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Architectural education and environmental aesthetics

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Abstract

Aesthetic is an action that has attracted the interest of people during history and has awakened concern in them. There are some general judgments about aesthetic but the output product mainly depends upon the skill of person creating it. Skill may be developed up to a certain point with education. There are no final cut rules about aesthetic in harmony of structures with their environments, the preferences of people are statistically unified through certain principles. Therefore, it is not easy to teach rules of aesthetic to architecture students but it is necessary. In this study, historical process of aesthetic and environmental aesthetics are shortly summarized and concern about environmental aesthetic between first grade students and last grade students are analyzed with a small questionnaire.

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1. Introduction

Every person has at a certain rate aesthetic concern and skill to differentiate beautiful. This skill may vary according to the factors such as genetic structure, living environment, education of the person. Aesthetic is very important in architecture as a philosophic branch. It is guiding design within theoretical and conceptual frame and it is very important to analyze architecture in means of aesthetic (Illies and Ray 2009). Students who come to obtain architecture education should on one side learn making an architectural design and on the other side having aesthetic concern.

In this article, aesthetics concept and history, environmental aesthetics will be shortly explained; aesthetics concept in architecture education and in harmony of architectural structure with its environment will be analyzed. A small questionnaire has been conducted in order to measure the environmental aesthetics concern between first grade students and last grade student.

2. Aesthetics Concepts and History

It is accepted that in order to detect the existence form of beautiful and aesthetics concept in human feelings and thoughts, reflection forms of them to natural and artificial products, architecture and environment in a correct relation to their current situations, research and analysis should be done on theory science basics and within a historical perspective (Ozer 1982, Senturer 1990). In the past, some philosophers advocated that the aim of art was

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to create beautiful structures and they reduced the aesthetics subject to simple. But in current researches, it is explained that even in the definition of beautiful, there are difficult obstacles. Beautiful is known as a person specific concept where completely subjective expectations of person are created on mind as a function. Since some natural beauties are frequently experienced and tried by people, they create an aesthetic value; many people share the same feeling for a subject and object which carry a certain aesthetic. Therefore, it is needed to make a differentiation between “beautiful” and “aesthetic” concepts. Mixing aesthetic value which is formed according to the visual knowledge and experience with superficial values of beautiful concept may cause some unjust and wrong judgments (Aydinli 1993). Aesthetic analyzes the problems of beautiful (Cropley and Cropley 2011).

As the objective of creating and forming arts work dates back to first periods of humanity, aesthetic concern also goes back that much. Wall pictures on walls during cave period, loyal ratios in Egypt Pyramids are the concrete proofs that aesthetic dates back to very old times. But the date when it was started to be recognized as a field of science became intense in Ancient Greek Civilization (Yurtsever 1988).

Antic Greek aesthetic and aesthetic doctrine of Plato forms the basics of aesthetic science which has quite different values today. For example, its seeing forms beautiful independent from their contents, accepting basic geometrical forms as absolute beautiful forms are the values that are also partially accepted today. According to Plato who has established the scientific perspective of beautiful idea in B.C. 500s, the existence of beautiful or catching the ideal (objective rule of nature) were stated in the structure and form of physical objects. “Beautiful” was created with the help of formal relationships and arrangement ratio, measure, rhythm, symmetry, harmony, cosmos, unity in variety and the origin of beautiful was looked in these principles and forms that were created by nature rules themselves. Aristo (B.C. 384-321), student of Plato based arts science on perfectionism and reality that is obtained through mind and skill and emphasized that an art work could emerge as a form, content and object union and together with nature imitation (Maser 1985, Aydinli 1993).

Arts world have been becoming stages of different aesthetic values depending on scientific and social developments from past to today. Through the end of 20th century, aesthetic science, especially aesthetic in plastic arts has been analyzed as experience/life and developed as a time beyond comparative field of science including art philosophy, art psychology and art sociology (Nasar 1988). In addition to deep development of modern psychology, together with the development of archeology, ethnology, anthropology sciences which are lightening the historical form interpretations of various world civilizations, modern aesthetic theories have been enriched. Thus, modern aesthetic understanding which analyzes also the behaviors of subject observing subject has replaced classical aesthetic which is only analyzing the qualifications of art objects (Tunali 1979). Moreover, usefulness and beautiful concepts have been reanalyzed in 20th century (Illies and Ray 2009). In 20th century, the object which is the taste of majority is recognized as beautiful.

Aesthetic thinking systems that have developed through history were summarized in Figure 1. Looking at this table, it is seen that within time there has been a transfer from idealist thinking system to materialist system since the middles of New Age. Similarly, subjective beautiful understanding started to replace objective beautiful understanding since the end of middle age.

Architecture students should have an idea about aesthetic concept and history even it is so less in order to be more successful in their designs because aesthetic science has shown a constant change through history. In order to understand aesthetic thinking systems, it is necessary to now previous and next ones.

3. Environmental Aesthetics

Environmental aesthetics has recently become attractive as a discipline including two different research areas “experimental aesthetics” and “environmental psychology” subject fields. It includes some lightening information about how to handle environmental problems that arise as a result of unconscious usage of visual values. Similar scientific methods are used in order to explain relationships between physical stimulators and human reactions in both “experimental aesthetics” and “environmental psychology” fields (Nasar 1988, Parsons and Daniel 2002).

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