

The Impact of the Myth on the Creation of Identity and Sense of Place

Nastaran Valipour

Department of Architecture, Kish International branch, Islamic Azad University, Kish, Iran
Email: nastaran.valipour88@gmail.com

Doi:10.5901/mjss.2016.v7n2s2p209

Abstract

Sense of belonging means people's mental perception from the environment and their more and less conscious emotions from the environment surrounding them that put the person in an inherent relationship with the environment so that the person's understanding and emotion get linked and integrated with the field of meaning of the environment. Iranian arts and culture has fostered its myths during various periods of history and in every period of history, by getting influenced by the available fields and backgrounds played an important role in a conscious orientation in creating myths. In the meantime, after the advent of Islam in Iran, due to the role of myths and symbols to create unity among Iranian and Islamic culture, the transmutation of myths and symbols can be seen to create unity among Iranian and Islamic culture. According to the myths' roles in the past and present life of culture, arts and architecture of Iranian society, investigation of how and why the symbolism based on Iranian mythology and investigation of the optimal orientation of Iranian society seem to be important in this case.

Keywords: sense of place, sense of belonging, identity of place, human, physical factors of defining space

1. Introduction

In our unconsciousness, the images scattered around the world or what Yaakov Burkhardt named them the ancestors' memories were found out by individuals. According to Young, they are human facilities linked to our brain generation to generation and display things which have been always available. The nature of such a hereditary transmission shows the phenomenon is finally unbelievable that some issues of legends and contents throughout of the earth planet can be repeated in similar shapes and forms. In mythology objective and subjective world are shuffled. The actual time loses its objectivity and changes into subjective time. Goddess becomes in human form and human shows non-objective powers that myth attributed them to the spiritual - supernatural events but believable. Symbol is an eternal intermediary between what can be understood or cannot be understood by wisdom. Hence, the best language to describe mythology is the language of symbols not intellectual concepts. Everybody in each era gives the symbols new framework so that the eternal fact showing its symbol is presented to us in a new form each time. On the other hand, the authentication during the presence in space, more than anything in the first place deals with the human behavior and familiar signs of the mind in space. This study aimed to investigate and identify the impacts of symbols on restoring the sense of belonging to a place. The final product of this work will be effective as a method in restoring the issue of sense of place.

2. Myth

Arts are the complete mirror of the human inside and dramatic mythology is illustrated by their emotions. The myth is the story which is being quoted in the sequence of human generations and so naively explains the origin of the phenomena of nature and the testator's traditions and beliefs, and explains the involvement of supernatural forces in natural and human affairs with the means of the changes created in the affairs of this world by such an involvement. This story since it is in the perception of ordinary people and involves justifying prejudices and imitations is a folk tale in one way but every ordinary story is not a methodology. Methodology is such a story observing the justification of natural facts through the blurred relationship between them and supernatural powers. Myth is the first and spiritual history of a society and in this term is completely comparable with the language of that society. Language and myth having common functions and are at the service of literal texts retell the facts about the distant past for us. Myth lived in unconsciousness Hamvand of a fact reflected in consciousness so that language may act the same. Each issue shows that the person became a part of the myth and once again lives especially in the ceremonies and discovers that the myth is so blunt and clear in their thoughts.

3. What do Myths Want?

Mythological formation was based on the reflection of social structures, the phenomena of nature and the human psychological reactions. Almost in the mythology of all tribes, the elements of nature, such as the sky, the sun, earth, mountains, trees and water that seem to be gods can be seen. The relationship between gods and with the human is a reflection of social relationship of mythology formation age but myths are the function of human mental issues both individually and socially.

4. The Metamorphosis of Myths

Myths which are cultural phenomena like other phenomena are changing over time. Some generally lose their nature and change into other forms. In the performance of some myths, metamorphosis occurs because myths, like all human things, like language and laws, pass long days behind, lose their efficiency. A time will come in which the role of myths in the lives of people will be less. Myths do not die, but change and by releasing from the collective consciousness gain an objective reality and it is in this state that they can be reviewed and analyzed. Myths normally do not have life therefore they become mysterious. Their esoteric and functional fact does not appear anymore and its meaning will be doubtful and do not fit in the thought like previous life. But it is possible that the mythological set gets But it is also set in the mythical stage of social development is manifested in a stage of social development and lose their power of change and in fact, lose their adaptation. Myths in metamorphosis, sometimes lose their meanings completely and get new meanings, sometimes they are replaced by other myths and once their inside also become more productive.

4.1 Myths functions

Sometimes the unconsciousness of a tribe becomes the base of other tribes' experiences existing in people's and ordinary individuals' mind of the tribe. It is from the resources that the first images, dreams and symbols are originated from and the tribe's members understand each other symbols because the symbols are available in their unconsciousness individually. Myth is always about "creation" and speaks about how something was created or how behavior pattern and nature and the way to do something have been created and this is why the myths are the symbol of human behaviors. By knowing the "myth", human knows the origin of anything and thus they can control or apply them. This knowledge is not external or abstract, but the knowledge that the person experiencing it as a ritual whether through ritual retelling of the myth and how ritually that justifies it.

4.2 Myths and religious life

Myths have a long history in compare with theology as well as the words and terms of the myths are older than their interpretation. The role that religious life is playing in the emergence of history and its changes often begins from the plan of myths. Since the myths belong to the mental time and beyond the world of time; however, the objective time which is the field of displaying and the flow of the historical fact, where the fact is dominated by the religious life in many cases it creates a new Myth or gets submitted to the attractions of the ancient Myth. One feature is considered as the human conscientious life, without knowing this constant psychological evolution it is impossible to understand the human fate and the end of the evolution of human societies well. However, "the religious life helps people take refuge from the concerns of current and moving time to the calmness of a stop time and in passing from this problem find the way to the divine past by the help of Myth.

5. The Myth of Tradition

Mythological time is an eternal time, and the time of beginning of all major events but since the foundation of the world and its inside depends on the tradition, hence, the religious ceremony recreates the time of myth every moment and makes it move around and eternity events get renewed again. Myths and associated traditions or in other words the action religious founding indicates world arrangement and its handler. During intellectual developments and traditions remain without the mythical content. Thus the mental activity of primitive human covers their eyes thousands of years from objective reality that he is not aware of the details and by displaying myths in ceremonies and specific events remind the people of long time ago they have forgotten. Changing the material time is one of the features of the tradition. By repeating the tradition the time of myths occurs. Every tradition is a renewal or renewal of what has occurred in the

earliest times but not only learning and remembering it but refutes the material time in order to direct the human in the eternal and everlasting world. Myth comes alive again and resumes life and mythological time gets renewal and revival and with all its power presents and activates at the present time, this is why all ceremonies, all the formalities are not just resumption of what has been done in a certain moment from creation, and the nature and history are revived by combining in it. Thus, the cosmic mythology and the religious life, all rites and ceremonies can be seen as experiences associated to the presence and nature of old man. When the old man acts in line with myths or participates in a ceremony or event does not lose and forget him but in contrary retrieves himself; because the mythology and rituals represent the great events of the world, namely the anthropology and the end of nature. As Young tried to find an origin for the dreams and symbolic images in them reached to the dimension and new area of unconsciousness. He called the new arena as "ethnic unconsciousness" or collective unconsciousness. According to him, inside the individuals' unconsciousness there is a deep and wide realm which is from the crowds which the person belongs to it and it is the unconsciousness of the tribe. Therefore, one of the functions of the myths is creation of symbols for all the society. Myths in today's culture have not been completely forgotten but lives in the depths of man, his imagination and dreams in a cover of old symbols and is reflected in the arts human creates. Gradually by considering the myths as the most important shape of population thought, a place was opened for it in the public history of thought and since collective thought cannot be abolished completely in no society and no stage of development it was seen correctly that there has been still the methodology behavior in new world. For example, contributing the community in some symbols is seen as a continuation of collective thinking. Showing the function of the national flag with the emotional experiences associated with it, which is not different in any way with participation in any symbol of ancient societies.

5.1 *Sense of place*

A place is a part of an environment expressed by senses and these are the senses giving us a better understanding of the nature. From the phenomenological perspective, sense of place means to connect with places by understanding the meaning of symbols and everyday activities. Sense of place not only causes coordination and proper function of architecture space and human, but as a factor for sense of security, enjoyment and emotional perception of individuals and helps the individuals' identity and their sense of belonging to a place. The sense of place in addition to providing comfort from the environment, support cultural concepts of the people, social and cultural relations of a society in a given location and makes remembering past experiences and gain support for people's identity. Generally, sense of place is an important factor in the coordination of the individual and the environment and leads to better utilization of the environment resulting from the satisfaction of users and ultimately their sense of belonging to the environment. The personality of a location is the most important factors of a sense of place and one of the important roles of architecture is to objectively achieve the sense of place so that through such a sense, abstract space becomes tangible space and its character is achieved. According to Norberg-Schulz's view, the location is nothing more than an abstract space, it is a generality built by real things and objects and has materials, shapes, tissues and colors and the set of the elements define the environmental characteristics. Norberg-Schulz by adapting Heidegger's ideas about the nature of living, considers settlements as the aim of architecture. He believes that the man settles when they are able to match themselves with the environment.

6. **Perceptual and Cognitive Factors**

As mentioned before, sense of place is a combination of meanings, symbols, and qualities that people percept consciously or unconsciously from a specific space or area. People without sense of place are not able to live in a specific environment because sense of place is the ability of a space or a place in creating a specific sense to the generality of a place and through the sense the individual supports the relationship with all concepts people and all other issues in that place. In this concept, sense does not mean the feeling before understanding stage but it means emotion, a stage after understanding. Therefore, places in different people create different senses and the role of characteristics and old experiences of the human are effective in gaining this sense. The space creating sense of place and belonging in an individual is not a space for him anymore and turns into a place. Sense of place connects the individual to the environment so that the human perception and feeling are integrated with meaning field of the environment.

6.1 *Physical Factors*

The most important physical factors affecting the perception and the sense of place are size, location, and degree of

closeness, contrast, scale, proportion, human scale, space, texture, color, smell, sound and visual diversity. Also, features such as identity, history, imagination and fantasy, mystery, joy, surprise, security, vitality, passion and experience caused an intensive relationship with their location.

According to Norberg-Schulz, sense of place is found in places with excellent characteristics and environmental characteristics are consisted of the tangible things with materials, shapes, textures and colors. According to Lynch, the sense of place is a factor connects humans and place and creates unity and space should have perceptible identity and be identifiable and memorable to make sense of place. This sense of place can also have a sense of belonging.

7. Mental Images and the Concept of Sense of Place

A place becomes a place when humans by their present are placed in connection with other layers. The layers can become clear by common activities with other people in connection with nature or in the corner of artificial environment. In this way, human gets familiar with other layers of its nature, available in external world. Until the time in which the meaning of a place is searched in physical structure and activities happen in it, nothing will be found but the meaning should be searched in mental images human experiences from a place. Human has various mental images from different places in mind. Their feelings can be effective on their perception from the environment and formation of mental images from place. This is the mental images in human's mind that gives identity to a place. In addition to physical structure of a place, their memories can be effective in giving identity to a place. Kevin Lynch regards the identity of the environment due to having a clear mental picture of it. A clear alive and continuous stage not only can create exact images but plays social roles as well. The factors make the mental images clearer then the identity of a place should be searched in memory and symbolism, readability and visibility, sensory experiences, internal communication, individual and group perceptions and understanding.

7.1 Identity

It can simply put that the identity of a thing can be the reflection of its adjectives and characteristics providing its distinctive feature with other things. Common senses are also the complete criterion of identity explaining the features of something in a specific group. Such a sense should be reached to unity and the perception of socio-cultural symbols is necessary.

7.2 Recognition: The most important condition of identity

Since identity is validated through the given definitions from diagnosis, the post important condition of identity is to be identifiable. Accordingly, the first step to recognize the identity is the possibility to re-identification of the process based on its similarities with the same phenomenon and its differences with different phenomenon in mind. In fact the term of re-identification does not only mean identifying things but experiencing meanings and concepts as well. If a phenomenon were not re-identified then the process of identity identification cannot continue. Without the factors of re-identification, the phenomenon loses its capability to match with the mental image and cannot fulfill the most primary expectations.

7.3 The role of culture in forming identity

Culture means the attitudes, beliefs, customs and traditions of society. Undoubtedly, culture is the most important and richest source of identity. Individuals and groups achieve identity through resorting to various cultural elements and components, because they are able to meet human needs in combining and being distinct. In other hand, culture brings about both differences and integration. In fact, what we call it as the culture was against to the myth and tradition in the ancient world. Collection of myths and tradition in primitive society is the culture of the community; because nothing was mental and behavioral out of this collection. All human' actions of life and thought were located in the collection of myth and tradition. In traditional societies, culture was able to perform the especial task of making identity very, because they were highly able to make differences and meaning. In such societies, culture not only created clear and sustainable borders but also was able to introduce integrated, relaxing and meaningful systems.

8. Symbolic Capability

People are the dealers of symbols which are one of the ways to establish connection. The symbolic meaning of furniture,

architectural designs and the methods of design and designing the perspectives are nonverbal ways used to interchange their messages, their past and social values and worldviews by people. For the people to whom security is the most important issue, architectural criteria especially those which are the symbolic obstacles of recognizing the human realm are really important. But, the symbolism of the built environment to satisfy emotional needs and the need for a sense of belonging and respect are more important. Symbols are eternal links between the wisdom understands and does not understand. Therefore, the best language to express the myths is the language of symbol not intellectual concepts.

9. Myths and Belonging to a Place

The language of myth is the language of symbols. Each phenomenon searching through the history to find about the myths have to return in order to change into a symbol. One of the functions of myth is creating symbols for all the society. Symbols are eternal links between the wisdom understands and does not understand. Therefore, the best language to express the myths is the language of symbol not intellectual concepts. Every one in every period, gives a new framework to the symbols; therefore, the eternal reality is reintroduced to us in a new form. The most important meaning of sense of belonging to a place is hidden in the experience of symbolic relation between individual, group and place which can be strengthened from cultural resources as well as social, political, historic resources. The experience of a place is in fact a complete sense can be achieved through all human senses. It is in this way that some messages are interchanged between the individual and place that the individual's senses consciously or unconsciously in relation to a place find a set of meanings, signs and concepts and links them together, and gives meaning to the place. The sense of awareness, belonging and interest, commitment and finally dedication to a place are in higher levels, recognition and affection comparing to the space with meanings, symbols, form aesthetic and space semantic and identity are achieved with it. Symbolic language is a language expressing inner experiences and feelings and thoughts in the form of sensory phenomena and events in the outside world and its logic is different from our everyday logic.

10. Conclusion

The overall understanding of the definition of sense of place show that sense of place is the result of human inner relation, their mental imagery and environmental features. This concept, in one hand, originates in mental experiences such as memory, tradition, culture, community and, on the other hand, it is influenced by objective and external fields in the environment such as design, smell, and sound indicating the sense of place is a complicated concept of feelings and human interests to the environment created by the use of a place by human. Feelings associated with places in human rooted in their mental images of space are one of the factors causes sense of place but not sufficient alone. Physical features strengthen the sense of place by facilitating the activities and creating identity. Matching Counter Model of physical factors due to the quality of design improves meanings and activities and by meeting the living, psychological and social needs of human causes a set of perceptions, satisfaction, and finally creation of sense of place and image, symbols, signs are of the most constructive factors familiar to the mind leading to one image in individuals' thoughts. Symbols with the roots in mythology and religion are so familiar that the presence of each one in the space can be a factor in establishing and restoring the identity in space and sense of belonging to a place. The ways to use the sense can be effective in creating the urban and spatial identity and as the result of creating identity, in addition to increasing social mobility; it is possible to reduce environmental damage.

References

- Behzadfar, M. (2007). *The identity of the city : A look at the city identity of Tehran*. Tehran: Shahr Publication.
- Elyadeh, M. (1983). *The myths' perspectives* (J. Satari), Tehran: Toos Publication.
- Elyadeh, M. (1995). *Myths, dream, and mystery* (R. Monajem), Tehran: Fekr e Rooz Publication.
- Felahat, M.S. (2007). The concept of a sense of place and the factors shaping it. *Fine Arts Magazine*, 26.
- Fromm, E. (1976). *Forgotten language* (Trans: E.Amanat). Tehran: Andisheh Publication.
- Gerimal, P. (1994). Human and myths (A. Esmailpoor), *Hasti Quarterly*, Tehran.
- Habibi, R. S. (2010). Mental images and the concept of place. *Fine Arts Magazine*, 35.
- Habibi, R.S., & Pakzad, J. (1996). Identity with the space. *Journal of Sofeh publication*, VI, 21-22.
- Klein Berg, O. (1976). *Social Psychology*, Volume 2 (Trans: A.M. Kardan). Tehran: Andisheh Publication.
- Lang, J. (2003). *The creation of architecture theory: The role of behavioral sciences in designing the environment* (A.R. Einifar), Tehran: Tehran University Press.
- Lofler, D. (1985). *The coded language of legends* (J. Satari), Tehran: Toos Publication.

- Rapoport, A. (1990). *The meaning of the built environment: a nonverbal communication approach*, the University of Arizona Press, Tucson.
- Sime, J. D. (1986). Creating Places or Designing Spaces, *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 6, 49-63.
- Sircus, J. (2001). Invented Places, *Prospect*, 81,30-35.
- Tuan, Y. F.(1980). Rootedness versus sense of place, *Landscape*, 24, 3-8.