

Cultural and Governmental Policies in Clarifying the Aesthetic Values of Iranian Art and Literature of the First Pahlavi

Abstract

Adopted political structures and approaches play a central role in the quality of art and literature. The first Pahlavi era should be considered as a great and epoch-making transition in the contemporary history of Iran. It was during this age that the emergence of a huge intellectual and political movement known as modernization, initiated the beginning of the construction of modern Iran. Thus, the Shah and his statesmen, as the political and cultural leaders of this trend, were committed to drawing the policy of writers, poets and artists. The articulation of this idea, which was cast in the form of a hegemony, dictated the two ideas of Iranianism and modernism at the same time in a corresponding manner. Although these two ideas came from the constitutional and Qajar descent and even earlier than that, in the first Pahlavi era, due to major regional and global transformations and events, they were considered a completely emerging idea in a discourse cycle. The change in the expression style of the artists indicated this transformation; As a result, the atmosphere of authoritarian political culture did not create a favorable environment for artists, specifically for writers and poets. The creation of relative freedoms in culture and art production, the originality of perception and the promotion of taste in art and architecture based on the aesthetic values of ancient art and modernism, and the birth and achievement of valuable transhistoricity and artistic works can be considered among the achievements of this movement. The findings of this research, complied via the aid of library sources and following a historical-analytical method, conclude that Iranianism in its archaism approach and the powerful central government with its modernity-oriented approach are two reliable factors in the construction of Pahlavi art and literature.

Research aims:

1. Investigating cultural policies in the art and literature of the first Pahlavi age.

2. Understanding the role of cultural policies in explaining the aesthetic values of first Pahlavi art and literature.

Research questions:

1. What were the policies of culture policymakers to create aesthetic values of art and literature of the first Pahlavi period?
2. How and to what extent did the ideology of "Iranianism and modernism" influence the authoritarian construction of the first Pahlavi art and literature?

Introduction

The most concrete example of the imperious production of the art and literature of the first Pahlavi age can be seen and heard from the announcement of *Dwarkoob*, the first talkie film of Iran. This announcement, which according to its preachers is a good news for Iran-worshippers, together with the first dialogues of Lor's daughter, articulates the pleasant and troubled life of Iran during the first Pahlavi period. One of Reza Shah's extensive measures was the construction and reform of cultural and social institutions in line with political domination. The duty of these cultural institutions was to encourage the people towards ancient nationalism and modernization culture. A few decades later, these institutions became the source of artistic developments in Iran and marked the spread of modernism in art. Tehran School of Fine Arts is a relic of the most important and effective institution of change and evolution of the era. In this research, we intend to examine the concept of dictating the construction of art in the three fields of literature, architecture and cinema. Since these three mediums, along with the emerging technologies of that era, i.e. radio, newspapers, magazines and other media would provide more powerful grounds than other cultural media for the proliferation of ideas and propaganda of any government; moreover, they also bring stronger demonstrations to the fore in implementing the government's will and motivation, Reza Shah and his statesmen decided to use this opportunity to legitimize the royal system and create social order, in order to start their storm of reforms as quickly as possible; Therefore, the Pahlavi policymakers' idea of using powerful cultural tools was focused on these three ranges of art. However, in the meantime, architecture was more preferable for the government due to its inherent functionalist nature and also the more objective presentation of the Shah's glory and majesty, which could better and faster show the power of the king and the developments of the new order

of the country to the people; Therefore, the architectural developments in this era are very impressive. In the end, the present study is an attempt to answer the question, how was the idea of dictating the art and literature of the first Pahlavi era, which caused a change in the way of expression of artists, formed?

Thus far, many books and articles have been authored in regard to the diverse aspects of the first Pahlavi era, which were mostly in the field of political-social as well as economic-cultural history of that time. However, the current article can be considered an independent research that examines the authoritarian political culture and ideological speech of Reza Shah's government as the main core of creating art and forming the sublime of this period. Here, merely the imperative sources are mentioned, whose research topic was centered on art and in line with the present article. Among the Iranian researchers, one of the most documented and reliable sources, newly published and first-hand, is the book of “Visual Evolutions of Iranian Art” by Siamak Del Zandeh (2015). In parts of his systematic research, Del-Zandeh considers the category of antiquarianism in the first Pahlavi period and before that to be fundamentally separate due to the difference in the epistemic system, and the foundation of nationalism based on exhibition order, orientalism and antiquity. Hamid Kashmirashkan (2016) in his book “Excavations into Iran's Contemporary Art”, despite the fact that he did not use a specific methodology in his writing, while defining modern culture and its relationship with Iran's political and cultural characteristics and nationalism, the historical backgrounds of the formation of artistic developments of the era are expressed in detail.

The book “Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran” written by Mohammad Reza Moridi (2017) answers the question of how power systems guide the “ups and downs” of artistic currents; in this book, the author whilst following a discourse analysis approach is looking for the fields of text production. He sees nationalism as an ideology in the first Pahlavi and defines the cultural discourse elements of the first Pahlavi in the triad of archaism, anti-Islamism and Westernism. The influence of nationalism discourse on literature, the duality of modernism, archeological idealism, archeology is among the other detailed topics of this book. The book “Cultivating Popular Taste in the Pahlavi Era” written by Ali Qalipour (1992) is about the origin of the idea of educating the nation and cultivating its taste among the statesmen and intellectuals of the first Pahlavi era. This book examines the cultural politics of the Pahlavi era, especially in the field of theater, cinema, and television, and analyzes the current viewpoints and debates among politicians and agents in

the field of culture, managers, artists, and intellectuals; furthermore, the book has a critical approach to the guardian and educational culture of its time.

The approach of the current research in terms of approach (viewpoint) is discourse analysis. In other words, in this methodology, institutions that generate meaning and reproduce the discourse are in the center of attention; Therefore, the fields of text production and the relationship between text, power and ideology are significant. On the other hand, in terms of examining the scope of the research, this article is among interdisciplinary and qualitative researches; furthermore, according to the nature of the investigated data, this research follows a historical-analytical method. The collection of materials is also in the form of library studies.

Conclusion

In response to this question, what conclusions can be drawn from the role of intellectual and governmental currents in the creation of Pahlavi art and literature? It should be said that the idea of creating a command of art and literature in the first Pahlavi era was an idea at times aligned and shared with artists and other times not. The change in the expression style of artists is a proof of this claim. Although the seed of this idea was planted in the era of constitutionalism; its birth took place during the great modernization process. This birth was in fact the commence of a new Iran that Reza Shah had promised; as he created a society comprised of intellectuals and politicians who were the founders of fundamental reforms in the society. These were the architects who used all their political power to build social discipline and modern culture. The general characteristic of this culture can be summed up in nationalism, moralism, modernism combined with skepticism, in addition to the nostalgic romantic sensation of the past. To publish and spread this new culture, the central government used the technology of propagation of ideas such as radio, cinema, newspapers, and publications, as well as the arts that had strong manifestations in displaying the glory and greatness of the royal government. Among these arts, architecture was more important to the government than other arts since architecture, due to its intrinsic property of functional orientation and its visible possibility as a manifestation of modernization, could be better and more displayed in urban spaces and among the people, and easily exhibit the ideas and notions of the first Pahlavi statesmen. Also, architecture provided a faster possibility for government demonstrations and all relatable actions had strong and centralized government support. These measures were carried out in line with the modernization of Iran and through the ruling ideological

institutions. Creating relative freedoms in expressing opinions and producing works of art, creating originality of taste and promoting public taste, and finally producing very valuable works of art, were all valuable achievements of the government, which were carried out through the implementation of the dictating policies of its educated and scholarly officials; achievements that were especially based on the thought of archaism and modernism. Finally, in the following years, these actions laid the groundwork for the so-called modern movement and the strengthening of the aesthetic sense among artists and even the public during the second Pahlavi era. The art association known as Khorosjangi was the first consequence of this great movement. All in all, it can be considered that Reza Shah's government, with its authoritarian political culture and ideological speech, created a noble cause and cultivated taste in public culture and in a relatively free atmosphere and left an acceptable record. Although this government did not succeed in creating a free space for artists, especially writers and journalists; However, we should not lose sight of the fact that the world and the region at the beginning of this century were in chaos and fragmentation as a result of the Second World War, which necessitated the hegemony of the nascent states in the extremes of the world.

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