Chapter 10

The Necessity of the Study of Humanities in Analysis of Intangible Architectural Heritage of Europe in the 1930s: Mohsen Foroughi, The Study of Education and Inherited Culture of Architects Linked to the Power

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ABSTRACT

The chapter suggests a deepening through the study of humanities in order to define, rectify, and identify the significance of architecture as a methodological base. The case study of the chapter is the monitoring of the works of the Iranian architect Mohsen Foroughi who was employed to build the main architectural scheme of the power flourished in the thirties in Persia. Accordingly, to attain the objective of the chapter, which lies in the epistemology of humanities in relation to architecture, the first step is to define a comparative platform where the works of the Iranian architect could be deciphered amidst the study of the works and opinions of his contemporary colleagues in Europe as Marcello Piacentini. The comparison has been undertaken amidst the two PHDs of the author of the chapter. The second step is to study the Parisian education of the Iranian architect and his inherited Persian culture. Finally, other similarities to Foroughi’s works alongside with the presentation of texts upon the branches of humanities related to architecture are taken into scrupulous account.

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INTRODUCTION

The general perspective of the chapter is based on the thematic argumentations as follows. Prior to that, a brief presentation of characters who played focal roles in exposing power in the thirties in Europe and the Middle East seems indispensable.

The first character is the Persian monarch Reza Shah Pahlavi (15 March 1878 – 26 July 1944) was the King of Iran from 15 December 1925 until he was forced to abdicate by the Anglo-Soviet invasion of Iran on 16 September 1941.

He founded the Pahlavi dynasty in 1926 in Iran. Reza Shah and his role in making new Iran is also detected further on in the chapter. The presence of the king in the process of modernization of the country is unequivocal. In this regard, his role is highly comparable to the Italian conductor of fascism Benito Mussolini in the interwar period.

The nationalist system founded by Reza shah, had sensitive affinities with the fascist system in Italy whereas both were flourished amidst a somewhat romantic interpretation of their respective histories. The common, important and peculiar characteristics, which can either give a definition to the both systems and shed light on the similarities of their ruling institutions, are:

- The idol of the grandeur of antiquity in order to raise the reusing interpretative scheme of the modern laws and infrastructures in accordance with the old ones.
- The absolute power in the hands of a sacramalised commander with militarized tendencies.
- Extremely inclined to the modernization of a sort of an auto proclaimed wisdom regarding the sense of the national territory.
- Nationalist and somehow demagogical in the stabilization of their inculcating cultures using the scientific sources of knowledge in the both absolute and humanistic fields in order to create new and powerful nations.
- Revolutionizing the whole settings of culture attempting to reform the life patterns within the twentieth century modernist perception.
- And finally willing to address the architecture in the representation of nationalism, power, modernized culture, the sense of collectiveness and superiority of a unique and self made ideology.

In the fascist case, the grandeur of the antique Rome is brought to the modernizing attention of the constructors and intellectuals of Italy under the absolute iron hand of the ruler Benito Mussolini (1883-1945) who was first an Italian journalist, politician and later the leader of the National Fascist Party (Partito Nazionale Fascista). He ruled Italy as Prime Minister from 1922 to 1943. Analogically, In the Persian case the same ideological itinerary lies in the revitalizing of the glorious antique Persia accomplished by the utter presence in power of the monarch Reza shah. Each of these rulers had enormous considerations for the architecture as a sheer representation of the ideological power of their systems. In fact, their ruling systems utilized the architecture and the urbanization schemes as almost educational platforms for the introduction of modernism to their nations.

The two conductors were equipped with functional arms in the field of architecture in order to reach their objectives. The Italian architect dealt with in the chapter is Marcello Piacentini (1881-1960) who was an urban theorist and one of the main proponents of Italian modernist architecture. The Iranian counterpart of Piacentini could be considered Mohsen Foroughi (1907-1983) is the famous Iranian architect and the most prominent of the founders of modern architecture in Iran of national inspiration.