

**Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings
Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers**

Date: 20.10.2016

Title: A glance to Titus Burckhardt thoughts

Speakers and panel members: Mr. N. Fakouhi and Mr. H. Soltanzadeh

Mr. Fakouhi began his speech saying that the axe of the discussion was Mr. Soltanzadeh's "Islamic Arts" book and notes about T. Burckhardt views regarding Islamic arts. He said that he will not focus on Burckhardt's thoughts but will to have a critic approach. In his opinion the analyze of Burckhardt's ideas and believes must be realized by philosophers and Christian theology experts What Mr. Fakouhi wanted to do is to understand his thoughts regarding the relation with artistic systems including architecture.

Mr. Fakouhi asserted that in his opinion in Iran Burkhardt is not the most imminent personality in the fields that he has been presented and magnified, but for different reasons some Iranians knew, translated and presented his works to the Iranian public. Anyway Burckhardt is one of those philosophers whom ideas are coming from ancient Greek to Middle Ages arriving to our days, a movement called sectarianism, closed societies that have special rituals to accept their followers.

Regarding the sectarianism, many people know the Freemasonry that has a political characteristic and is spread worldwide, of course we don't talk about their internal structure but their spiritual effects on arts that include also the architecture.

Mr. Fakouhi talked about the French religious and sociologist M. Desertau who analyzed and studied the ideas reported by Burckhardt. Unfortunately this figure is unknown in Iran, but it would be interesting to introduce him to the Iranian public.

Another personality is the philosopher Wilhelm Reich who was the author of the work "The psychology of the Fascist masses". He had problems regarding his ideas with the American governors and also with the German Nazis that accused him a Jew that spread his ideas regarding over natural phenomenon.

Mr. Fakouhi asserts that during the last 100 years many researchers like Joseh Roheim has tried to find similarities of behavior between the Australian aboriginals, but they have failed to find such relationship between the human mind and his views to the universal complexities. The problem that the researchers faced was that they couldn't find solutions for precise and particular problems in a lower scale of life.

Passing from psychology to esoteric principles that Burckhardt treats, cause many mistakes because the approach is very general, that somehow we can define as an anti modernism mentality and approach, even though the modernist movement is growing fast in Europe, having its spiritual center in Vienna. The same fear that today we have toward the accelerated process of progress, was present also in 19th century, that probably caused the readiness of the people to open the gates to the access of Fascism in Europe, having as principal root the racism as ideology, where particularly the German race is considered superior to the other races and population.

Talking about architecture Mr. Fakouhi believes that a superficial approach causes views failures, we believe for example that the architectural elements have the same value and contain the same message in different civilizations. Each artistic and architectural element is the result of complex social and cultural processes, in base of which we can find the identification that we are looking for and are interested in. This kind of approach can help us to find answers to our questions, regarding for example what do we expect from the process of modernization and the concept of modernity in general, not on a spiritual level and sphere, but in a material and manmade field of activities.

The second speaker was Mr. H. Soltanzadeh. He says that if we have a glance to the field of architecture in East, in Iran, in Middle East and Russia regarding the historical studies, it will be clear that our architectural society is considerably behind other countries. As an example Mr. Soltanzadeh says that there are few books that study the Iranian contemporary architecture and are translated and considered in the other parts of the world. He named authors like A. Godard, D. Dielber and M. Sirot. In his opinion regarding the archeological studies the situation is much better, meanwhile in architectural studies the students focused just on design process, not considering the study on historical facts. This kind of approach caused a gap the spirit of critical studies, meanwhile in other fields like movie or sports the situation is positively different.

Mr. Soltanzadeh asserted that it's more than a decade that many articles regarding light, water and unity has been published, but there is no structure to control and evaluate the presented works. Giving an example he talked about the author Pirnia and his work "The sense of Unity" published 45 years ago, but in all these years nobody tried to approach the content of the work with a critical view. Mr. Soltanzadeh explained that criticizing doesn't always mean a negative behavior, for example all of us know and respect the ideas and principles of Platon, but in some

cases we do not agree with what he said and asserted. Sciences and the societies are continuously changing and improving and updated, but unfortunately in Iran we assist to a mentality that freezes the believes regarding a particular idea or approach.

Continuing his speech Mr. Soltanzadeh talked about the industrial revolution in 19th century, when under very bad conditions the people moved from the villages to the cities to feed the needs of the industry. In 19th century many challenges shook the western world, especially the Christian believes and many thought to improve the believes that formed the Christian bases. Talking about his book dedicated to the ideas of T. Burckhardt that contrasted the opposition of the Christian Church regarding the progress, liberalism and civilization he talked about Pope Pio IX approach that tried to balance the opposite positions of the two parties.

Step by step from 1870 the Christian Church condemned both the traditionalist and progressive movements ideologies trying to find a middle way that could satisfy the society.

In 19th century in France and England catholic and protestant movements criticized each other regarding different matters. These movements were attracted by different believes and ambitions that in some cases seemed an attempt to unify the religious believes.

Continuing his speech Mr. Soltanzadeh talked about the ideas of Burckhardt, like the mosque, the central yard and the importance of collective prayer in the Islamic world. Meanwhile Burckhardt compares the central yard with the garden and then with the paradise, Mr. Soltanzadeh shows how the central yards in the mosques are always without green spaces and trees, so it's impossible to connect these spaces with the idea of the heaven. Burckhardt asserts that because the close yard has four angles so the Moslem man can have four wives. Mr. Soltanzadeh denies also this assertion. When he talks about Taj Mahal it is clear that Burckhardt doesn't know the relation between the Indian art and architecture with the influence of the Iranian arts that Mr. Soltanzadeh tried to show in a book and an article on regard.

Concluding the speech he said that if we try to classify the aspects and elements that have effectiveness on the formation of different arts in the past times we can divide them in two categories that are material: like the environmental characteristics, the way of life, the economic capacity of the employer, the technological level... and on the other hand the cultural phenomens, the believes, the traditions and the cultural exchanges. All these components are often used and applied in the arts especially the first category is used in the field of architecture. So the role of these components has not had the same effect on different artistic categories.