people's activities, and materials of the pavements, height of buildings and their usual style. We touch the city and the cold and warmth of surface of streets, alleys, walls and facade of buildings influence us. We smell city; the odor of its air, its lightness and heaviness smell of flowers and plants, fragrance of its foods and shops affect our body. We taste city and remember its sourness and sweetness; that is how city is felt and perceived by our body and participation of senses. Differences between cities are differences in their multi-sense perceptions, and our body is aware of these differences; The more sensory cities, the easier and more possible physical perception of them: alleys of Grenada, Prague, Rome, Aleppo, Istanbul, Yazd, Naveen, Kyoto are all open to our multi-sense perception because they are existence-based not visual-based [20].

CONCLUSION

Perception is an intellectual process in the course of recognition which is used (by architect or user) in total process of form, and even afterwards. A person's perception of environmental elements causes the appearance of a mental picture and his perception of constructed space can create a sense of place. In every step of the process of form production numerous factors can affect this perception. Knowing these factors provide architect with more creativity. So it can be stated that if architects are not familiar enough with social and cultural values of the society of the users they face problems in designing architectural spaces and makes mistakes in predicting their reactions to spaces.

In addition, the values which are placed on buildings and spaces by the society are effective in people's behavior. Architectural spaces, in fact, are a combination of various factors; space has no meaning neglecting them and knowing them helps effectively in designing.

In the end, architecture's song will be everlasting when its words are not borrowed and taken from ethnic culture.

Appendix

For further reading refer to:

1. Norberg-Shulz, Christian, 1392, page 240
2. According to Kenneth Frampton, which means clear seeing in etymology, contains this meaning that size and value of objects are not determined because of their quality inside a culture, but because of their relocating [7].
3. Pallasmaa says "although we may have rejected the duality of body and mind of Cartesian, this separation is still reproduced in cultural, educational and social actions. [15]
4. Regionalism is reflected in architectural phenomenologists.

For further reading refer to: Frampton, (2002, 2007), Canziaro, (2007), Norberg-Shulz, (1985, 1988, 1996)

5. Baraga is one of the most important and prominent architects of the 20th century. His works contain a poetic aspect to the extent that he was given the authentic architecture prize SpritzKerry 1980 for his high poetic nature in his architecture (Bragan, 1992, 11).

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