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## New Approaches to the Landscape Aesthetics Research

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### Abstract

According to the approaches of landscape aesthetics developed in the twentieth century based on environmental psychology and experimental works, landscape and urban planning is of high priority. On the other hand, the effect of aesthetics on the perception, experience and changes of landscape is highly highlighted. According to research-oriented perspectives, aesthetics is very important for perception and experience of landscape.

Aesthetics also affect the changes of landscape.

Nowadays, aesthetics plays a significant role in the landscape architecture and is used as a driver to change the landscape in term of cultural values, social justice and environmental rights.. Aesthetics provide a new form of sustainable landscape and contribute to beauty, acceptance and make sense of the landscape. The objective of this study was to find the paradigm of landscape aesthetics in the future. According to the qualitative data of previous studies, to understand future researches in the field of aesthetic landscape, three different approaches should be concerned that are described in detail in this study. These approaches including phenomenological, psychological and ecological can shape the general paradigm of landscape aesthetic and determine the direction of the future researches in the field of landscape; therefore, this paper tries to answers these questions: what are the new approaches to study the landscape aesthetics? How these approaches can be used to shape the researches in the field of landscape aesthetics in the future? This is a descriptive-analytical study.. In this study, scientists' views and intellectual typology of the past century have been collected by analysis of the approaches mentioned above. If the phenomenological approach is perceived as the exchanged type and the ecological approach as a holistic one, psychological approach is as psychological and evolutionary approach. According to the results of study on the future researches on landscape aesthetics, the approaches mentioned above are neither incompatible nor consistent. These approaches complement each other, but explain different aspects of landscape aesthetics.

### Keywords

Landscape, Aesthetic, Psychological Approach, Phenomenological Approach, Ecological Approach.

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**Introduction**

First studies in the field of landscape aesthetics were began in the late 60's and the topic of built environments against natural environments were focused. In the second half of the twentieth century, most of the researches in the field of landscape aesthetics discussed cultural and social values independent from other topics. Then, the fans of ecological aesthetics challenged this approach to answer some questions: what makes the beauty of the landscape? How intrinsic values change the perceptions on the beauty of landscapes? Based on the aesthetic characteristics, these approaches can be used based on a logical hierarchy in beauty (Karimi Moshaver, 2013: 53). Finding a model for future researches affect the landscape aesthetics; therefore, landscape planning, designing and management is very important. (Karimi Moshaver, 2013: 53) The objective of this study is to find a general paradigm for future researches in the field of landscape aesthetics. According to the hypothesis in this study, phenomenological, psychological and ecological approaches affect the future of landscape aesthetics and determine the future of the research in the field of landscape. To confirm the hypothesis, the researcher tries to answer some questions. What are the new approaches in the study of landscape aesthetics? Which are the measures to assess the approaches? In addition, how these approaches can be used to shape future researches in the field of landscape aesthetics? In this study, logical reasoning and analytic reviews have been collected through library study and Internet to answer the questions. For this purpose, ecological, psychological and phenomenological approaches were specifically studied.

Given the intellectual perception and understanding the human, these approaches are able to divide intellectual thinkers' typology and theorists (Mansuri, 2012: 83) into three exchange, holistic and evolutionary categories. This study was conducted by exploring the relationship between these approaches and looking for future researches in the field of landscape aesthetics (Fig. 1).

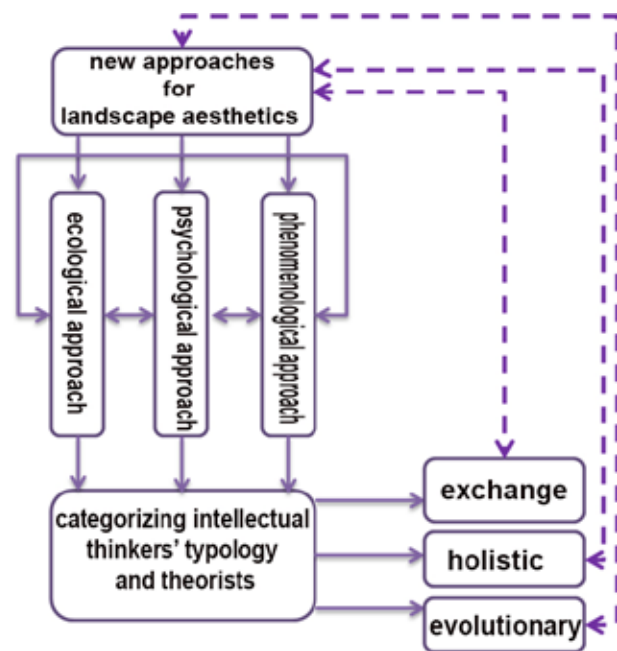


Fig. 1. Conceptual Model of the Research, New Approaches for Landscape Aesthetics. Source: authors.

**Literature Review**

Today, understanding a variety of possible approaches in the field of landscape aesthetics is necessary. Extensive literature has been included in art and philosophy in the field of landscape aesthetics (sometimes with a higher amount of focus on landscape) (Jorgensen, 2011: 353-355). Meyer et al indicated the effect of beauty and the experience of aesthetics on the creation and providing sustainable new forms of landscape architecture. The researcher also stated that the desired credibility had also been neglected (Ibid: 353-355). Zube (1984), Porteous (2013) and Carlson (1979, 1993, 2001, 2004, 2006) introduced experimental and humanistic approaches with high potential to integrate other paradigms for exchange or innovation. In these approaches, human is a part of the environment. Ittelson's (1973) examined the perception of landscape in cognitive and experimental approaches. Carlson in his environmental model combined other models based on the knowledge and experience for aesthetic assessment. According to the analytical review and shortcomings of current approaches, a more holistic and interdisciplinary paradigm is needed to shape

a new paradigm about the landscape aesthetics. Therefore, the theories of different researchers on a more comprehensive and integrated paradigms should be examined. Three topics to clarify the connection approaches are exchange, developmental and holistic paradigms based on landscape aesthetic experience. In other words, the experimental nature of landscape aesthetics also should be assessed from the perspective of phenomenology, psychology and ecological approaches.

**Phenomenological Approach**

Berleant (1997) stated that the environment had been interpreted for a long time by natural science and is rarely defined by geographers and cultural ecologists. The aesthetic assessment was influenced by traditional art theories and some parts were misguided due to its common focus. For a long time, artistic works had been perceived as a cognitive, imagined and impartial phenomenon.

Berleant (2000) believed that a holistic approach should provide an analytic view on what happens in the aesthetic experience through a variety of aesthetic experiences of everyday life. He continued, the integrity of the aesthetic experience is a “discipline of aesthetics” and there is a practical and dynamics relationship between its four components: artists, observers, aesthetic goals and critics (Fig. 2).

**An Exchangeable Look to the Landscape Experience with a Phenomenological Approach**

The exchange of aesthetics is occurred when analysts aauthenticate the properties and quality provided by a designer Analysts, developers or artists are connected to each other by experiencing the artistic work. In the first experimental attempt to identify the qualitative characteristics between artwork and environment, Berleant specified several factors in different states within the aesthetic experience. The researcher first defined aesthetic aspects of perception and then introduced a wide range of emotional responses such as visual sense, tactile, auditory, olfactory and perceptions of movement in our ordinary experiences as biological factors.

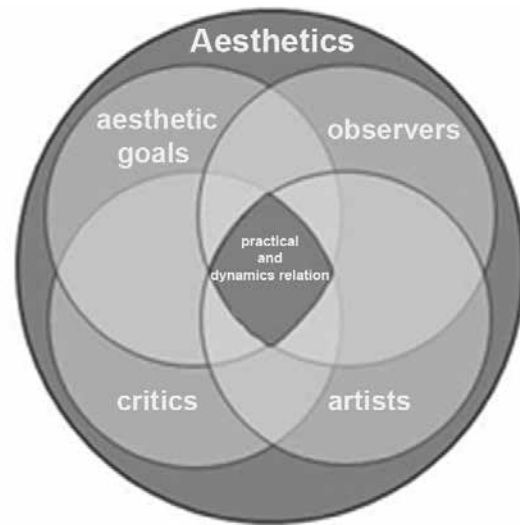


Fig. 2. The Aesthetic Components and the Relationships between Them (Berleant). Source: Berleant, 1997.

**Psychological Approach**

The second factor that should be considered is a psychologist o provides an analysis. The researchers identified characteristic patterns of visual experiences. This factor is based on attitudes in terms of behavioral sciences, Gestalt psychology and cognitive science.

Berleant (2005) stated that another form of aesthetic experience is understanding the concept. As an empirical study, understanding the psychology of beauty “is one of the steps of cognitive psychology”. The interviews and questionnaires were affected by earlier ideas in comparison to the actual understanding of the real experience. Therefore, before any action to evaluate the aesthetics, it is necessary to specify the features of the responses to each situation in relation to the aesthetic experience (Table 1).

Aesthetic experience		
Characteristics	Factors	
Active-receptive, Qualitative, Sensuous, Immediate, Intuitive, Unique, Intrinsic, Integral, Pre-logical, Non-cognitive	Perception	Biological
		psychological
Cognitive knowledge Based Analytic	Appreciation	cultural/social historical

Table 1. The Conceptual Framework by Berleant (2000) of Landscape Experience. Source: authors.

There is a close connection between definition of aesthetics landscape physiological and psychological processes. These processes were closely related to aesthetic assessment and provided aesthetic experience of landscape. Based on the research by Zube, Raichel and Capelin, Kellert, Ulrich, Wilson and many others, there is need to examine many aspects in research. Parsons (1991) was among the first researcher who connected the aspects of landscape experience to different routes of landscape considering physiological change and the hypothesis of neurological reactions..

### A Complete Look to Landscape Aesthetics with a Psychological Approach

Bourassa had concerned two possibilities to identify the principles of aesthetics in the researcher’s latest works; one was based on biological hypotheses and the other was documented based on cultural hypotheses. The researcher stated three modes of aesthetic experience as an approach in a comprehensive theory. The researcher first utilized the historical-cultural psychological theories by Vigofsky , then reviewed McLean and Zajunak’s research on thinking and feelings to link biological and cultural experiences and later the researcher used the general theory by Meyer and in the end suggested that “modes of aesthetic experience and their manifestations as constraints and opportunities of aesthetics”.

Bourassa’s statements of aesthetic experience were structurally similar to that of Vigofsky’s understanding of the three modes of the presence and development of the human intellect (Fig. 3).

### Ecological Approach

Although, science and art were essential ways in understanding the world in Gobster’s perspective, but most reactions in the environment are determined through personal experiences from a personal perspective (Gobster, Nassauer, Daniel & Fry, 2007: 36).

According to Koh, any aesthetic theory should be used in designing and testing for ensuring the performance. Therefore, aesthetics should be evaluated in environmental design and designing works

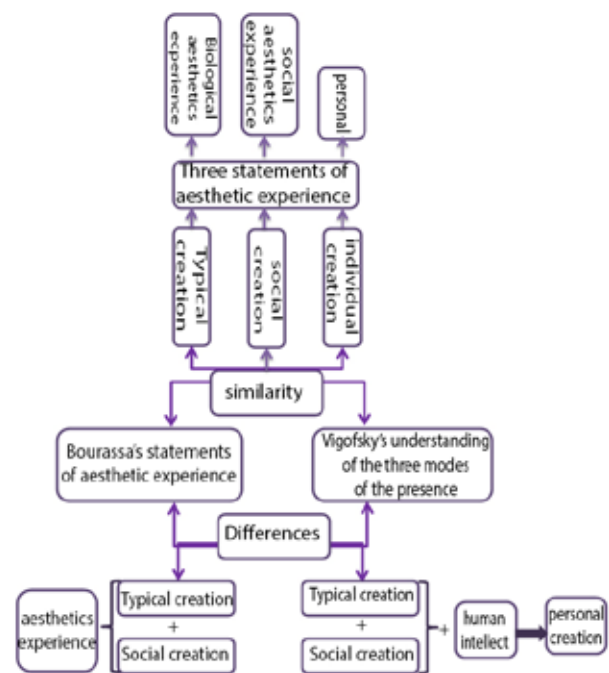


Fig. 3. The Similarity and Differences of Vigofsky’s Understanding The Three Modes Ofthe Three Modes of Presence and Development Of Human Intellect Source: authors. Source: authors.

(Koh, 1998: 177-191). Given the close and complex relationship between aesthetics and ecology, recognizing the nature of this relationship plays an important role in the perception of landscape ecology. The reasons provided in Figure. 4 clarifies why aesthetic considerations are effective in the anticipation of landscape change and the implications of environmental landscape.

### A Holistic Look at The Experience of Landscape in Ecological Approach

Common practices examine the aesthetics by considering the art work of as an objective observation in the frozen and static dimension and strives to peruse a scientific, goal oriented and positive process. While in the phenomenological approach, aesthetics concern the holistic and humanistic aspects and intends to encourage designers to gain experience individuality in an experience-oriented form. Therefore, a combined or paradigm-ecologic theory is required to help designers in the field of objective-oriented values and aesthetics judgments,. Koh introduced a topic “a theory of creativity” based on this idea (Table 3).

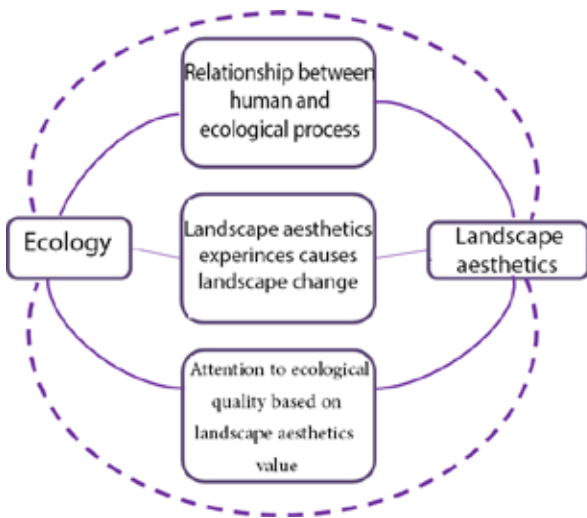


Fig. 4. The Relationship between Landscape Aesthetics and Ecology  
Source: authors.

Table 3. Koh’s Experimental Assumptions for Aesthetic Theory Of Creativity. Source: authors, based on Koh

aesthetics experience design	Koh's experimental assumptions for the aesthetic theory of creativity
perception&cognition Supplement each other creative process	
Design as a problem solving process mention to aesthetic judgment seeks Basic solutions	
Aesthetic scene with sense of humor Related to four aspects of creativity	
scientists,artist and creative designers Makes a distinction for aesthetics in compare with practical subjects	
Design & Aesthetics both are creative product & creative process	
Art & Science mention to art and nature both are creative products which activate aesthetic response	

**Discussion**

Although, the existing patterns and intellectual methods in studies in the field of landscape aesthetics tried provide theoretical assumptions and different methods, but the main objective of all these approaches is same: experience of landscape aesthetics.

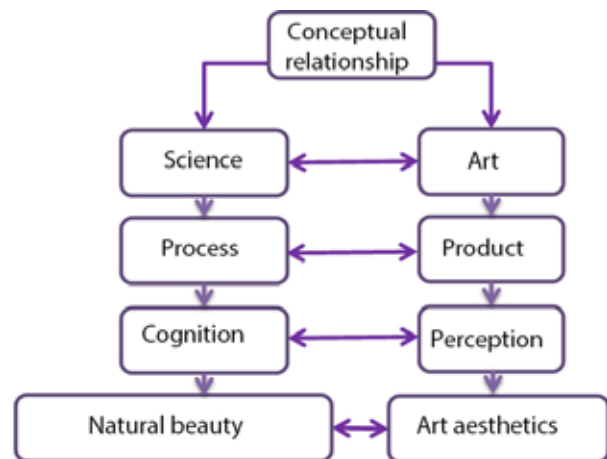


Fig. 5. The Theoretical Relationship between Art Aesthetics and Natural Beauty. In Koh’s Creativity Theory. Source: authors.  
Source: The author on Koh.

The conceptual model described in the literature in the field of landscape quality assessment, including ecological, aesthetic, psychosomatic, psychological and phenomenological models discovered the measures in aesthetic selection in both terms of quantitative and qualitative or experimental and humanistic by changing the classification of evaluation methods .methods. Classification in any form such as scientific or humanistic, pragmatic or theoretic and quantitative or qualitative should create a more general group to strength the human experience as well as combine different existing patterns and models (Table 4).

Obviously, there is always a dichotomy between empirical and intellectual approaches. According to the quartet categorization, the meaning of experimental studies are analytic and conceptual approaches. In order to reach exchangeable approaches in solving this dichotomy, experimental approaches should move towards the analytical humanistic and the logical approaches move towards the conceptual humanistic. In this case, the theory of experimental landscape aesthetics can provide empirical understanding that is a clear policy for conceptual norms.

Therefore, we can divide aesthetic experience into two categories: analytical and conceptual. The analytical approach deals with feelings, sensation and thoughts and contributes to understanding of

cognitive components (sense) in the relationship between individuals and location by explanation and evaluation. The conceptual approach is associated with feelings, intuition and thoughts and contribute to understanding of basic spiritual components (intuition). The polar aspects of feelings and intuition indicate dual directions of studies: scientific (conscious) and humanistic (Table 5). As a result, this quartet trans-theoretical scheme showed that the existing models and theoretical perspectives in the field of landscape aesthetics had confirmed the subject of this paper as a scientific research. This means, while any theoretical approach can be effective and acceptable in its own domain, but, other approaches are needed. Landscape experience is concerned as a holistic principle, but their divisions are s either personal or analytical and knowledge.

Table 4. Humanistic Conceptual-Analytical and Relationship with Landscape Approaches. Source: authors.

Conceptual Humanism	Integrated approach	Analytical Humanism	conceptual schema
Professional Either personal or impersonal	Experiential Humanistic Interpersonal	Psycho-physical, Formal Scenic, Cognitive Experimental Either Personal or impersonal	Existing Approaches
Experiential Conceptual humanism	Experiential Analytical-conceptual humanism	Experiential Analytical humanism	Proposed Approaches
Normative Descriptive	Explanatory Normative Descriptive	Explanatory Descriptive	Theoretical Character
Resources - manager Ecosystem-caretaker Ambiance-participants Culture-nature-human	Holistic Evolutionary Transcendent	Causal-mathematical Stimuli-respondent Objects-human subjects	Traditional relationship between People and Place
Ecological Cultural, social Historical Phenomenological	Ecological Phenomenological Psychological	Biological Cognitive Behavioral Psychological	Aesthetic contexts

Feeling-Sense	Intuition-Feeling	Thinking-Intuition	Sense thinking	Interactive types
Particular Humanists	Conceptual Humanists	Conceptual Theorists	Analytical Scientists	A typology of Scientists (1978 ,Mitroff & Kilmann)
Personal Localist Biased Focused Specific	Personal Generalist Speculative Imaginative Holistic	Impersonal Generalist Speculative Imaginative Holistic	Impersonal Specialist Methodical Logical Specific	
Explanatory	Justificatory	Evaluative	Appreciative	Primary attitude
			Object, Scenery model Environment model	Models for Environmental Appreciation Carlson, 1979, 1993 2000, 2004
Arousal	Metaphysical imagination	Post-modern	Engaging	
Psychological	Phenomenological		Psycho-physical Formal aesthetic Ecological	Paradigms for Landscape Perception and Evaluation Daniel & Vining 1983 Zube et al 1982
Cognitive	Experiential	Expert	Psycho-physical	
Heuristic approach: Explanatory + Descriptive + Normative				
Behavioral	Humanistic	Professional	Behavioral	Paradigms for Environmental Aesthetics Porteous 1996,
Experimentalists	Humanists	Planners	Experimentalists	

Table 5. The Classification of Scientists in Relation with Landscape Approaches. Source: authors.

### Conclusion

As mentioned earlier, recent studies in the field of landscape aesthetics were divided into two fields; experimental sciences and humanities and few studies have been conducted to prove the concepts and develop infrastructure components. The existing experimental sciences and humanities approaches should be combined together – to introduce the exploratory approach. This approach is introduced in discussion section in Table 4. According to this approach, experimental and conceptual sciences should be combined together to indicate aesthetics and moral values of landscape. Therefore, we introduce a comprehensive approach for rediscovery and the connecting theoretical centered explanatory, descriptive and normative with the means of reaching to a prosiest high accuracy analysis (Fig. 6).

According to analogy, thinking is a key factor in any kind of study related to aesthetics, because it contributes in analyzing scientific studies, but also it had assisted with conceptualization in humanism studies.

The quartet plan of theoretical views for lack of emotion against intellectual logic can be useful for many specialists’ designers. The unspeakable sector of the whole aesthetic experience was withheld in our heart and soul. These two common borders existing within us meet as a form of a biologic and ecologic. In the very fundamental and spiritual part of human life and experience, the dimension of insight desire towards aesthetic would be linked to moral obligation, which is experienced throughout love, desire and respect towards nature and landscape.

As mentioned earlier, most psychological issues should be started with with phenomenology and then, followed by different traditional psychological methods such as objective, experimental and behavioral methods. In this way, we could achieve a more reliable level of knowledge.

As noted earlier, recent studies on aesthetic landscape were divided into two fields of experimental and humanities sciences. However, few studies have been done on proving conceptual models and developing infrastructure components. Therefore, this approach should combine isolated sectors – principally experimental and humanities sciences into a single body against humanism concept analysis; i.e., a combined experimental and conceptual science which can distinguish the ethical and aesthetical landscape values.

Polar aspects of sense and intuition indicate dual directions existing in studies: scientific (conscious) and

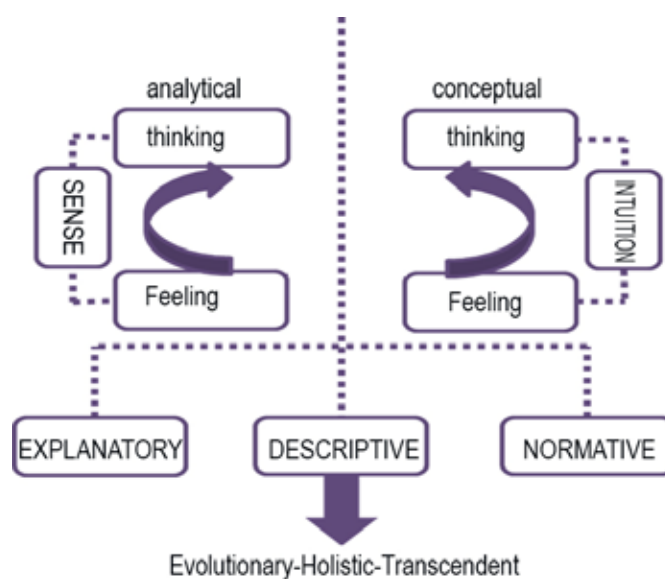


Fig. 6. Diagram of Prospective Approach to Landscape Aesthetics Author’s Sources. Source: authors.

humanistic (unconscious). Therefore, this paradigm and general theory provide insight into holistic, interdisciplinary, interchangeable and innovative experience in aesthetics which penetrates exactly between the common fields of theory of landscape designing and aesthetic experience. This general theory is able to address the integrated entity as the intersection of components and factors related to landscape. Therefore, this provides clear information for professionals on aesthetic criteria and they can achieve a more open view in judging the values to assess the quality and characteristic aesthetic. Finally, it should be mentioned that all the existing paradigms related to understanding and assessing landscape were proportional and homogeneous with the paradigms of aesthetics assessment in the environment. Therefore, this general theory and new paradigm in landscape aesthetic should be useful from experimental perspective such as understanding, evaluation, and assessment of the environment in terms of aesthetics, ecology and morality.

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