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A Comparative Study of Function of Allegory in Expression of Meaning (With an emphasis on Iranian Architecture)

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ABSTRACT

Every phenomenon in the world has various levels of meaning, from material to spiritual meaning, which are known as appearance and inwardness or "form" and "semantic features" and are perceived according to individuals' worldview. In architecture, buildings indicate the meanings at different levels. So what is of particular importance for designer is to gain an understanding of various ways to express meanings. Allegory is one of the various ways to express meanings in the disciplines of literature and art. The present study aims to explain the role of allegory and its application in architecture. To this end, the conceptual and structural properties of allegory in other fields are investigated to fill the theoretical and epistemological gap of its application in architecture using a comparative study. This is also helpful in paving the way to create magnificent buildings as well as in understanding the meanings latent in buildings more deeply. The present study is descriptive, analytical and qualitative research in which the applications of allegory in literature, art, and architecture are compared to answer the key question of what the role of allegory in the expression of meaning. The results of the analyses showed that the allegory plays a key role in the perception of meanings at different levels by making mental concepts more tangible. In architecture, using objective images, allegory creates the intellectual and mental images of the concepts in the audience's mind and such images have a long lasting effect on the mind. The findings also suggest that the allegory, with a role different from symbols and signs, which have a more abstract function, objectifies and visualizes deep meanings and thereby enabling individuals to understand the meanings using their reasoning. The most important allegories used in Iranian architecture express the monotheism as the highest level of truth and meaning.

Keywords: Meaning, Allegory, Architecture.

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1. INTRODUCTION

In the universe, every phenomenon has an appearance and an inwardness. Its body and face are its appearance, and its soul or in other words, its meaning, is its inwardness. Architecture, as an artificial form created by man, also contains a meaning that is manifested in feeling and senses. In other words, an architectural work (i.e. the art of architecture not just the building) has a non-formal meaning and it attempts to express or refer to it using means. There are various relationships between the form and the meaning and in different ways the meaning is manifested in the body. In fact, each truth can have different manifestations in the body. Of course, different worldviews and cultures consider different levels of meaning. For example, material worldviews refer more to the concept of appearance, while monotheistic worldviews consider other levels of meaning in addition to material and physical aspects, and with this worldview, the work seeks to express the ultimate meaning, based on spiritual and monotheistic knowledge. Depending on his worldview, beliefs, and knowledge, each person perceives one or more levels of meaning hidden in the work, from the most superficial level to the supreme truth.

Making architectural works meaningful, as one of the most important concerns of a group of scholars, has led to the development of semantic theories. Although the most important impact of meaning and its implications is seen in the expression of concepts in religious and philosophical texts in the linguistic fields, its undeniable role in architecture has always been emphasized. With the concern of revealing the hidden layers of architecture, some experts, such as Nuremberg Schultz, mentioned to factors such as geometric shapes, equilibrium, symmetry, axis, passage, center, proportions, dematerialization, light and so on as abstract symbols and allegories of the important themes in the universe, which express concepts such as spiritual evolution, world order, perfection, and the body-soul connection (Norberg-Schulz, 2008). Many studies also consider the meaning a spirit-shaping factor and place identity. For example, Relf (1976), Canter (1977), Carmona (2007), and Cresswell (2009) know the meaning as one of the most important components of the place model. Moreover, Eco (1968), Hershberger (1970), Rapoport (1990), Gibson (1950), and Goustafson (2000) classify meanings at various levels ranging from explicit primary to implicit and symbolic meanings. In the Islamic perspective, as emphasized in this study, the meaning is an external thing and a truth, which is perceived and understood in mind. In this thought, the meaning is a unified, fixed, and real thing that is differently objectified in different examples (Fayyazi, Malikzadeh, & Pashaei, 2013; Sajedi, 2006). Also, in Islamic Iranian architecture, designers consider the concepts based on Islamic insight and they are perceived on the basis of a monotheistic worldview by different people.

Despite the different theories of meaning, there are various ways to convey rational facts into tangible presentations, one of the most important of which is the allegory, whose recognition and application can lead to the semantic quality of space and the richness of artifacts. Due to the lack of theories in this area, the present study discusses allegory using an interdisciplinary approach in order to achieve the research goal, i.e. to investigate the role and application of allegory in specific fields, and to answer the following questions. a) How is the allegory applied in the fields of literature, art, and architecture? b) In art and architecture, how does the allegory lead us to the origin and source of the design and the meaning latent in the work? And c) What role does the allegory play in the design process, from thought to the final work? To this end, first, what the meaning is and its application in architecture is briefly discussed. Then, the common ways of expressing meaning are described, followed by discussing the concept of allegory and its functions in the expression of meaning in the disciplines of literature and art to explain its function and posing in architecture.

2. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The present study discusses various concepts, but due to the limited space herein, the concepts related to the theoretical foundations are briefly explained.

2.1. Meaning

One of the concepts discussed in this article is the meaning. Various studies have been carried out on the meaning and what it is in a particular aspect and a specific context. What can generally be said about meaning is that it means sense, notion, intention, tenor (compared), interpretation, gloss, interpretation, inwardness, whatever form, word, term or appearance implies (Dehkhoda, 1998). In many theories, "meaning" is assumed to be against the "form, word, or instance" and in relation to it. According to most theories, the meaning, which is usually latent and inward, is considered in relation to the word and form, which is obvious. Philosophers, especially philosophers of language in the West, have various opinions on the nature of the meaning. Some of them, including John Locke, conceives the meaning as a mental image or idea. Some also search for the nature of meaning in the individuals' behavioral and external reactions. Wittgenstein, in the early phase of his philbiology (philosophical biology), relied on the "visual theory of meaning" (a language or a word is an instrument to provide an image of reality); but later put forward an applied or instrumental view of meaning (the meaning of a word is equivalent to its use). John Austin, like Wittgenstein, emphasized on the application in the analysis of meaning (Sajedi, 2006, p. 85).

In the West, the "meaning" concept is mainly raised

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in the field of linguistics, while Muslim scholars have implicitly put forward their theories and debated the "truth of meaning" to analyze religious and philosophical propositions. For example, Ayatollah Khoei regards meaning as a concept that is present in the mind. Although the mind is the only place of the meaning, the meaning is adaptable both to the outside and to the mind (Sajedi, 2006, pp. 103-106). In the Islamic worldview, the meaning is manifested in the form, but beyond the body, and in fact, an esoteric and truth-related matter. "The inner, inward and non-formal aspect of everything carries the main purpose; in other words, the meaning is the essence and truth of things and phenomena" (Bemanian & Azimi, 2010, p.40). On the appearance-inwardness relationship, Imam Ali (AS) said, "Every appearance has its own inwardness, what looks clean in appearance, has clean inwardness and those with unclean appearance have unclean inwardness." (Nahjul balagha, Sermon 145). It can be said that the body is the sign that leads the audience to the essence and meaning of matters. About the manifestation of meaning in form and body, it is stated that any place or object, in addition to a specific "place", "space" and "territory", refers to the content surrounded by it, the content surrounding it and the principle contents created it (Naghizadeh & Aminzadeh, 2000, p.28).

According to this view, in the first encounter with [traditional] architecture, first, the appearance of architecture is on an individual's mind and influences him. With more reflection on the forms, the influences deepen and the meaning becomes important for him. The approach of Islamic art and architecture is not to merely refer to the form and appearance, but also to the meaning. In architecture, the form and meaning refer to the tangible and reasonable aspects (ultra-tangible) and the architectural form is the evidence of the meaning that conveys the architect's intent (Zolfagharzadeh, 2014, pp. 37-39). Traditionalists, such as Nasr, consider meaning and spirituality to be the same, and he wrote: "The words of meaning and spirituality originate from the same root and both are embedded in the clergy. Both words imply the inwardness or the inner in which the source of Islamic art and architecture must be sought" (Nasr, 1996, p. 12). Finally, it can be said that meaning is formed by mental images. These images are created by external affairs and personal and social perceptions. Given that according to the Islamic worldview, the ultimate goal of human beings is divine transcendence, it seems that various works and forms, as human's actions and behaviors, attempt to express the meaning and reach the absolute truth in various ways and by various means.

2.2. Allegory

Allegory is generally a subject related to the rhetoric that has been used in a variety of languages, such as Persian, Arabic, and Latin, for specific purposes. In Arabic and Farsi languages and literature, allegory plays a major role in various literary, religious, philosophical, and artistic fields. The review of the topic background illustrates the application of the allegory in several main axes, all of which are rooted in the expression of meanings.

The first axis may be the literary one that proposes the nature, types, and functions of the allegory in the rhetoric, myths, stories, religious literature, and so on (Fotouhi, 2005). These studies have discussed the teaching position and role of allegory in literary poetry, such as poems by Saadi (AghaHosseini & Seyyedan, 2013) or Masnavi by Maulana (Golchin, 2013), or emphasized its teaching aspects in general. (Vafaei & AghaBabaei, 2013). A number of studies have focused on the teaching role and function of it in conveying mystical teachings (Aghdaei, 2004). Some studies have discussed the nature of its imaging (Mortazaei, 2011). Some studies have also attempted to establish a link between its philosophical and literary functions (Ghaemei, 2010).

The second axis can be considered the artistic one in which the artistic uses of the allegory have been studied. In such studies, the differences and similarities between the allegory and other means used to express meanings such as symbols, signs, and codes have been identified (Akbari & Pournāmdāreiyan, 2011) (Emami, 2002; Gobadi, 1998). Some studies have also explored the use of symbols and signs in architecture (Bagheri & Einifar, 2017).

The next axis is the philosophical one in which some topics such as the forms (ideas) and the world of ideas have been discussed. From ancient times, the allegory has been used by great philosophers. In sermons of Greek people, for example, like Aristotle, the allegory has been used to argue and persuade the audience. "Aristotle cites the example of fiction as one of the tools of an orator [...] and names two figures of speech: reminiscence and creation of an example for telling the truth" (Aristotle, 1992, p. 155). In many philosophical allegories, the speaker's theory or thought is conveyed through narration or story. Suhrawardi's stories are examples of this allegory. In general, in the philosophers' view, the characteristics of the world of ideas indicate the truth of another world. From Plato's point of view, the world of ideas is merely abstract and its place is in the intellect. According to Suhrawardi, the world of ideas is between the material world and the abstract world and from Mulla Sadra's view, the world of ideas between the material world and the abstract world, but it is the result of human actions and formed in the world of ideas (Parvizi & Pourmand, 2012, p. 33).

Beyond all the axes mentioned, the best allegories are found in Qur'an, which have been partly explained in related commentaries and studies. In fact, one of the most important parts of Qur'an is its parables. Many of the teachings of this divine book are expressed with

allegories, and according to Sura al-Zomar (verse 27) and Sura al-Hashar (verse 21), allegories are the means for humans to be reminded and think on divine signs (Qur'an).

According to the literature section, it is possible to understand the role of allegory in expressing and conveying meaning. By recognizing the most important elements, uses, and purposes of allegory, it is possible to further utilize it in architecture. Since architecture is identified with meaning, it can use allegory as a means of expressing meaning. About this, no studies have been carried out, and only in a limited number of cases, such as the "Garden is an allegory of heaven", the allegory has been mentioned. Now, by recognizing different areas and using an interdisciplinary approach, one can identify its place in reading and creating meanings hidden in architectural works to fill the gap in the field.

3. METHOD

The present study is qualitative-analytical research, which was carried out inductively by examining and deducting subjects from raw data. Content analysis expresses various analytical approaches, from predictive and interpretive perceptions to systematic and detailed approaches (Raeisi, 2017, p. 138). The data required were collected through second studies and field studies. To achieve the main purpose, the most important means used for expression of meanings are first examined and the application of allegory in the disciplines of literature and art is recognized. Then, the role of the allegory in the design process is categorized based on existing attitudes, and finally, its application to Iranian architecture is presented, based on its nature, goals, and functions in other areas.

4. MEANING IN ARCHITECTURE

Given the importance of meaning in architecture, when facing architectural work, many audiences seek to understand the themes forming it or ideas hidden in it, i.e. the meaning and concept latent in the work that transcends the boundaries of designers' thought and are manifested in the body. Accordingly, it is the responsibility of the audience to review the meaning hidden in the building that depends on his "visual ability" "mental effort" and "power of perception". The architect and builder, during a process, express immaterial and semantic ideas in the physical form and attempt to refer the observer to the themes and thoughts expressing the truth. If the meaning behind the work is transcendent and expressing a truth in relation to the spiritual world, the work will remain beyond the place and time; otherwise, the body and the material effect will have no meaning beyond the matter itself and be devoid of meaning and spirituality[1]. Since knowing the meaning of being also depends on thought of it, thinking about building and being leads the thought towards the meaning of being (Ahmadi, Mohajer, &

Nabavi, 1998, p. 59).

Traces of meaning can be found in the descriptions of architecture by many scholars. In other words, the definition of architecture is not separate from meaning. Some scholars, such as Schultz, have explained the meaning of each historical style in factors such as the relation of humans and building with God, interaction of building with the environment, etc. (Norberg-Schulz, 2008). The different levels of meaning can be understood in describing the architectural features of each race and ethnicity, because, in the end, architecture is a developed abstract word in which concepts, ideas, cultures, and values are manifested as codes. Once this manifestation is realized, the contexts are prepared for the reception and cognition of architecture (Falamaki, 2002, p. 108). The perception and cognition of architecture require understanding the codes and meanings latent in it that are abstractly manifested in the building. So perception of space depends on perception of its meaning. "Often, the reason behind our feeling of unfamiliarity with a building or structure is that the building or environment appears meaningless for us [...] although the richness of many spatial experiences depends on the perception of meaning, it is sometimes signified and influenced by the presence of a transcendent meaning, i.e. an inner feeling that does not rise from place, but adds a meaning to it" (Winters, 2005, p. 27). On the other hand, if architecture is considered multilateral, in addition to a quantitative or functionalistic approach, it will be considered that it includes the quality and meaning arising from the mind. For many, architecture is an inclusive and multifaceted system. According to Alvar Aalto, architecture is a compound phenomenon that covers virtually all areas of human activity. Architecture is not only an art and a profession, but also an expression of subjectivity (Antoniades, 2002, p. 37).

According to numerous theories, the meaning is a factor creation the quality of space and sense of place. Eduard Rolf, for example, identifies places as a locus for gathering of meanings formed in our experiences, and that humans, either individually or in group, convert the spaces to a place by attaching meanings to them (Tiesdell & Carmona, 2007, p. 101). According to Nuremberg Schultz, the main task of an architect and an urban planner is to create places that have a special and meaningful character; in other words, man acquires his existential base when his place has a character. From ancient times, the environmental character has been regarded as the spirit of place. By pointing to the origins of ideas, he emphasizes that architecture, as an artwork, defines superior realities or values. The architecture gives visual expression of ideas, that make something meaningful to humans, because they organize the reality. Such ideas are probably social, professional, scientific, philosophical or religious. He emphasizes the revival of spaces if they are converted to meaningful places (Norberg-Schulz, 1986). Table 1 shows the different levels of meaning.

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Table 1. General Levels of Meaning According to the Opinions of Some Contemporary Experts

Expert	Eco	Gibson	Carmona	Rapoport	Hershberger
Levels of Meaning	Implicit Explicit	Primary and Tangible Applied-Instrumental Valuable and Emotional Signs-Symbols	Implicit Symbolic	Lower Level Middle Level Upper Level	Represented Tangible and Referential Responsive

The designer's thought in expressing the concepts and meanings mysteriously is influenced by his attitude to being, because the meaning does not only come from an external object, and the creator's mentality is influential in the creation of the subjective image and the perception of meaning by the audience. Now, if "the origin of this mentality is based on a sublime, transcendental attitude, its architecture would also have a semantic and conceptual dimension. […] Beyond the physical body, some thoughts are hidden and in many cases, architecture is applied to express these mysteries and secrets. The secrets and mysteries, while respecting nature and its conditions, satisfy a part of human's material and physical needs. It can be said that architecture is influenced by a set of factors that are fluid in the minds of civilizations and cultures and achieve their final form in the right conditions" (Pourjafar, Akbarian, Ansari, & Pourmand, 2007, p.96). In the descriptions of Iranian architecture, the role of meaning in the formation of spaces is considered and the mission of architecture is defined as "the expression of deep meaning" (Nadeimi, 2006, p.3). Architecture seeks to express and arouse the deep sense of eternal, excellent and spiritual meanings and the unity of all beings of the world in the observer (Ardalan, 1995, p. 16). After the rise of Islam, the meaning in architecture had been based on monotheistic worldview and found more depth and excellence. "Iranian architecture in the invention, design, and execution of building, prioritizes the spirituality over the sense of beauty and goodness, and provides a spiritual environment for approaching GOD. This is more understandable in the architectures of the Islamic eras due to epistemic proximity." (Aboulghasemi, 2005, p. 76). One of the most important approaches and methods in shaping Iranian architecture has been the way of looking at material (physical) and semantic factors in harmony with one another. "Spiritual domination, unity of beauty and usefulness, harmony with the environment, deep understanding of materials, the creation of architecture based on sacred cosmology and sacred knowledge, readiness to accept to change needs and conditions while remaining faithful to the eternal truth of all times can be observed in Islamic and somehow in pre-Islamic Iranian architecture" (Nasr, 1995, p. 49).

5. EXPRESSION OF MEANING METHODS

By reflecting on the meaning, it can be found that the meaning is a thing related to the world of the mind at different levels and requires intermediaries to be expressed and perceived. Signs, verses, marks or symbols are some of the tools used to make the superior realities sensible in the real world and to express meaning in various fields such as literature, poetry, visual arts and architecture, which are summarized below (Table 2).

Sign: Sign is contractual and social. It, in itself, is invalid and used to refer to an object and a concept other than itself. Signs often have a clear, unambiguous and single meaning. There are various types of sign: visual signs (refer to the shape similarity between the signifier and the signified), indexed signs (refer to the relationship between the signifier and the signified), and descriptive signs (refers to the contract in the relationship between the signifier and the signified) (Ahmadi, 1993).

Verse: A verse, which means divine signs and works, is used to refer to spiritual meanings and inwardness. Although the verse, whether as a koranic word or a natural sign, contains meaning, it seeks to reveal a superior truth. In general, it can be said that a verse is an "objective" object and concept for conveying a spiritual object and concept.

The whole universe is a divine verse, and the Qur'an says that the natural phenomena related to the human life are verses, and invites human being to think and contemplate to understand the meaning and inwardness, and finally, guides them (Naghizadeh & Aminzadeh, 2000, p. 24).

Symbol: The symbol literally means 'manifest, appearance, representative' (Dehkhoda, 1998, p. 22731). It refers to something else due to the correlation, association or contract. Symbol is also a visible sign for something invisible, such as a concept (lion is the symbol of courage, cross the symbol of Christianity), and an optional or conventional mark to represent actions, quantities, and qualities in written form or role (Naghizadeh & Aminzadeh, 2000, p. 24). Corbin has defined the example and allegory as the symbol. Nasr has also known the symbol equivalent to the secret and the allegory (Nasr, 1995).

Mark: Mark is not a conventional thing, and it is a real

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one. For Nasr, the mark is a reflection of a reality related to a level higher than the being in the lower-level thing (Nasr, 1996, p. 51). In Ghazali's view, everything in nature is a mark of what exists in the superior world (Naghizadeh & Aminzadeh, 2000, p. 22).

Simile and metaphor: The simile is the equation between the compared and the likened. In metaphor, the word has originality, and the meaning is more indirectly and more difficultly understood as compared to simile. Metaphor is a kind of lexical simile by omitting the compared or likened (Zeyf, 2004, p. 275). Irony and metonymy: What man says and intends something else from it. Rather than mentioning a word that is intended for the intended meaning, the metaphor brings up another word that is synonymous with the intended meaning, and the latter word refers to the first meaning (Purnamdarian, 1989, p. 16). As a result, the irony is not explicit. In metonymy, the main meaning is used with the aim of referring to another meaning.

Table 2. Comparison of Words and Tools Representing Meaning

	Sign	Verse	Symbol	Mark (Symptom)	Irony and Metonymy	Metaphor
Type	Visual Indexed Description-Verbal	Verbal (QURANIC) Natural (Creation)	Visual Verbal	Visual Verbal	Verbal	Visual Verbal
Properties	Visible mark Contractual and Social Single Meaning Understandable in Context	Visible sign Self-Meaningful Referring to Spiritual and Unworldly Origin (Occult Truths, Creator of the Universe)	A visible Mark for the Invisible One Optional or Contractual Referring to the Cause of Correlation, Association, and Contract	Visible or Invisible Mark Referring to the Truth Non-Contractual Manifestation of the Superior Order Intuitively Understandable	Non-explicit Mysterious and Vague Referring to a Meaning other than the Original Meaning	Non-Explicit and Complicated Simile Exaggeration Referring to another Meaning
Target of Meaning	Physical Social Contracts	Transcendent Meaning The Origin of Phenomena Superior Truth of Creator Guidance	Non-Material Meaning Identity Concept or Order	Numinous the Infinite Truth Glossing Meaning in Many Different Levels	Indirect Description	Expression of Meaning through Similarity Stimulating Inner Emotions
Type of Indication	Direct and Explicit	Direct	Direct	Indirect Mysterious	Non-explicit Mysterious	Indirect
Role and Application	Referring to a Material Thing other than Itself	Cognitive, Perceptive The Contemplation of the Inward and Truth of Things Referring to the Levels of Meaning	Cognitive, Perceptive Referring to the Concept Representation of Quantities and Qualities	Cognitive, Perceptive Directing to the Source and Truth	Cognitive, Perceptive Reaching Unity Describing the Indirect Similarity	Material Immaterial
Domain of General Application Generalizability	Contractual Signs, Visual and Written Language	Nature Science Religion Art Architecture	Language (Written and Spoken) Visual arts Art Architecture	Philosophy, Thought, Language Art and Architecture	Language (Written and Spoken) Poems	Language (Written and Spoken) Poems Art and Architecture
Attitude to the Universe	Material Physical	Monotheistic	Material (Sign and Mark) Immaterial (Levels of Meaning)	Immaterial (Monotheist)	Material Immaterial	Material Immaterial

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6. ALLEGORY

Allegory is one of the means of expressing meanings and concepts that, while differentiated, has many similarities to simile and metaphor, and in addition to its teaching and educational role, it also creates a subjective image and association of meanings.

6.1. Terminology

The allegory from the root of the parable means to exemplify. The parable is used to express deep thoughts and concepts and ethical and educational points in the form of short words. There are various definitions of parable and allegory in literary and religious sources, including "what is to be interpreted in the literal language as 'parable' is to make something analogous to something or something to obtain a spiritual benefit" (Hekmat, 1982, p. 1). Or, "as in short, prose or order refers to ethical, social, moral, and life-giving concepts. The use of parables in speech is called "proverb" or "story-telling" [...] like a solid structure, a fluent expression, a common denominator, and a general application" (Shokr allahi, 2004, pp. 5-6).

Allegory is a type of simile in which there is often equality between the two strands, or the first strain is imbalance, and the second strand is employed to illustrate the first strand in the allegory of authenticity with a theme that exemplifies Visualization and objectification have entered the field (Sheiri, 2010, p. 38). By using pure parables, it will have a greater impact and a lasting meaning on the audience's mind. Clear, profound, rapid and profound impact on the audience, sweet and pleasant are the characteristics of the parable.

6.2. Relationship between Meaning and Allegory

In Islamic thought and worldview, meaning is an esoteric, yet true, and reaching of it starts from the outer senses to eventually perceive the meaning at the highest level by reason.

Getting the inside of things i.e. meaning, from the appearance of things, i.e. instances, includes various levels and degrees. These middle levels, in the eastern texts, are called esoteric senses, including the powers of imagination and thinking, in some Western texts, the appearances are called perceivable things and the inside as rational things. There are various ways and solutions to get the most rational level, i.e. true meaning, from the most tangible level, i.e. sense, in different contexts. Allegory is a method of lowering rational and transcendent meanings into tangible and sensible ones, which helps one to understand meanings and degrees by utilizing the powers of thinking and imagination. The important points about the nature, structure and function of the allegory is that it can best realize the purpose of reaching the meanings from appearances due to its characteristics such as rational verisimilitude.

6.3. Function of Allegory in Literature

Allegory as a rhetorical tool has many types. Allegory literally means to exemplify when designing an article or subject in order to make the truth clearer (Sheiri, 2010, p. 40). The allegory is either told in a story and indirectly addresses a moral issue, or expresses moral points directly in an example. The term allegory refers to a wide range of areas including, reasoning, compound simile, compound metaphor, proverb, equation style, moral anecdote, animal story, and mysterious story (Rezazadeh & Shahroudi, 2012, pp. 61-62). Abdul Qahir Jorjani considers allegory one of the type of simile. He also emphasizes that allegory is a type of compound simile that its event is rational and abstracted from the set of things that come together (Jorjani, 1982, pp. 60-61). Some distinguish allegory, metaphor and simile as follows;

- Metaphor (poetic) is a kind of lexical simile with the elimination of one of the parties, (Zeyf. 2004, p. 262). In the allegory, unlike metaphor, that the exaggeration is one of its main pillars, the exaggeration has little place. [Metaphor] is a linguistic figure, while in the allegory, the event is created by several illustrative elements. Moreover, simile describes the character of a thing as what the audience sees, the allegory only creates an imaginary form of that thing in mind. Understanding the simile is simple and straightforward, but understanding the allegory requires gloss and its event is rational (Sheiri, 2010, pp. 35-36).

Table 3. Comparison of the Important Characteristics of the Expression Elements, from a Literary Perspective

	Allegory	Metaphor	Simile
Type	Branch of Simile	Lexical Simile	An Extensive Set of Descriptions, Allegories, and Metaphors
Goal	Expression of Meaning	Conceptual	Description of Things or Meaning
	Way of Announcing the Truth	Means of Rhetoric	
Means of Expression	No Exaggeration	Existence of Exaggeration	No Exaggeration
	Word of Appearance, Meaning of Inwardness	Originality of the Word	

Target Subject	Creating an Imaginary form of an Object or Concept Using Imagining Tools	Create a New Meaning Create Mental Similarity	Clear Description of Things
Component	Analogy and Compared With Multiple Intellectual and Illustrating Events	Analogy or Compared by Removing One of them	Analogy and Compared With Simple and Clear Event
Perception of Meaning Methods	Gloss of Meaning	Interpretation of Meaning	Explicit and Direct Understanding of Meaning

Studies show that there are very close instances for similes, metaphors and allegories. In addition to the means of expression of meaning, these elements are illustrative elements, because in many cases, they create a general picture of a text and thus help to understand its meaning. From some perspectives, including literary attitudes, image precedes imagination and speech, and in terms of visual hierarchy, allegory is placed on the first level, followed by symbolistic and metaphorical images, respectively (Sheiri, 2010, p. 33).
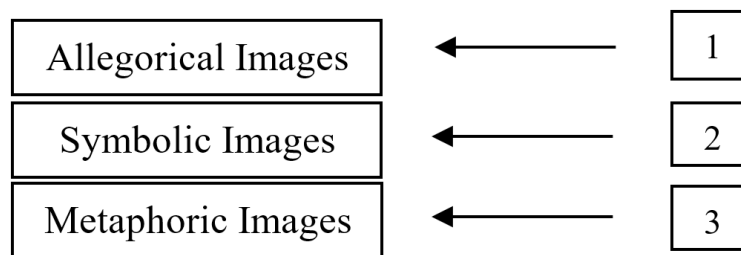
Fig. 1. Visual Hierarchy in the Rhetoric
(Sheiri, 2010)

Reflecting on the above descriptions, one can explain the general features of the allegory, which are also applied in the fields of art and architecture:

- The allegory, as an illustrative element, creates an imaginary form in the mind.

- In the allegory, it is a meaningful originality that emerges in the mind, not its appearance.

- If the allegory has the elements of simile, including compared, likened and event, the event is rational, so meaning can be understood by rational and logical reasoning.

- The simile used in the allegory is not as simple as the simile nor is it so complex that the addressee cannot get the meaning of the object. Rather, it is possible to "gloss" the meaning through the rational reasoning to get to the essence of the subject.

6.4. Function of Allegory in Art

In religious art, which is a kind of rational intuition of the truth, mystery and allegory are considered a way of conveying the truth. "According to Suhrawardi's thought in which beauty and love are infused with the realities of celestial light, mystery and allegory are one of the ways of communicating the fundamental truths of wisdom, and in all the "abstract" categories, where the human mind is used for the comprehension of the material, there is a defect that does not exist in mystery and allegory" (Kamālizadeh, 2010, pp. 175-176).

According to some scholars, such as Schuon, there is such a profound relationship between the science of interpretation and allegorical art that the allegory and religious art are destroyed if there is the lack of interpretation (Schuon, 2009, p. 90). Moreover, in his view, that art having mysterious and allegorical aspects and transmitting knowledge by encoding cosmic (ontological) laws, is a perfect art (Kamālizadeh, 2010, p. 177). Sheikh Suhrawardi also considers the language of mystery and allegory to be the best and most expressive language of reporting the world of light, and according to him, the language of mystery needs to be decoded according to the school of illumination. The school of illumination is also based on symbol and code. According to Henry Corbin, in the illuminationism, the word illumination most beautifully denotes the symbol of light and embodies all the traditional mysteries of light and darkness. In his view, the code is not an abstract symbol or sign, the existence of the code is the existence of what the code expresses, the code is the form of the middle world (example), and it is a way to move the world superior the world of idea (Corbin, 2009, p. 154). Of course, Suhrawardi and the Ishraqian emphasize that symbolism and decoding only seek to "guide" one to spiritual truth, and to "realize" the truth within the seeker. In sum, the sage and the artist try to use the allegory to represent the truth and understanding the truth by decoding the symbols and allegories is realized not by the sage or the artist, and the image and text compiled by him, but also by the viewer and his soul.

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6.5. Function of Allegory in Architecture

In spite of being physical, architecture deals with the human mind and spirit through its content. This is achieved by embodying spiritual meanings and hierarchies. To this end, using allegory can be one of the most effective ways. Among other things, the "nature of meaning and its hierarchy in the building", "the users' mental background towards their symbols, signs and concepts", "worldview, culture and attitude of the community towards being" influence how the allegory is applied.

6.5.1. Types of Application of Allegory in Architecture

Given the concept of allegory and its aspects, different attitudes toward its functions in architectural design can be explained. Each of these approaches has a different attitude towards the meaning of the architectural work and its understanding. Here are some of the most important functions.

A) Allegory as Analogy (Shape-content)

By studying different references, it is found that one of the most important attitudes to the allegory in architecture is equivalent to analogy. Now this analogy, which is actually some kind of simile, may be in a form of shape or content as follows:

- Allegory is a factor creating the concept, i.e. the model is an analogy of the concept

In this approach, the allegory is "equivalent to analogy", and the concept, which plays the role of

creating unity and coherence in various decisions, is an allegory of the original architectural design. Allegory is probably the most widely used tool for formulating concepts. The allegory identifies possible literal relationships between things and transforms what is known to all desirable features into a model for the project ... by creating a concept, based on an analogical (allegorical) model, the designer determines the contribution of effective factors and the importance of each in relation to the other factors" (Nadeimi, 1999, pp. 94-103).

- Allegory for expressing purpose or describing and interpreting architectural form

The allegory is also used to express the purpose of the architecture or to describe and interpret its form. In such cases, the allegory plays the role of analogy, in which the purpose and application of the architectural work, as its meaning, are compared. For example, "architecture as a machine", "architecture as a language" or "architecture as an organic process" or "architecture as the past". The purpose of this type of application is to express the instrumental and functional meaning or the purpose of architecture. For example, "architecture as the past" is intended to explain the use of past patterns to recall historical values, meanings, and teachings. In these cases, allegory also plays a role in the design process. "Such allegories and analogies provide a way for a self-shaped design based on order and hierarchy. So an architect is able and know what to think and what to leave to think about it later in the design process. These are the common allegories used to explain architecture" (Ibid, p. 99)
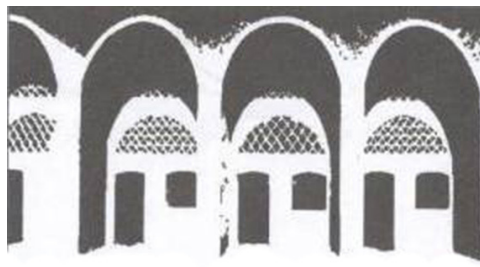

Fig. 2. Architecture as an Allegory of the Past

Given the concept of shape analogies in architectural allegories, William Gordon introduces four types of allegory: (1) direct allegory; (2) self-conception (personal) allegory; (3) Symbolic allegory (Cross Plan); and (4) Fantasy allegory (Laseau, 1998, pp. 156-158).
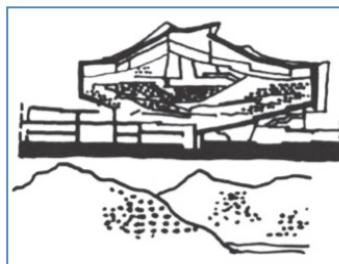

**Fig. 3. The Direct Allegory;
The Philharmonic Hall is
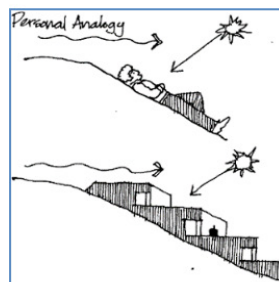an Allegory of the Hill**
(Antoniades, 2002, p. 72)

**Fig. 4. The Self-conception Allegory.
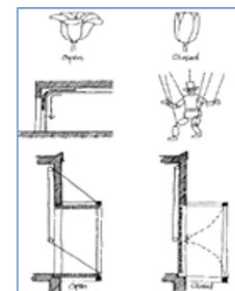Likening a Building to a Lying
Human Being**
(Laseau, 1998, p. 158)

**Fig. 5. The Fantasy Allegory.
The Door Is Opened and
Closed in Like Flowers**
(Laseau, 1998, p. 159)

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In the analogical approach, allegory is a tool for enhancing the creator's mental ability and creativity. It can also indicate the beginning of a variety of architectural design. Sensory perceptions play an important role in understanding the concepts in this kind of allegory.

Table 4. Analogical Function of Allegory in Architecture

Role and Function of Allegory	Type of Analogy	Methods of Analogy and Simile in Architecture	
Formation of Concept	Shape Analogy	Modeling of Concept	
Expression of the Goal of Architecture	Content Analogy (application, goal)	Architecture as an allegory of machine Architecture as an allegory of heaven	
Explanation and Interpretation of the shape	Shape Analogy (formal simile)	Analogize the work to: Human, his Behavior or Action Specific Core, Symbol and Mark Living or Non-Living (shape similarities)	
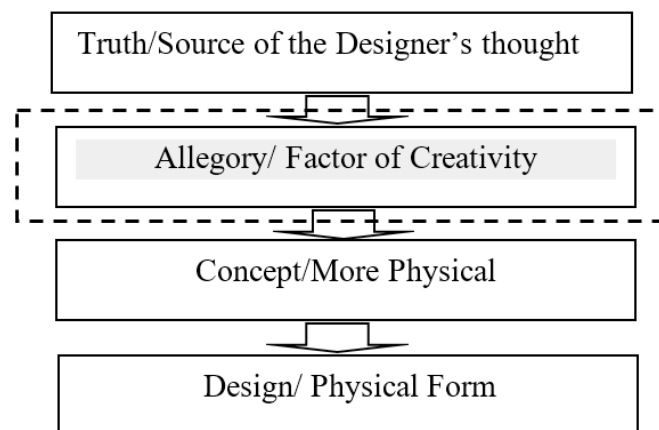
Fig. 6. The Position of Allegory in the Formation of Architectural Work (From though to Work/ Truth to Reality)

B) The Allegory: A Way by Which the Form Implies the Content

According to some theories, such as content-based theories, the role and function of the allegory is to provide content for architectural buildings. According to semantic theory, the content of a building will make it meaningful and thus transform it into an architectural work. Our understanding of architecture also depends on our understanding of the meaning that the architecture contains, in other words, understanding what architecture wants to represent or associate. Answering the question of "what" and "how" architecture implies, can indicate a variety of ways to apply the allegory in architecture. "Nelson Goodman" has proposed three methods of "explicit implication", "allegorical implication" and" Referral with mediatory" that give meaning and content to architecture[2].

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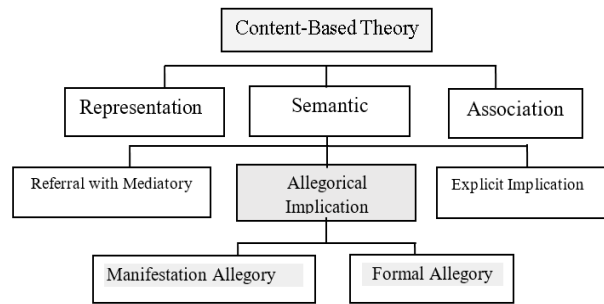
Fig. 7. Allegory from the Perspective of Semantic Theory
(Winters, 2005, p. 31)

With the analysis of this approach, it is concluded that building, as "signifier", indicate to "the signified" of the same referent it implies and gets its content from it and becomes meaningful.

Building (signifier) → the signified (that referent the building implies)

Understanding of a building → following the path from the building to the referent

Understanding the implications is the knowledge of the content that leads to understanding of the meaning of the building. In the meantime, the role of the allegory is to express these meanings that lead us to referent and meaning. In most cases, these allegories are shape similes that refer to the content of the building and in some cases, embody a valuable concept such as spirituality.
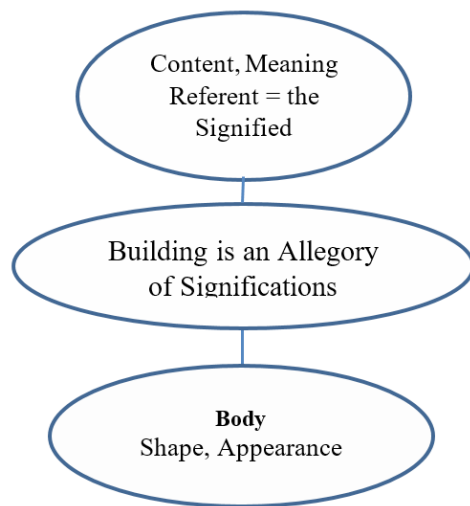
Fig. 8. Allegory on the Significant Path
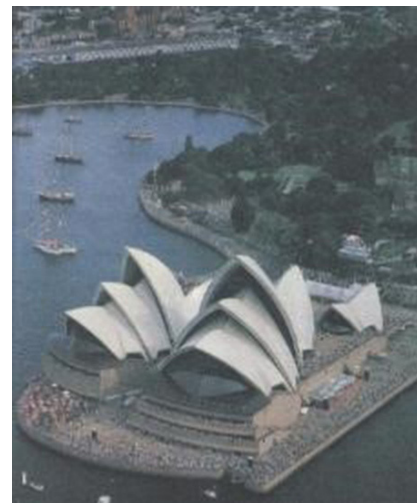
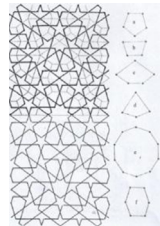**Fig. 9. The Sydney Opera House,
An Example of a Formal Allegory**
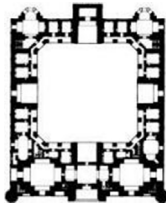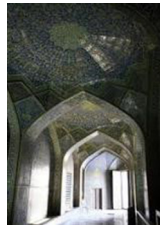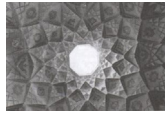
C) Allegory; Expression of Rational Things in the World of Perceptible Things (Expression of Truth in Iranian Architecture)

In Iranian architecture, especially after the rise of Islam, allegory has been used as a mediator for

the expression of superior truths in the real world to express the semantic concepts and make them understandable in the body. Some of the well-known allegorical elements widely used in Iranian architectural examples are summarized below:

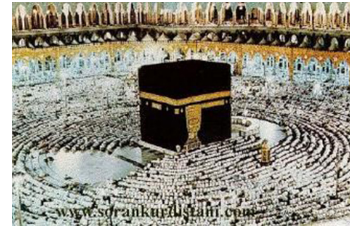**Table 5. Allegory in Iranian Architecture**

No.	Allegorical Elements	Expression of Meaning	Architectural Example
1	Heaven Garden Model (Pattern)	Iranian Garden as an Allegory of Heaven	**Fig. 10. Fin Garden, Kashan**

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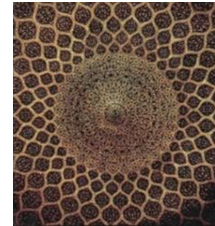| 2	Four Point of Space Limitation	Four Directions as an Allegory of the Universe Paying Attention to Four Corners as Four Corners of the Universe, an Allegory of Stability and Deployment on 4 Bases (Falamaki, 2002, p. 302)	**Fig. 11. Khargerd Ghiasieh School** 	**Fig. 12. Fin Garden, Kashan**
			View to the Surroundings from 4 Direction/ Empty and Full Spaces (Haji ghasemi, 2011)	
3	Spatial Hierarchy and Continuity	Perfectionism Privacy and Respect Inside and Outside	**Fig. 13. Entrance of Sheikh Lotf-Allah Mosque** 	**Fig. 14. The portico of Jameh Mosque of Varamin**
			(Haji ghasemi, 2011, p. 11)	
4	Light	Light and its Manifestations in Architecture A Manifestation of the Essence of God's Omnipotence, Pure truth	**Fig. 15. Bazaar of Kashan** 	**Fig. 16. Sheikh Lotf- Allah Mosque**
			(Noghrehkar, 2008, p.401)	
5	Nature	Unity of Beauty, Usefulness and Integrity Day/Night Cycle and Change in Season as an Allegory of Divine Signs Coordination and Interaction with the Environment	**Fig. 17. Mohammadi's House, Yazd, Interaction with Nature** (Bozorgmehri, 2002, p.277)	
6	Geometry of Motifs	Axis: Way of Behavior Geometry as an Allegory of: Harmony, Order and Stability in the Universe The Movement from Plurality to Unity and from Unity to Plurality Stability and Deployment	**Fig. 18. Tiling, Imam Reza's (AS) Tomb** 	**Fig. 19. Geometry of and Harmony in Motifs**
			(Bozorgmehri, 2008, p.284)	

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7	Centrality	Monotheism	Fig. 20. The Kaaba and Tawaf
		Unity	
		Uniqueness	Fig. 21. Baldachin, the vault of Sheikh Lotf-Allah Mosque
		The Single Origin of the Universe	
			(Noghrehkar, 2008, p. 601)
8	Numbers	The Order of the Universe	Fig. 22. Si-o-se-pol, Isfahan
		Cosmology,	
		Holy Knowledge	
9	Ornaments	The Movement from Plurality to Unity,	Fig. 23 & 24. Ornaments and Inscriptions - Imam Reza's (AS) Tomb
		Integrity and Order	
		Direct Expression of Verses and Signs	
		Reminding, Mention and Penitence	(Bozorgmehri, 2002, p. 284)
10	Movement	Perfection and Excellence	Fig. 25. Tawaf; Move around the Kaaba
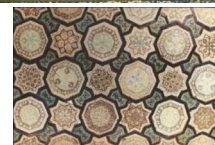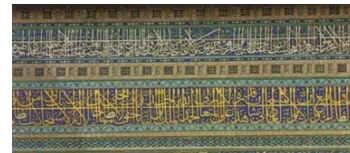
7. COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF ALLEGORY

By examining Iranian architecture, which has a judicious attitude towards the universe, it is found that in monotheistic worldviews, understanding the unity of the world leads to the sense of meaning hidden in objective forms. In this attitude, the study of natural forms, forces, and laws are the way to divine wisdom. As a result, sciences such as mathematics, geometry, physics, etc. do not have qualitative dimension and they will have a quality derived from spiritual knowledge and the knowledge of monotheism. In art and architecture, the use of allegory paves the way to understand the true meaning and enables the understanding of shape implications and meaning by providing reasoning based

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on wisdom and logic, because in monotheistic worldviews, in addition to material and physical use, symbols and signs have a high degree of excellent meanings, while in material worldview, symbols fall to the mark and sign. Comparing the functions of allegory in architecture and disciplines reveals that objective forms (tangible bodies as compared) with the help of allegorical elements create concepts that results in subjective perceptions, which have various levels and at the highest level, the particular audience is drawn to the pure truth.
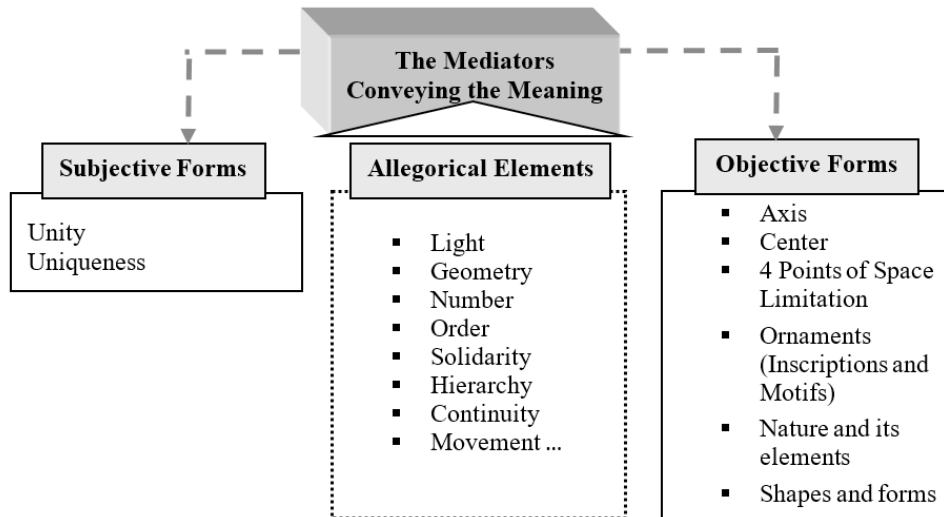
Fig. 26. The Mediating Position of Allegory in Expressing Meaning in Iranian Architecture

Accordingly, by studying the examples of Iranian architecture, one can find that the various elements of the allegory in architecture (such as light, centrality, hierarchy) with the use of objective forms (such as geometry, numbers and ornaments, etc.) create multiple meanings, such as unity, uniqueness, order, etc., in the audience's mind, and these subjective images and forms ultimately point to the monotheism at the highest order of truth. Categorizing the most important objective and subjective forms can reveal the role of the allegorical elements as the agent of transfer from one form to another (from the perceptible to rational things). The classifications presented in the following structure show the right way to properly apply various objectivities to realize the meaning by appropriately separating the instances, concepts, and tools (Fig. 26).

Studying and analyzing the functions of allegory in different disciplines, such as literature, art and architecture, some other common points can be made as follows:

- The allegory does not create the meaning, but is used to explain the transcend meaning or concept of an intangible truth. This is done by making the rational affairs perceptible through the material (physical) affairs, which is consistent with the description of art as a means of expressing rationalities in the world of perceptible things.

- The function of the allegory is to simplify rational things and make them perceptible, so there should be no complexity in the allegorical expression, otherwise, the allegory will lose its role. This is evident in the literary allegories that have a teaching role, as well as the allegorical elements used in architecture.

- Using allegory, rational facts are transformed into tangible forms, shapes and manifestations and presented to the audience. This is in the form of speech and world (creating subjective images using words) in literature and in visual form in architecture (creating subjective images of concepts using space and body). In fact, in all the areas studied, allegory is used as an intermediary to reach the truth from reality, where the two elements of imagination and thought play an important role in the intellectual conception of meanings.
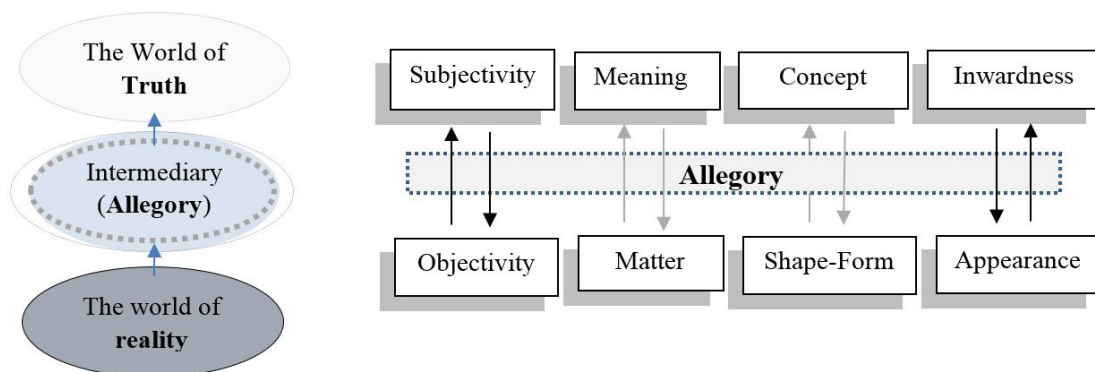
Fig. 27. The Role and Position of Allegory in Different Disciplines

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8. CONCLUSION

Architecture, especially transcendent architecture, is the manifestation of thought, thinking, and meaning; this meaning has a logical and philosophical basis, defines the end of existence and manifests itself in the material and physical body. The allegory, as an intermediary between reality and truth, seeks to make perceptions tangible and reduce the world of the mind to the world of the objectivity and, uses forms to make the truth and meaning understandable in the realm of the perceptible things. In illuminationism (illuminationist or ishraqi philosophy), in particular, the allegory has been used to express the truth, which is not only an abstract function and it is a way to the spiritual world. So reducing the allegory to abstraction in architecture, so that the building is merely a sign or abstraction of an objective reality, will diminish it from the truth of the allegory.

Up to now, most studies have focused on the role of symbols, signs, and marks in explicitly referring to the intangible and conceptual aspects of the work, while the present study indicate that allegory has a more distinctive potential because it can make a basis for crossing middle levels to reach the truth from the lower levels. This expression of meaning method, with its effectiveness in three main axes: (a) objectivity, (b) imagination, and (c) gloss and reasonability, by employing the power of reason and thought, provides the understanding of meaning at various levels and enables human beings to approach the truth and understand meanings when facing real phenomena such as architectural examples.

One of the most significant differences between allegory and other expression of meaning methods is its reasonability and verisimilitude, while symbols, signs, and marks are abstract and suggest conventional things; the allegory plays a role of stimulating thought. Studying the structure and nature of allegory in other disciplines also shows that the allegory, with its educational, teaching and illustrative functions, seeks to simplify transcendent concepts and make them perceivable for the audience to understand the truth easier and more durable by establishing experienced subjective images. It should be noted that the decoding the symbols expressing the allegory is performed by the audience, and each person, depending on his perception, understand it and comes to the truth. There are, of course, there are different ways to express meaning through allegory that largely depend on two factors: "the meaning and the concept intended to convey" and "the audience's perception of meaning according to his worldview, culture and attitude to being".

The research results also show that the allegory, in addition to the objective (material) image, also creates a subjective image in the audience's mind, which remains in his mind and promotes a better understanding of meaning at different levels.

In addition, one of the most important uses of the allegory is to guide the mind into the meta-material realms, to contemplate on the world and create new questions. So, knowing the allegorical ways used for the expression of meaning in disciplines such as literature and art and utilizing it in architecture can pave the way for designers and users to understand "the meaning of buildings" with rational and logical reasoning and create a transcendent and lasting architecture in the present era, while providing the ground for the creation of "new buildings with meaningful foundations".
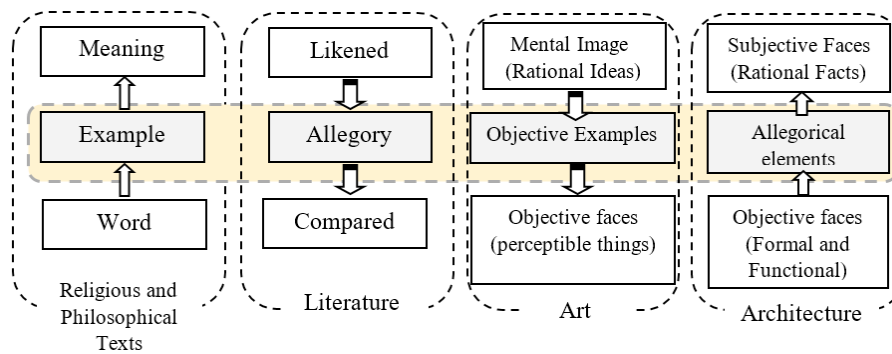
Fig. 28. A Comparison of the Position and Function of the Allegory, as Means of Expression, in Different Disciplines

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END NOTE

1. The constituent factors of meaning in architecture are not merely shapes and forms, and many components, such as "activities taking place in space and place (function)", "builder's intention "," how to meet the physical and metaphysical needs of users" and many other components are effective in making an architectural work meaningful that discussion of them requires a detailed and comprehensive research and it is not possible in this research. Therefore, the purpose of this article is not to explain how to make an architectural work meaningful, but to examine and express the "methods of expression of meaning" using "allegory" as well as to study the application of it in design.

2. In "explicit implication", with the form and form similarity, building is a representation of another object, as a referent or the signified. "Allegorical implication" is divided into two types of formal allegory and manifestation allegory. In the formal allegory, the allegory is used as an example, and the building shape expresses the characteristics of its generality (such as the method of construction or structural elements) and may represent no symbol. In "manifestation allegory", the building tries to induce and refer to the attributes that it does not have formally and it seeks to express the concepts and meanings hidden in itself. The meanings that are not directly and formally seen in the body, and the building seeks to indirectly and metaphorically express them. In "referral with mediatory", a chain of consecutive meanings, which are longitudinally interdependent and the ultimate meaning of which is superior and more non-physical, is referred to by the building. For example, the church is a manifestation of the boat, the boat is a manifestation of liberation from worldly interests, that is, a manifestation of spirituality.

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