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A Comparative-Adaptive Study about the Meaning of Center According to Isfahan School and Heidegger’s Thought

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Abstract

The creation and configuration of the universe depends on the imagination of a “Journey” in the existence realms. This journey contains Source/Beginning, Direction, and the Destination which can make the main structure of the existence to organize the “place”. Using this cosmetic place, there will be a place created for the “life’s flow”; the life in which people experience the existence. Accepting these ideas, one can argue that “place” as “center” is rooted in the philosophy of being.

Both Isfahan school of thought and Heidegger, separately, introduce some basic ideas according to the concept of “Existence/Existing” from which we come up with scope of the co-existence among the concepts of “universe”, “place”, “life”, and “center”.

In this article, referring to the above mentioned ideas, we will try to find out what would the real meaning of the center be. This task leads to the using of the hermeneutic in an adaptive approach in terms of research method, although structure basics are rooted in the realm of Logical reasoning.

The subjects that will be considered in this article will adapt the grounded ontological points of views in both schools which interpret universe, human being, and the world. Based on the findings from these considerations we will search for the meaning of center in those areas.

The findings of this research can help us to have the clearer understanding of the concept of the meaning of center in a historical realm which will lead to a better understanding of this concept in our time. Knowing this aspect, the meaning of center from an ontological scope to the biological one can be transformed.

Keywords

Isfahan school of thought, Phenomenology, Meaning of center, Ontology of Place, Existence/Existing.

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Introduction and problem statement

Discussing the center depends on the two concepts of “the world and the man”; the concepts that refer to fundamental questions about the “quiddity” of the source and destination of history. Answering these questions can significantly guide the man and world to the path of life – in the world (Maddadpour, 1992: 23). In the history of the West, the world of myth, philosophy and religion have attempted to answer these questions ontologically according to their worldviews. These worldviews believe that the world and human being belong to a single source and the human beings are moving toward a defined destination (Zamiran, 2000: 117-120). They think that the structural elements in arrangement of the place in the world are defined as the source / direction / destination. In this definition, the destination is a center for gathering and presence of things and the direction is a path for transition in between the source and destination.

By the establishment of “the world of science” in the contemporary history of the West, the attitude toward “world and man” changed from continuity to fragmentation in which the source was ignored and the route in between was conceived as the foundation. The place that has arisen from this viewpoint changed the central position of destination and degraded it to the concept of a node due to consideration of the direction as the foundation. The nodes along the direction did not indicate the placeability of the center and disregarded its past historical values. These aspects led to world-lessness of place and man and contributed to the meaninglessness of place for human life (Sennet, 1990: 41-62).

The philosophy of phenomenology¹ was a reaction to the scientific world and the scientific worldview where the profound meanings of the world and human being was degraded and mutualized to the concepts of “subject” and “object”. Hence their spiritual aspects were ignored due to their source and destination (Ahmadi, 1994: 57 & 95).

In return, “Heidegger’s” phenomenological ontology, aimed at providing the foundation of today’s

foundation of the man and universe and the past’s foundation of the world and man , in a historical approach, in order to use it as a “pre-understanding” for further “understanding” of the current crisis. His foundations consider an existential aspect for all beings. Accordingly, the crisis roots in contemporary architecture and urbanism in general as well as crisis roots in their central fields in practical can be understood by referring to these foundations.

According to Isfahan school of thought², although the center rediscovers its meaning on the basis of the “source / direction / destination” in relation to fundamental questions of the world and human being, it is significantly different from the worldview in the history of the West. The school aims to combine the world of myth in ancient Persia with the world of philosophy in Greece - whose philosophers are both peripatetic and illuminationist- on the basis of the world of religion and mysticism.

According to these schools, the world and the human beings are included in the pervasive concept of “unity of existence”⁵. They believe that the source of all diversities in the world is a unique source.

The utopia in Isfahan school is derived from this ideology. All centers of this utopia at any scale (from micro to micro) are structured based on “source/direction/ destination”. Such a structure puts people in certain relation to the things, so that they can experience the ontological aspects of their lives. These relations are neglected in contemporary urbanism in the country following the emergence of urbanism structure in the West.

The overall objective of this research is to achieve a sense of ontological meaning of center in the whole ideas of thinkers of Isfahan school and Heidegger. Adaptation of Isfahan’s ontological wisdom, mystic, religious and philosophical structure and Heidegger’s ontological philosophic structure about the center can be carried out through a comparative-adaptive study. They are similar in structural attitudes toward being/existence; however, different in context and time. These aspects can be reread through a comparative-adaptive approach that refers to the existence and

existing, the world and man as well as temporality and historicity.

What is the structure from which the center achieves a meaning in an ontological approach? What relation does it have with the place and life?

Basically, it is hypnotized that the ontological approach is a structural approach to the universe. Therefore, this approach tries to offer a meaningful interpretation for inhabitation in the universe through living in place.

The results of this study provide an approach in developing a conceptual model based on combination of thoughts about the world, place and life. Concentrating on this aspect can reveal the existential meaning of the center. The topics addressed in this article reflect the meaning of center based on the foundations and structures which finally address three scopes for coming to the conclusion.

Theoretical foundations

Theoretical foundations are based on four fundamental concepts of totality, integrity context and time. The concepts of Isfahan School of thought and Heidegger's ideas offer semantic features of the center in three interconnected concepts of the "world", "place" and "life" in an ontological approach.

Discussion of the center and its ontological meaning roots in the worldwide mythical, religious/mystical and philosophical beliefs. These meanings are understood based on "creation nature" in mythical and religious / mystical ideologies; a nature that believes in totality of things that spring from unique being. However, the center and its meaning in the ontological philosophy are considered based on the language of "universality" composed of components arranged by the center structure. These two approaches contribute to the study literature on the meaning of center up to day.

Isfahan school of thought discusses the order derived from the creation nature and "multiplicity" in terms of "unity of existence". "Habibi" (1998) presents the order of nature in relation to place in architecture

and urbanism as "presenting the existing -in- the existence". Alexander (2014) and Arnheim (1982) have established their viewpoints in arrangement of the environment based on the concept of "totality". They believe that totality is closely related to structure and center and the universe has come to discipline in totality according to this point of view.

Today, the literature on the ontological meaning of the center is oriented towards "nature of life" or life. The meaning of place or center in the ontological philosophies of Isfahan school is presented as the concept of "existing – to - being" and based on Heidegger's fundamental concept of "being – in world". These fundamental concepts consider the philosophy of place / center as existential relation of human beings to things for life excellence and perfection. "Habibi and Maghsoudi" believe that the center at any scale of place is a space for the emergence and participation of civil life where the life events take place (Habibi & Maghsoudi, 2005: 13). Bollonow also considers the center as a place for experiencing life.

This study tries to reread the concept of center based on the discussed literature in order to integrate the ontological ideas of Isfahan school of thought and Heidegger's ideas which will provide a historical aspect in this study.

Research Methodology

The overall structure of the research is categorized as interpretative in terms of methodology. In this approach, a systematic review of the sources for systematic interpretation of qualitative information is pursued. Thus, it can be regarded as interpretative meta-synthesis method. Fundamental concepts of this research are characterized in logical reasoning owing to their meta-physical nature of foundations. They are formed on the basis of principles out of which some reasonable and necessary results are obtained (Groat & Wang, 2003: 309).

The interpretative field is described in "structuralism" paradigm and based upon interpretation and deduction. Heidegger believes that understanding

is an aspect of existential context that has a historical and meta-historical origin. This origin as a pre-understanding aspect shapes our present understanding (Heidegger et al, 2012:102-104). Schleiermacher believes in hermeneutics as “the art of understanding”. However, Heidegger does not consider hermeneutics as a method and thinks of as a reflection in the philosophy of ontological foundations and explanation of principles conditions (Norouzitalab, 2007: 80).

In general, this study seeks to study the two ideas with an adaptive-comparative approach. This approach does not merely focus on similarities and studies the differences as well. These similarities and differences make sense with respect to a common idea³ (Corbin, 2013: 67).

Foundations⁴

A. Isfahan school of thought

The ideas in Isfahan school revolve around the fundamental concept of “totality” over “being” and stated in the phrase “He is all things and all things are him”. This idea is revealed based on “the discovery of existence”. The discovery of existence is a steady search on movement and direction in the world to seek existence. Therefore, this search is directed according to exoteric (zahir) and esoteric (Batin) concepts. In these directions, the existence is discovered in two statuses:

1. Existence in exoteric status

In this point of view, existence is a movement into

the microcosm of man (the world of introversive) that begins from its physical existence and moves toward its spiritual center. Here, we face the world that lives in us.

2. Existence in esoteric status

In this point of view, existence is the incarnation of all and considered a movement from earth to the divine skies (the extroversive world). There, we face the world in which we live (Ardalan & Bakhtiar, 2001: 11).

Man can perceive the origin and nature source of all creatures by seeking in the realms of human existence and accepts the universe as the manifestation of existence. Mulla Sadra uses the concept of “totality” in the so-called “unity of existence”. In his view, the creatures are nothing but the real light in substantive existence. Existence has different levels from multiplicity to unity (Bolkharighahi, 2004: 258-259). Mulla Sadra used the term “unity of existence” as a result of his four spiritual and intuitional journeys of intellect. The journeys provide the man with a vision based on his existential level in his ascending or descending movement. The journeys are directed from source to the direction and destination and reveal the association of all beings to the existence (Ibid: 251-253).

According to “Corbin” these journeys between the source and destination are derived from soteriology and eschatology in this (Isfahan) school of thought. These principles offer a source, direction and destination guided by prophecy and Imamat without perversion or injustice (Corbin, 1994: 41-109); (Fig. 1).

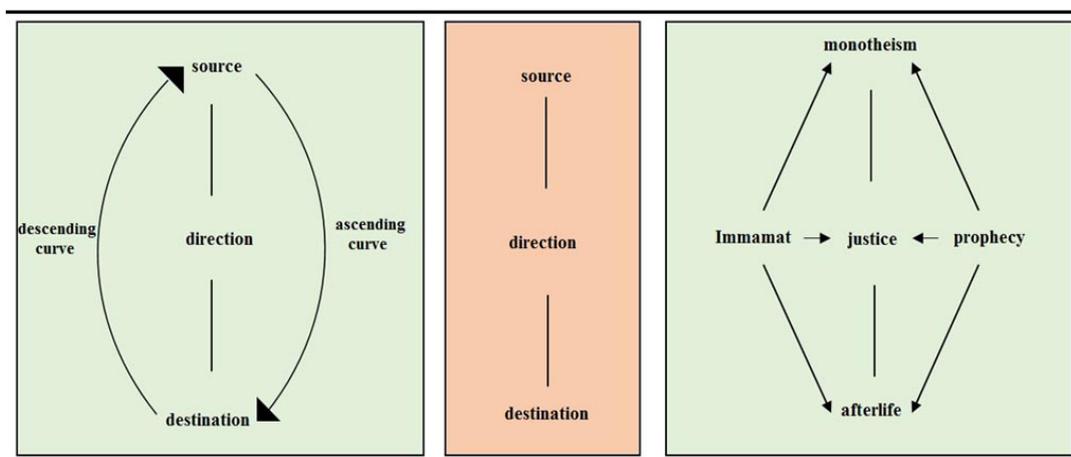


Fig. 1. Fundamental principals in Isfahan school and their relation in existential structure. Source: authors.

According to Isfahan school of thought, the existential journeys does not occur only in the universe; but, all aspects of human existence with the levels of the world existence are connected with their corresponding levels based on the principles of “unity”.

According to “Shaykh - e Bahaei”, man is defined in body, spirit and soul. The spirit is an exoteric power which empowers human life and includes intellect and sensuality. On the word of Mulla Sadra transcendent philosophy, the human in existential, sensual and spiritual levels relate to the existential worlds including material world, firmament world, intelligible world and the divine world. These existential worlds stand for the presence of body and soul. Mir Damad believes the essence of human nature and the two worlds is intertwined and humans have both body and soul essences. He is the macrocosm and the microcosm.

But, how is time interpreted in relation to existential worlds?

“Ala ud-Daula Simnani” has interpreted time into: “exoteric” that is in the “introversive” world and “esoteric” that is in “extroversive” world. He believes “being” roots in existing and the existential world obtains it from the absolute world (Nasr, 2006: 435-436). Considering the concept of time, Mulla Adra conceives of being as a meaningful position that evolves until perfection. He analogizes this concept to wearing new clothes on the old clothes – without taking the previous ones off (Sharif, 2010: 487). The realization of this kind of “being” depends on journey to introversive and extroversive in order to discover and experience the existence spiritually and physically. This existential experience reflects meanings such as life, vitality, self-consciousness, absolute existence, creatures’ existence and the source of universe (Nasr, 2013: 181-186).

Heidegger

Ontologically, Heidegger’s philosophy is founded on the attempt to introduce human and the world based on “totality” of existence in order to provide essential

meaningful equipment in relation to creatures.

In his primary philosophy presented in the book “Being and Time”, the concept of the totality is combined with things in three areas:

- The intertwining of existence and existing as a meaningful totality.
- The intertwining of man and world as an assembled totality.
- The intertwining of man and time as an evolving totality.

“Being” and discovering being is highlighted in the early Heidegger’s philosophy. The most significant being is introduced as “Dasein”. “Dasein” defines how a man lives. Dasein is a man who understands his being – in all statuses, positions and conditions.

He believes the discovery of being is enlightened by being in time. Dasein (man) is the direction to being. Thus, the universe is progressive, transgressive and out-of-itself. He believes these processes are dependent on movement. Time obtains meaning and things obtain their fullest essence through this movement. He indicates that movement is founded in the essence of existence. The essence in total connects all beings (creatures) with each other (Ahmadi, 2011: 245-246).

Based on Heidegger’s notions, Dasein (man) understands that fact that creatures appear on the horizon of being. The creatures are manifestation of existence. He discovers its source and destination on this horizon. Thus he becomes both the direction and the viator.

The intertwining of man and the world is also the initiator of discussion in Heidegger’s Being and Time. His first statement indicates that there exists a being in the world. In other words, man exists in the world and the world is evident and present to him. This implies the openness of the two as an intertwined and interconnected whole which reveals two viewpoints in Heidegger’s thoughts:

- Firstly; due to intertwining of man and his affiliations to the world, he has been able to aggregate and reach the things together intrinsically (Rashidiyan, 2010: 140-141).

• Secondly; the interweaving of man and the world offers historicity for both. What is meant by historicity is being founded in the past or being rooted in history. Historicity of man and the world is achieved both by their openness together and their affiliation to existence as a source which is the origin and foundation of all things.

Heidegger considers the intertwining of man and time as the horizons of out-of-selfness of Dasein (man). He believes the entity of timing and temporality is due to the unity of out-of-selfness. Being is out-of-selfness and out-going-of-itself. The past, present and future are the horizons of out-of-selfness in totality (Heidegger, 2000: 695). According to Heidegger, the past is not lost but transited to the present. The past and the future exist in the present. In his viewpoint, the time should be considered as a manifestation of existence (Jamadi, 2013: 514-518).

“Tuan” privileges time over place in Heidegger’s philosophy because time is primarily experienced and understood in continuity of Dasein (man), while the place is later created through the coexistence of human and natural phenomena. Hence Heidegger’s latter philosophy is oriented toward place.

In general, Heidegger’s discovery of being – in contrast to Isfahan school of thought – is not developed in an existential world, but in moving through the existential world. The totality of existence is revealed through Dasein (man). This discovery unlike Isfahan school – that is based upon the three physical, sensual and spiritual aspects – is merely achieved by body and mind.

A. Structures⁶

Regarding Heidegger’s philosophy and Isfahan school of thought, the signifying structures of central region are categorized in three concepts of “world”, “place” and “life” as follows,

World

The world is a magnificent book, composed by being and summoned to be read by man. Reading of it begins with man’s journey within this book. He

realizes that the things and he are manifestations and representatives of being to which they belong. In such ambience, the world is perceived and imaginations and thoughts are created. In other words, one realizes that all beings exist owing to one being. Therefore, all beings are interconnected and based upon a united essence in terms of structure.

The earth and sky, the man and the world and all things are structured by a unique thing; they are the world. The world has a foundation of being. Mulla Sadra defines the world on the basis of his four journeys of intellect in unity of existence. According to Isfahan school of thought, man has the existential world within himself which allows him to assemble things in the world.

Heidegger also believes that affiliation of man to world characterizes approachability (avoiding distance), replacement and assembling in man. Heidegger describes the world in his fourfold philosophy comprising the earth, the sky, the mortals and immortals. Being is defined in the fourfold and the fourfold are united based on their essence of existence (Jamadi, 2013: 641).

The world is perceivable in Isfahan school and Heidegger’s philosophy. The number four replicates the world to four concepts of “totality”, “integrity”, “order” and “perfection”.

Place

A man pictures his world by making it. Here, picturing means embodiment of the world in terms of place based on imagination and thought. Such imagination and thought tries to structuralize the place with reference to the existential elements of journey (source, direction and destination). This structure directs and defines place. In other words, this structure settles the place on earth and directs it to the sky. Thereby, the place contains a qualitative aspect (Ardalan & Bakhtiyar, 2001: 110).

In this case, the space is an extension to the worldview and embodies the spirit of place; an extension that completes and assembles or defines. Therefore, it is necessary that the place find the elements in

between the earth and the sky in order for having a direction and meaning. Rotenberg considers a place as a location where there is significant meaningful elements (Medghalchi, et al, 2014: 28).

“Habibi” refers to place as “presentation of existence – in – the existing” in urbanism and architecture. This representation is an expression of truth in reality. A place that is configured through this representation is a work of art or a masterpiece that cradles a latent world to a vivid one based upon general eternal and infinite principles. He also introduces certain principles (confirmation, multiplicity, unity, etc.) in configuration of place. Combined together, these principles create the grammar of place in Isfahan school (Habibi, 1998: 51-53).

These principles are embodied by referring form fundamentals to various factors such as material, geometry, form, figures, motifs and light. “Ardalan and Bakhtiyar” believe that forms are the realization of concepts descended in a journey from the perfection world to the material world. Forms are symbols of eternal space and reflect a sense of place (Ardalan & Bakhtiyar, 2001: 60-68). As perceived by Nasr, forms indicate cognition and allow man to travel beyond reality (Nasr, 2013: 393).

According to Heidegger – in discovering the truth – a place reveals a universal time that is configured in the height between the earth and the sky. In this viewpoint, place conceals a truth and locates it on earth as a work of art. He believes that the earth is a place for revealing the truth from suppression (Jamadi, 2013: 934-936).

In the late philosophy – in discovering the world – Heidegger introduced the place as meeting of the fourfold and indicated it as a historical event (Ahmadi, 2012: 458). He believes that being requires place for being. At the same time, place requires being for compiling things⁷. He considers the essence of place in making for living (dwelling) (Heidegger, et al, 2013: 61 & 62). Things are connected and linked together upon a unique essence by dwelling in place. This connection always entrusts - a meaningful - world in the place (Myers, 2016: 1). Interpreting the Heidegger’s ideas in architecture,

«Schulz” considers architecture as a provider of world and supplier of meaning (Schulz, 1998: 261). He believes in meaningfulness of existential elements (domain8 / direction / destination) in deposition of the world in place. This view defines and gives existence to the place and the man in place. Defining meaningful places, he summarizes the architecture language in three main words (Schulz, 2003: 112).

• **Topology**

Schulz uses to this term when referring to earth and sky. Having combined these two, four perspectives (cosmic, Classical, Romantic and hybrid) are configured who each owe a special spirit of place as a landscape (Schulz, 2009: 66-73 & 44).

• **Typology**

Schulz believes architecture springs from fundamental forms and shapes, presenting the truth and unity. Architecture offers meaning and presence to the world by the way it stands between the earth and sky in the mentioned perspectives.

• **Morphology**

This term addresses the combination of built and natural environment which represent a world in the Erath and sky.

Overall, the place receives meaning from the existential world and by building and dwelling on earth, under the sky. This dwelling is worth it for the world becomes sensible in and with it, and it turns in to a place to live. This aspect is derived from a structural approach to being and entrust a rather similar definition to the “work” in Heidegger’s and Isfahan school viewpoints. This work reproduces the world and reflects the “presentation of existence – in – the existing” or “manifestation of the truth in reality”. In addition, the concept of context as the earth and the sky are considered the common core in Heidegger’s and Isfahan school viewpoints to predispose a world in place; a world that vividly exposes the truth.

A. Life

Life deals with the concept of “lived experience”. Hossein Nasr discusses the existential experience of things according to Isfahan school and body wisdom

in terms of affiliation to the nature and the universe. He indicates that the human body is adapted to the universe; not only in the formation of the elements, but also in duplicating it as a small replica. Therefore, our affiliation to things springs from the profound inner feeling that connects all things and elements together (Nasr, 2013: 305-313).

As indicated life is a foundation of movements in existential journeys that espouse man with excellence and completion based on the being-to-becoming process. Hence, life is repeatedly openings of the world and opening up to horizons. In this case, events that occur “there” are consistently renewed and filled with imagination, knowledge, joy and peace. Mulla Sadra suggests this event in existential journeys takes place when the existence level fits the presence level. The more is his being present, the more he benefits from other worlds (Corbin, 2014:505-506).

The lived experience is defined differently by Heidegger. He indicates that we obtain experience from living in being. In his view, the quality of perceived emotion is also important in this experience (Ahmadi, 2012: 336-337). Heidegger intertwines life with the concepts of “freedom” and “redemption”. In his opinion, freedom occurs to the degree that we are in the world. This freedom means being in peace and dwelling in world. Living in freedom preserves the essence of things. He believes freedom leads us to contemplation and constant questioning in life (Heidegger, 2011: 492). He also defined redemption as “respecting being”. He believes redemption is a genius attempt to respect the openness of the world, so that the world becomes the world and remains the world (Ibid: 496-498). When spoken of the world, he uses three terms of “making”, “being” and “thinking”. In his view, this indicates the right living in the world. In general, a place in which a world is opened reflects spaces in existential experience of man with things and generates profound meanings. This existential experience creates life and bestows meaning, value and depth upon life; an experience that is founded in movement and shaped in the fourfold. This aspect differentiates the two viewpoints in movement

foundation despite their similarities in defining the meaning of life.

• Meanings

According to foundations and structures, the meaning of center is arguable in three fields.

• Meaning of center in the scope of world

In this scope, the world is founded in being and the creatures are the source of being. Therefore, the creatures are structured from a united essence and assembled around its horizon and encompass it.

Referring to center in the world as the foundation and structure of being is perceivable through a part of being called “united and multiple”. In other words, whenever a unique being unites multiple ones, it can be entitled as the center.

Spiraling of creatures around being turns the world into a system through motivating centrality in two different viewpoints (Fig. 2):



Fig. 2. The center in unifying position. Source: www.tebyan.net

In phenomenologists' point of view

“Karl Jaspers” believes that being is manifested in its circular essence; in a center and its surrounding circle (Schulz, 2014: 23). Gaston Bachelard also notes in his Poetics of Space that being is circular and the world is configured around the round being (Bachelard, 2011: 284-285).

In Isfahan school's point of view

According to Isfahan school being is still, motivating,

complete and dimensionless. Spinning of creatures around being stimulates spirit and soul (movement) in them, so they can evolve through this movement. In such a case, the world turns in to a circle in spinning around the being.

Arnheim believes the world is configured through a centrality that radiates energy into their environment and creates connection, completion and assembly (Arenheim, 1982:3-6). Alexander also directs that world is a total whole invigorated by an authoritative center. According to him, the living and interconnected entities are always in need of center (Alexander, 2015: 63 & 68 & 69).

The meaning of center in the world is disciplinary (assembling, connecting), enlivening, identifying and completing.

• **Meaning of center in the scope of place**

In this scope, place and center are founded and structured based on unifying of the fourfold. In Isfahan school of thought, place is the location for assembly

and dwelling of the fourfold (people, religion, government and types).

Place can open a location is space for unifying the fourfold in a center. Hence, the center turns into a destination for those who enter from the source (dwelling fields) in order to approach the destination. The fourfold has assembled the relative activities in space and arrange them based on horizontal and vertical axis and reciprocal play of the earth and sky for opening a world of meaning in accordance to presence and profound connection of things.

Alike Heidegger's ideas, Isfahan school believes that place is founded and structured based on the fourfold. In addition, the center opens a space in place by unifying the fourfold (Heidegger et al, 2012:62); (Fig. 3).

Hence, the buildings of this fourfold, leaning on earth and standing up to the sky, link the earth to the sky (Gods). This creates a world of meaning on the basis of the clear truth and connection in things.



Fig. 3. The fourfold reciprocal play in center. Source: www.isna.ir

This aspect of Heidegger's thoughts about the sky –polytheism - is distinctly different from Isfahan school. The center as a place in these two categories is defined in middle of things, not as an intermediate space that relates between things. In addition to being in middle of the earth and sky, the center in Isfahan school is located between the old and new city to interconnect the separate parts as a whole and manifest presence (Aghabozorg & Motedayen, 2013: 27). Accessing the destination (center) requires movement, exertion and exploration. Heidegger believes that a way is a metaphor of a journey. Thus, man is always in the way. Man has continuous seeking relation to being (Ahmadi, 2011: 460). A way is not confined to a route that simply connects two points (source and destination) but it indicates going, moving and seeking (Barati & Zarringalam, 2013: 104). In this path, movement and tolerance is required to reach the destination (center).

Quoting Eliade, Schulz asserts that the center is a purpose achieved after an intolerable journey. Reaching the center is bestowed upon a special level (Schulz, 2014: 2). Montgomery refers to medieval centers in his "Happy city" whose religious elements direct the looks from the earth to the sky. As "Richard Sennett" has written, this path leads to heaven. Achieving it requires the tolerance of pain (Montgomery, 2013: 25); (Fig. 4).

Overall, the meaning of center in place is motivating, connecting and identifying.

Meaning of center in the scope of life

In this scope, the center is founded in the midst of the earth and sky and based on an existential experiment. Man is constituent of elements configured between sky and earth. Hence, his life is embodied from biological to ontological between sky and earth.

As perceived by Mulla Sadra, man is created by the



Fig. 4. Reaching a specific level in destination. Source: www.tebyan.net

mid love which urges man to contemplate and pray in the midst of things (Emamijome, 2009: 105-107). This is possible when the reciprocal spaces of the center are configured in between the earth and sky. In this case, man is faced with an existential fourfold following relations;

- The relation of man with himself in order to reflect
- The relation of man with society in order to interact
- The relation of man with God in order to evolve and progress
- The relation of man to environment (it constituting elements) in order to influence.

In this case, the man is related to his existential aspects and obtains an existential experience in a place such as a center. Having experienced the being, man turns from an observer to and addressee and intertwines with the world of the product and unifies with things.

According to Heidegger the product is configured in entanglement of the earth and the world. This product allows man to live and dwell in it. Things come to presence in thus world and take place – self-show⁹– by observance and acceptance. Alike Isfahan school, the space provides a center for connection of the fourfold.

Heidegger believes that in there is a being in this connection which one sees, asks (dialogue), thinks, understands and acts (behaves). They are laid in one direction and one foundation in terms of their essence. He asserts that man being is not apart from his being-being (Ahmadi, 2012: 335-338). This sets an ontological experience of life in human physical body and ignores the spiritual aspects – despite Isfahan school of thought.

Interpreting the phenomenological being of center, Bollonow suggests that center is a place where a spirited man can settle; a place where he contemplates and experiences space (Schulz, 2005: 33). He addresses the lived experience in housing and settlements. In his view, in the sum of these two spaces -in terms of center- different forms of human life are created (Bollonow, 1961: 2).

These experiences define life and make it memorable. Life is a collection of memories whose review and remembrance can reposition man in life and perpetuates and continues to it by commitment to it.

Center in the field of life, rediscovers its profound meaning as a space for the existential experience with respect to its relation to things-in form of events.

Conclusion

According to what has been stated above, the following is presented as a summary and conclusions. In general, the ontological approach is a structural approach to being which can be perceived according to two movements;

- Firstly, a movement from to exoteric (zahir) to esoteric (Batin) that considers the phenomenal multiplicity of things in the world based on unity from the unique truth within.
- Secondly, a movement from inside out to reveal the truth.

The two movements configure the foundation of the world and the place based on the center, for an existential life.

The existential world is created based on a language (principles) which harmonizes the world, man and place and offers them foundations and meaning (Table1).

Table 1. Principles of giving meaning to things in the world. Source: authors.

Principles for giving meaning to things in the world	world
Totality/ Integrity / Time / Context	

Revealing the truth requires language; a language that can depict the imaginary world in the real world. This aspect of language is dependent on the allegorical language and the language and being can be expressed in this place (Table 2).

Life is exemplified on the basis of profound connection between man and the things and thereby place is created. In this experience, man can express his inmost existential feelings in the form of poetry (Table 3).

Table 2. Language clarifying the truth in places. Source: authors.

Language of clarifying truth in place	place
Morphology / Localology / Typology / Topology	

Table 3. On the basis of life experience. Source: authors.

Existential experience of life in terms of presence	life
Reflect/ Interact/ Evolve/ Influence/	

Having combined the data presented in the above tables, the meaning of existential center can be perceived based on the world, place and life. According to ontological approach, center is the existential foundation and the existential core of things (Fig. 5)

In the above picture, the existential center is the core of world and place which takes delivery of “meaning” through language principles in relating to world; and reveals itself by “presence” through language in relation to place. Providing and revealing the truth of world in place results in meeting and acceptance of existence and the existing through which they can experience an existential life in “relation” with each other¹⁰.

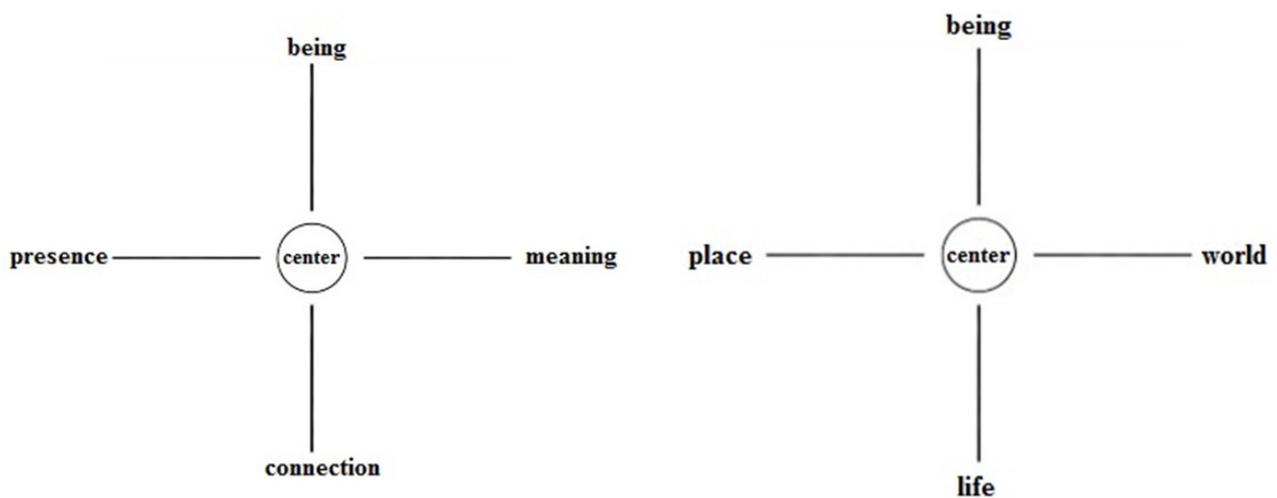


Fig. 5. The existential meaning of center, world and life according to structural approach. Source: authors.

Endnote

1. The Phenomenological philosophy includes epistemology and ontology. Epistemology was suggested by Edmund Husserl and ontology was followed by Martin Heidegger. The pure being is the most important goal sought in Heidegger's ontology. For further information, refer to by Jamadi, 2006.
2. Isfahan school of thought was first coined in 1972 by Henry Corbin, the French Islam philosopher. This term is conventionally used by others including Hossein Nasr. For further information refer to Nasr, 2006.
3. Henry Corbin's considers his method as phenomenological in his spiritual-philosophical works. In 1978, he discovered the relation of Heidegger's thinking illuminationism wisdom and their interrelated aspects. He believes he provided a foundation for a new method to study spiritual philosophy by transition from Heidegger and his phenomenology to illuminationism wisdom and mystic interpretation and linking phenomenology and mystic interpretation. He used this method in investigating Isfahan school of thought and finally considered phenomenology the same as interpretation; because the implicit and explicit and the overt and covert are associated with phenomenology. For further information refer to Corbin, 2014.
4. Foundations are determinatives in which the understanding of all creatures presented in this paper are presented. These foundations root in metaphysics and categorized as logical reasoning. This part offers a system in which the interconnected beliefs about "world and human" and "source, direction and destination" can be discussed. For further information refer to "Architectural Research Methods" by Linda Groat and David Wand, University of Tehran publications.
5. According to Mulla Sadra, the four spiritual and intuitional journeys of intellect in the route between the source and destination are as follows:
 - Journey from this world to God
 - Journey in God with God
 - Journey from God to this world
 - Journey in this world with God
 He describes these journeys according to his mystic experience as:
 The first journey is a direction from introversive to extroversive
 The second journey is contemplation in existence and truth
 The third journey reveals the unity of God and his offering of multiplicity
 In the fourth journey, the seeker, aware of creatures and effects comes to a recognition that everything as a unified whole reflects the ontological unity of the divine and a desire to return to it. For further information refer to Bolkharihahi, 2004.
6. World, places and life are meaningful when associated with "existence". The structure in here is "existential relation" or "chaining with existence".
7. According to Heidegger a "thing" is the play of the fourfold (earth, sky, mortals and immortals). A thing is meaningful in its four worlds upon which their profound connection is created. Norberg Schulz discovers a thing in "compiling" and considers things as compilation of a world. For further information refer to Heidegger, et al, 2013. Domain in Schulz' view is equivalent to source in Isfahan school of thought
8. As Mulla Sadra believes, since existence is unity in multiplicity and multiplicity in unity, rational divisions and differences in existence are normal; however, it is inherently indivisible at the same time such as unique and multiple, old and current, active and passive. For further information refer to Sharif, 2010.
9. Self-showing phenomenon is an existential phenomenon. It is the ultimate obvious horizon defining the world. The self-showing phenomenon is the fourfold, alike a massive explosion whose radiations prevail in four directions. Heidegger perceives the being in a fourfold phenomenon. For further information refer to the following books:
 Ahmadi, 1994.
 Jamadi, 2006.
10. Within this unity, the center delivers the truth of things in a visual connection. This approach is very distinct from the approaches that consider the truth in a predicative - conformity of thought with reality- system and confine the meaning to linguistic and semiotics – that depends on absence- in a structural approach.

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