ARCHITECTURAL FORM AND MEANING
IN LIGHT OF
AL JURJANI'S LITERARY THEORIES

by

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Architectural Form and Meaning in Light of Al Jurjani's Literary Theory.

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Abstract:

This thesis is an application of Al Jurjani's -a Persian scholar- literary theories as a method for the critical analysis of architectural meaning. The study is based on the understanding of architecture as a mode of communication, and aimed at examining architectural meaning in general, and the metaphorical content in particular. The process is initiated by studying the literary theories of Al Jurjani. It is followed by investigating the analogies between literature and architecture, and establishing a foundation for the analogy proposed by this thesis. The application of Al Jurjani's theories is manifested and examined through the analysis of the case study: Sultan Hasan complex in Cairo. The analysis is mainly concerned with the meanings conveyed by the building, and the different means by which they are achieved. The specific case study leads to a more general scope of issues concerning architectural meaning which are presented in the conclusion.

Thesis supervisor: Stanford Anderson
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER ONE</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;Al Jurjani's Theories of Construction and Metaphor&quot;</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Arabic literature pre-Al Jurjani</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Biographical notes on Al Jurjani</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Al Jurjani's theory of construction</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Theory of metaphor</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>CHAPTER TWO</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>&quot;The Application of Al Jurjani's Theories as a Method for the Analysis of Architectural Meaning&quot;</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. The analogy between literature and architecture</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The approach and intent of the analysis</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Case Study: Complex of Sultan Hasan, Cairo</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. The Mamluks</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Sultan Hasan, &quot;The Founder&quot;</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. The complex of Sultan Hasan</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The analysis of Sultan Hasan complex</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bibliography</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
Form and Content:

"Although architecture does not imitate the external world, it attaches itself to this world through our experience or our knowledge of buildings.

All the brute facts of construction, all our perception of gravity, and all our disposition towards spatial enclosure are "humanized" and become the sign of other things." (1)

The duality of form and content is one of the most disputed and long lasting issues in the arena of architectural thought. However, it is not exclusive to architecture; it has dominated philosophical thoughts concerned with all domains of art. Similarly, the duality of word and meaning has dominated the theories, studies, and thoughts of linguists throughout the years. It has always contributed to the parallel dispute in art and architecture.

Among the theories developed around this issue were those on the construction of literary work and metaphor by Al Jurjani in the eleventh century. Al Jurjani adopted the dispute, and presented us with a system of critical analysis by which the exploring and revealing of the most intricate and complex aspects of the structure of the artistic process was made possible.

Al Jurjani's theories with their revolutionary, modern character will be examined as a possible method of the critical analysis for architectural form and meaning.
The process of examination will start with a study of the two theories and will end with their application to the study of architectural meaning. This will first take into account the previous analogies between literature and architecture, and the strategies on which they were based. It will also present the opposition made by critics questioning the validity of such analogies, consequently establishing the foundation on which the analogy between literature and architecture will be drawn in this thesis.

Finally, the application will be manifested in the analysis of the case study of Sultan Hasan complex in Cairo.

"It is true that the content is that which is convertible into form, but it has no determinable qualities until this transformation takes place. We know nothing about it. It does not become aesthetic content before, but only after it has been actually transformed." (2)

Aimed at the analysis of the metaphorical content of the building, the application will also search into the factors determining both the creation of the metaphor and the interpretation of it. My premise here is that literary theories can provide a new approach for analyzing architectural work -- not as mere forms but as expressions and images of their content.

In conceiving of architecture as a mode of communication, I will investigate the types of meanings conveyed by architecture and the different means by which it accomplishes these effects.
Chapter One:

Al Jurjani's Theories of Construction and Metaphor
Arabic literature pre-Al Jurjani:

The development of Arabic literary studies was initiated by the controversy around the creation of the Quran. It was launched, however, by the efforts made by the scholars to comprehend and reveal the mysteries behind the holy book. The Arabs, proud as they were of the language they had skillfully mastered, reacted in different ways to the superior nature of the Quran -- a superiority that was the sign of the new religion and the proof of the prophecy of Mohammad. Some questioned it being the word of God and accused the Prophet of being a poet, a madman, or a magician. God, glorifying the superiority of the Quran, challenged them to produce an equivalent to it:

"And if you are in doubt  
As to what We have revealed  
From time to time to our servant,  
Then produce a Sura  
Like thereunto;  
And call your witnesses  
(If there are any) besides God  
If your (doubts) are true." (3)

During the early period of Islam, the believers, who were Arab Muslims, did not feel the need of any analytical, logical, or philosophical accounting for the inimitability of the Quran. They recognized it by intuition, since it was in a language deeply rooted in them.

Later, during the Abbasid period, many non-Arabs adopted the new religion. Since they did not speak the language of the Quran, the need to demonstrate its majestic power arose. On the other hand, many delicate
issues were raised, such as the question of the translation of the Quran into other languages.

These issues awakened the intellectual curiosity of scholars about different aspects of linguistics and literature such as the origin of language, the relation between word and meaning, and, most importantly, the qualities that contribute to the transcendence of the holy book. As a result, many theories were developed in an attempt to reveal its secrets and uniqueness. One school of thought was called Al Mutazila. The head of Al Mutazila (Al Nizam) claimed that the content of the Quran lends it its inimitability; the information, news, and historical facts it contains make it superior.

This approach generated strong reactions by Muslim theologians. Al Jahiz, a student of Al Nizam, was the first to argue against that claim. He believed that the inimitability of the Quran resided in its words and the way they were composed to form its eloquent and expressive power.

"The duality of word and meaning, or form and content continued to dominate the thinking of most theologians and writers on rhetoric alike until the powerful, subtle, amazing, sophisticated, and exhaustive arguments developed by Al Jurjani succeeded in destroying the dualism and establishing the concept of construction as the only valid principle through which it is possible to discover and explain the nature of superiority not only of the Quran, but also in the literary process in general."(4)
Biographical notes on Al Jurjani:

Abd Al Qahir Al Jurjani is one of the most prominent figures in the history of Arabic literature. In the field of literary criticism, he is considered to be the critic whose work marked the highest point in the development of Arabic criticism. Al-Ashmawi referred to this point as "a triumphant climax".(5) He was named after "Jurjan", the town where he was born and spent all of his life. It was located between the two provinces of Tabaristan and Khurasan in Persia, and was peacefully brought under Muslim rule during the reign of Omar b. Alkhabtab in the year 18(H)/639.

During the fourth and the fifth centuries/(10th-11th), a time during which many dynasties declared independence from the Abbasids, Jurjan was brought under the rule of the Ziyarids and then the Ghaznavids, until it was conquered by the Seljuks in 433(H)/1040.

There is very little material on Al Jurjani's life and education. His date of birth is not known to us, since it was not recorded by any of his biographers. He died in the year 471/1078. Since there is no mention of him having lived long or died young, he was most probably born at the beginning of the 5th/11th century. Jurjan was at the time one of the major centers for education in the Muslim world. During the fifth century (11th c.) it came under the influence of the intellectual boom experienced by the Muslim world, a boom attributed to the accumulation of the efforts and learning of four centuries attributed in turn to three sources of learning. These sources are: the inherited Arabic scholarship, Greek, Persian, and Indian scholarship in translation, and the integration of these different schools of thought. As a result of this growth of education and knowledge on the one hand, and the competition between principalities to house and take pride in scholars on the other, the number of educational centers multiplied. AlBasra, Kufa, and Baghdad were no longer the only centers of education; Nisapur, Isfahan, Cairo, Aleppo, Shiras, and Jurjan came into
the picture. Many scholars lived and taught in Jurjan. One of the most famous was AlQadi Al Jurjani of the 4th/10th century, whose books were one of the major sources of Al Jurjani's education.

It was in his town that Al Jurjani pursued and received his education. Unlike other students, he never travelled seeking education. One possible reason is the fact that he came from a poor family who could not afford to send him on such a trip. Mohammad AlFarsi was the only teacher Al Jurjani had; he taught him grammar and syntax. He was self-taught; most of his knowledge was the result of many years of dedication to reading all the material available to him on subjects of interest such as grammar, religion, poetry, and prose. This reflected in his achievements and the rich quality of his work. He became one of the most important scholars of his time, and students from around the Muslim world travelled to learn from him and acquire his knowledge.

In his time, he was called the "Imam," the head of grammarians. For a long time, he was known only as a grammarian. It was not until later that he was recognized as a theorist of the sciences of eloquence and rhetoric by scholars like Al Razi and Al Sakkaki, who based their work on his theories. His reputation as a founder of the science of meaning and rhetoric grew to dominate that of the grammarian. He wrote many books on the topics of grammar, rhetoric, Quranic studies, poetry, and prose. It is unfortunate that only two of his major works were published; they are "Asrar AlBalagha -- The secrets of eloquence" and "Dalail Al Ijaz -- The proofs of inimitability," on which this study is based.

**Al Jurjani's Theory of Construction:**

Al Jurjani's theory of construction was based on the refutation of the traditional approaches that attributed the power of literary expression to
either word or meaning, and was centered around his own argument that eloquence and expressiveness are the result of a unity between word and meaning as well as the harmony of the words in the composition. This theory of construction was part of his theory of meaning and the creative process, the purpose of which is stated by Al Jurjani himself in "Asrar Al Balagha":

"Realize that my purpose in the exposition which I have started, and the basis which I have established, is to reach a clear presentation of the nature of meanings and how they differ and agree; how it is that they find themselves together and apart. It is also my purpose to discuss their various species and types in detail, trace what is special and what is common to all amongst them, and clarify their honoured position in relation to the intellect, their firmness in its domain and their close relation to it, or their distance from it....."(6)

Al Jurjani believed that whenever there was beauty there was a reason behind it. Based on that belief, he argued that it is the critic's responsibility to go beyond stating his opinion to supporting it by logical reasoning, a concept he used throughout his work. Though Al Jurjani agreed with Al Jahiz that the secrets of the inimitability of the Quran did not reside in the words or in the meanings but in the way words were chosen, composed, and related so as best convey the meaning, he, unlike AlJahiz, did not stop at stating this. He devoted his research to the inquiry into the aspects that contribute to the eloquence and the expressive power of literary work through analysis, explanation, and demonstration. As his starting point, Al Jurjani looked into the creative process underlying the concept of construction, and this he reveals by distinguishing between the
construction of a 'word' on the one hand, and the construction of a literary expression on the other. The construction of a 'word' is the succession of its elements, the letters. A literary expression consists of the relations established among the elements, and between each element and the whole.

In the first case, the arrangement is arbitrary, and not dictated by the meaning of the word itself. In the second case the arrangement follows a specific pattern to convey a specific meaning, a pattern dictated by that of the meaning in the author's mind:

"Since words are the bearers of meanings, it follows that their order inevitably accords with the order of the meanings, therefore, if a meaning has to be first in the psyche, the word which signifies it will have to be first in the utterance. To imagine that the words are constructed and arranged before the meanings, or that the mental activity involved in the construction is one of constructing words, or that once you have arranged the meanings you still need a process of thinking in order to arrange the words accordingly, is a false and untrue assumption."(7)

Arguing the same point in "Asrar AlBalagha" he states:

"This particular pattern occurs in the words, following the arranged meaning in the psyche which has an order presupposed by the intellect. It is inconceivable that words should follow a certain order, or be assigned special positions or arrangement as mere words."(8)
Al Jurjani clarified that what he meant by the construction of words in a literary expression is not the succession of their sounds, but the interaction between them and the positioning of each as part of the whole. It is a construction of meanings. He rejected both the view of construction based on the sound aspect of words independent of their meanings, and the one based on the words as individual entities.

"The meaning of 'constructing words' is not that the signs as sounds occur successively in the utterance. It is that their 'significances' are harmonized, and their meanings arranged to the way which is presupposed by the mind."(9)

He believed that individual words do not have any communicative or expressive value unless they have entered into a set of relations determined by linguistic and non-linguistic factors. He demonstrated his point when he took a line of poetry, broke its structure into parts, placed them at random, and declared it meaningless. The significance of words, then, is not directly connected to their individual meaning, but to the role their meaning plays in the creation of the expressive image, as they are entered into a context.

"It is conceivable that with two names which conventionally apply to the same thing, one of them is more adequate to express it and to reveal its image than the other..."(10) "We find the word at its highest degree of eloquence in one context and we see this very word in numerous other contexts devoid of any share of eloquence."(11)

This concept was developed in Modern Literary Criticism by Richards. He stated in his book, Principles of Literary Criticism: "There is, of course, no such thing as the effect of a word or a sound. There is no one effect that
belongs to it. Words have no intrinsic literary characters. None are either ugly or beautiful, intrinsically displeasing or delightful. Every word has instead a range of possible effects, varying with the conditions into which it is received..."(12)

To support his argument, Al Jurjani rejected the doctrine that attributed the communicative and expressive power of discourse to the words themselves. He argued that the qualities of communication, expressiveness, and eloquence are a result of the whole and not the part:

"Know that the composer of speech is like a man who takes a number of pieces of gold or silver and melts them one in another until they become one piece. For when you say "Zaid hit Amran on Friday very hard in order to correct him," you get from the combination of these words a conceptual complex which is one meaning and not several meanings, as most people imagine."(13)

Modern critics have also rejected that doctrine. B.L Whorf states:

"Because of the systematic, configurative nature of higher mind, the 'patternment' aspect of language always overrides and controls the 'lexation' or name-giving aspect. Hence the meanings of specific words are less important than we fondly fancy.... Sentences, not words, are the essence of speech..."(14)

Al Jurjani did not believe that two sentences can have the same meaning in the way that two words have the same meaning. Each sentence should be structured differently in accordance with the meaning of which it becomes an image. Any change of the structure of the sentence must
denote a new significance. This concept is best manifested by Al Jurjani himself in his analysis of the Quranic verse, "...and they ascribe to God, as associates, the jinn":

"...it is clear that the placing of the word 'associates' before 'the jinn', has a fascination, beauty and majesty which cannot be achieved if the 'associates' is placed after 'the jinn'. The reason for this is that the placing of 'the associates' first conveys a majestic meaning and has a noble implication not possible otherwise. Although the general meaning is that they have ascribed to God the jinn as associates, and worship them as they worship Him, and although this can be conveyed by both structures, the one placing the 'associates' before and the other after 'the jinn', the former structure conveys this and another meaning which is that God should not have been ascribed any associates, neither the jinn nor anyone else. The other structure cannot convey this admonition, but only states the fact that they worshipped both God and the jinn...

The meaning conveyed by the shift in word order would otherwise have needed an additional expression to convey it, and even then its majesty, nobility, and impact on the psyche would not have been produced."(15)

Before he proceeds to explain the linguistic and psychological factors that determine the syntactical and grammatical relations between words, Al Jurjani clarifies his definition of words and their role. He identifies them as elements of the language that refers to known things and acts, in such a
way that they become signs of individual images in our minds.

"Individual words, which are conventional elements of language, have not been created in order that what they represent may itself be discovered, but in order that they may be joined one with another, thus expressing, by their interrelations, valuable information."(16)

He also argued that one cannot find the position of a word in a structure until one knows its meaning, especially since words are arranged not as mere sounds but as symbols of known references. On that basis, he identified the linguistic factors that determine the syntactic and grammatical relation within a structure, as well as the psychological factors that influence its formulation.

He confirmed that since the intention of the speaker is neither to inform the hearer about the meaning of a single word of a known reference nor to communicate a meaning using words unknown to the hearer, the thinking process cannot operate in such a way as makes it possible to think of the meaning of one word with no intention of relating it to the meaning of another.

"Realize that it is inconceivable that thought processes can operate on the meanings of words in isolation from grammatical and syntactical relations. Thus it is impossible for a man to 'think' of the meaning of a verb without intending to relate it to a noun, or to think of a meaning of a noun without intending to relate it to a verb by placing it as its subject or its object, or without intending to form some relation between this noun or another, such as placing it as a
subject, a predicate, or an adjective."(17)

Al Jurjani devoted a large part of his theory to the investigation of the factors that determine the positions of elements in the linguistic formulation of both the "subject-verb-object" and "subject-predicate" relations. The investigation was based on his belief that such relations between the meanings of words are dictated by the psychological setting around which the literary expression was formulated. There are psychological factors related to the speaker on the one hand, such as his inner state, the degree of his emotional involvement and his knowledge about the experience being expressed, on the other hand there are factors concerning the relationship between the speaker and the hearer, such as the speaker's awareness of what the hearer knows, how he would react, and his emotional and moral stand.

Furthermore, all these factors are themselves determined by other factors relating to the wider context of the situation. Al Jurjani cites an example where different structures containing the same elements change according to such factors:

"...as it is the case in their [a certain community] attitude towards a Kharijite who causes damage, destruction and great harm to the people. In this case they would want his death to be brought about, without caring who killed him. Thus, if he were killed, and a man witnessing the killing wanted to tell them of that, he would place the Kharijite [before the subject], saying, 'Qatala al-Kharijiyya Zaidun'. He would not say, 'Qatala Zaidun al-Kharijiyya, because he knows that there is no benefit for the people in knowing that it was Zaid who killed the
Kharijite, and that mentioning him will not concern them, nor add to their contentment. The speaker knows from their state that all they hope for and look forward to is the occurrence of the death of the Kharijite and that now they need no longer to fear his evil deeds."

(18)

To render his argument complete, Al Jurjani rejected the doctrine of meaning as the quality to which inimitability and eloquence are attributed. He himself never stressed the importance of the subject matter in literary expression:

"...and it is known that the nature of discourse (or the method of literary expression) is the same as that of the image-making and silver work, whereas the nature of the content which is being conveyed is that of the material upon which image-making and silver work are carried out, such as silver and gold, when a ring or a bracelet is made of them. As it is absurd for you, if you want to judge the making of a ring and the distinction or badness of the making to consider the silver or gold in which the picture is worked, so it is absurd, if you want to discover where the distinction and high quality of discourse lie, to examine only its meaning."(19)

By establishing his concept of construction, Al Jurjani made the distinction between two types of meaning, literal and metaphorical. He called the first type 'the meaning', and called the second 'the meaning of meaning', introducing the later term for the first time into Arabic literature.
"Having realized the nature of this principle, there is a concise way of putting it: that is to say, the meaning and the meaning of meaning. By the 'meaning' I mean what you understand from the immediate expression and what you reach without a special medium.

By the 'meaning of meaning' I mean what you understand from the immediate expression, and what you reach without a special medium.

By the 'meaning of meaning' I mean that you comprehend a certain meaning from the expression, and this meaning leads you then to another meaning..."(20)

Al Jurjani identified two types of discourse. One is conveyed by the significance of the expression itself (for example by saying "Zaid went out" we only mean to communicate the going out of Zaid), the expression refers to its own meaning and not an external meaning outside itself. The second type is not communicated through the immediate significance of the expression but through a second significance, the understanding of which leads to the realization of the intention.

**Theory of Metaphor**

Having established the distinction between the two types of discourse, Al Jurjani's study and analysis was focused on the artistic process that produces the meaning of the meaning, a study which also included the process by which the recipient's comprehension of the expression is achieved. He based his argument on the rejection of the employment of words or meaning as a determining factor in the critical analysis of literary expression. He also denied the traditional duality between form and
content. Al Jurjani argued that the artistic process fuses the two to produce neither words nor meaning but what he defined as "surat al mana," the image of the meaning, a concept around which his studies and analysis are centered:

"Realize that I use the term 'image' to express an intellectual concept by analogy with a visual object. We know that the difference between members of the same species lies in their image; a man, for instance, differs from another man by virtue of some distinctive features in their images, and this is the case with art objects such as rings or earrings. Similarly, as we realize intellectually that the meaning in a line of poetry has distinctive features not present in another line, we have indicated the difference from its image in the second."(21)

Al Jurjani demonstrated the process of the creation of such an image through the analysis of different literary formulations concerned only with expressing the meaning of the meaning, forms such as Tashbih, Tamthil, Kinaya, and Istiara in which the communication process involves an understanding of the associations suggested by the expression. This understanding is based on both linguistic as well as non-linguistic knowledge.

"The essence of kinaya is that it is a suggestion of a meaning which you comprehend, not by way of words used, but by way of meaning expressed."(22)

This is a principle on which the other forms of image-making are also established. The interpretation of literary images by the hearer requires the hearer's active role as an essential element in the process of
communication, which in turn requires the hearer's acquaintance with the linguistic, as well as the cultural, context.

"It is through the associations evoked by these two contexts, and through their interaction, that the image conveys its meaning. Moreover, if the meaning of the image is not determined by the linguistic context alone, and if it is based on the evocation of wider associations related to the cultural context as a whole, it follows that the image is not simply a statement of meaning."(23)

Two concepts have clearly been established by Al Jurjani. Firstly, the comprehension of meaning depends entirely on the understanding of the image of the meaning. Secondly, the creation of all of the different forms of image are considered to be commonly based on the notion of similarity, a notion he always used in comparing these forms:

"Tashbih [simile] has the status of an origin for istiara [metaphor] and istiara has the status of a branch of tashbih."(24)

Istiara: "is a type of tashbih and a form of tamthil a branch of simile tashbih is an analogy; and analogy occurs in qualities comprehended by the heart and realized by the intellect."(25)

Though tashbih and tamthil are repeatedly presented in conjunction with each other, Al Jurjani accredited the distinction between the two to the nature of the theme of similarity.

Al Jurjani described the nature of similarity and the effect it produces as an act of creation through which two different objects are unified. He emphasized the feeling of contentment generated by the discovery of
similarity between two dissimilar entities, an act through which the image acquires its expressive power to accomplish "a mood of exaltation and liberation."

"The skill and craftsmanship, and the insight which is delicate and penetrating, lie in ... linking the objects that are foreign one to another by kinship, correlation, contexturing and interlacing."(26)

Through such a skill, the different forms of imagery acquire their power, tamthil, for instance, stated Al Jurjani, "excite the deeply buried sense of comfort and relief, and lure and attract the escaping sense of pleasure."(27)

Al Jurjani argued that not every process of assimilation of two different objects is a valid one. One has to take into account the nature of the two objects as well as the appropriateness of the point of similarity in relation to the image of the meaning to be conveyed.

"One must find a correct and comprehensible similarity between them ... I do not mean that one can invent similarity which has no origin in the intellect. What I mean is that there are hidden similarities which have delicate paths to them. If one's mind penetrates and comprehends them, then one deserves to honour."(28)

In his analysis of the point of similarity, Al Jurjani differentiated between two types of the attribute through which two objects are compared. The first type indicates an attribute that belongs to both objects, one which is apprehended by the senses. The second type indicates an attribute of one object in comparison with an abstract attribute of either a physical object or an abstract entity, a type in which the image owes its appeal to the object
involved and not to the notion of similarity. This enquiry into the expressive power of the image is carried further in Al Jurjani's detailed study of istiara (metaphor), its character, and the process of its creation. One of the powerful qualities to which the beauty of istiara is attributed by Al Jurjani is in its ability to render:

"the inanimate alive and communicative, inarticulate meaning clear and revealed to the eye." (29)

Al Jurjani defined istiara as a process through which two entities are combined and their attributes fused, confining attributes to those which are suitable to the image and its context, a process he called transference (naql) or borrowing (istiara). In analyzing the metaphor 'I saw a lion'--as an expression for seeing a brave man--to demonstrate such a process, Al Jurjani stressed that the fusion between the man and the lion is a product of the imagination of the speaker, which, in turn, is a product of the existence of qualities that are attributed to both the man and the lion. This is not to deny the existence of other qualities unshared by the two.

The hearer on the other hand, can only realize that the speaker is not referring to a real lion but to a brave man, with the knowledge of the wider context.

"Istiara", stated Al Jurjani, "evokes in the imagination the impression that the referrent is a man and a lion at one and the same time, both in image and character." (30)

Based on this aspect of istiara, Al Jurjani denied the possibility of creating a metaphor through the transference of a name with no referrent, an argument which tailors the whole of his theory of metaphor. It suggests that since istiara is a literary creation that expresses the integration of the
attributes of two entities, then it is those specific attributes within the meaning of the second name that are being transferred, meaning that istiara is not a borrowing of the name but a borrowing of the meaning of that name.

This concept refutes both the concept of metaphor as a transference of the name from its meaning, developed in Arabic criticism before Al Jurjani, and the concept of metaphor as a transference of a name phrased by Aristotle as "applying to a thing a word that belongs to something else."(31)

This concept of istiara as a transference of meaning or attributes through fusion and associations is only valid in relation to the first type of metaphor classified by Al Jurjani as the 'purposeful istiaras'. The second type, the transference, is merely of the name and not of the meaning. According to Al Jurjani, using the name of an object to refer to another without a transference of their attributes is only a linguistic device and not the creation of a metaphor. For example, using the word 'hand' to stand for 'beneficence' does not include attributing a quality of the one to the other, therefore no transference of meaning occurs. It is merely a process of substitution.

Having divided istiara into two types, Al Jurjani carried the classification of purposeful istiara into another level in relation to categories of words:

"Many occur in one of two categories of words only either a noun or a verb. The one occurring in a noun may be of two types. In the first, the noun is transferred from its original referent to something else definite and recognizable. The name is thus applied to the object and has a
similar relation to it as that of the adjective to the qualified noun."(32)

This type is demonstrated in the examples "I saw a lion" and "A deer appeared to us," referring to a man in the first and to a woman in the second.

Though similar to the first, the second type differs from it due to the absence of a source for the quality being attributed: "The noun is transferred from its true position and placed in a position where nothing can be seen and pointed out as being the thing intended by the [transferred] noun for which the latter has been borrowed and made a substitute for its name and a representative of it."(33)

It is more clearly exemplified in the line: "How many a cold windy day have I protected people against, when the rein of the day has been taken by the hand of the north wind." The word 'hand' is a quality attributed by the poet to the wind in the absence of the object it is being borrowed from.

The third type is achieved by the verb:
"The verb does not refer to the thing in itself as the noun does, but attributes the meaning from which it is derived to the thing in a time context referred to by the tense of the verb..."(34)

At another level, Al Jurjani divides istiara into two types according to the nature of the attribute subject to transfer. In the first type the attribute, though present in both objects participating in the creation of the metaphor, varies in excellence and strength. The second type is similar to the first, it differs in one aspect regarding the point of similarity. In this case the attribute that belongs to both objects is the same one. The third
type of Istiara involves a similarity between intellectual images (suwar aqliyya). In this type:

"The similarity lies neither in an attribute which is a general category, an instinct or natural characteristic, nor in a countenance (hai'a) nor an image of the physical appearance of feature; it is an intellectual image."(35)

This third type considered by Al Jurjani to be superior to others, is further subdivided into three types:

"These are: first, the type in which the similarity is revealed between visual or perceptible entities and intellectual or abstract concepts. The second is that in which the similarity is revealed between perceptible entities and similarly perceptible ones, but the common quality itself is an intellectual one. The third is that where the similarity is revealed between abstract concepts and similarly abstract ones."(36)

Translation of a Metaphor: Based on his belief that any two images expressing the same meaning could not be of the same form, Al Jurjani argued against the translation of a metaphor or any other form of imagery into its literal meaning.

"If a translator translates our expression 'I saw a lion' (by which we refer to a brave man in a way which has the meaning of the phrase 'a strong brave man') and fails to mention the name which is assigned to the lion in the language into which he is translating, thus failing to render the expression in its own image, then he will not be
translating our discourse. He is composing his own discourse."(37)
Chapter Two:

The Application of Al Juriani's Theories as a Method for the Analysis of Architectural Meaning

Case Study: The Complex of Sultan Hasan
The analogy between literature and architecture:

The attempt to apply Al Jurjani's theory as a method for the critical analysis of architectural expression obliges me to question the foundation of drawing an analogy between architecture and literature. Aestheticians and architects have taken many different approaches that have served many purposes in the attempt to assimilate architecture to language.

During the eighteenth century, in the search for a universal theory of expression applicable to all the arts, the first doctrine that linked architecture with language appeared in France. It established a connection between architecture and the conventional knowledge of grammar, on the basis of which the process of combination was declared as a basic ingredient in architectural creation.

"Each time it appeared, however, the analogy was employed for no other purpose than to validate competing morphological choices by grafting on them the prestige of literary creation."(38)

Some drew the analogy between architecture and language as fields; Ledoux, for instance, stated that "Architecture is to masonry as poetry is to belles-lettres."(39)

Quatremere, on the other hand, applied not only concepts but also transferred linguistic terminology to architecture, "honor to the architect not only hears but speaks the language of buildings in their relation with the type and character of institutions."(40) Others made the comparison between the elements of architecture and language. Germain Bofard stated, "The sections of molding and the other parts which make up a building, are, in architecture, what words are in discourse."(41)
Francesco Milizia applied the same analogy using the materials of the building:

"The materials in architecture are like words in discourse which separately have little or no effect and can be disposed in a despicable manner, but combined with art and expressed with a motive and agile energy, are capable of unlimited effects."(42)

Such comparisons were repeated over time by many people -- among whom was J.B. Papworth, who believed that the art of building is the power through which materials are given an expressive quality -- but were never developed into a theoretical formulation.

The failure of language from the mid-18th to the mid-19th century to serve as a model for architectural composition cannot be blamed on the lack of a developed theory in the field of linguistics at the time, since the more developed and sophisticated linguistic theories of the 20th century have not proven capable of providing a model for architectural language or even justifying such an intention. Umberto also used grammatical analysis as a critical method for architecture. He argued that "architectural language is an authentic linguistic system obeying the same rules that govern the articulation of natural language."(43)

Following in his footsteps, Slippo used the definition of grammar in the context of architecture:

"Considering architecutonic activity to be a set of operations designed to establish cognitive relationships by means of spatial realities, and considering the architectonic organism as a structure, an instrument of communication and
of knowledge, grammatical analysis becomes the principal critical instrument at the disposal of whoever seeks not only to grasp the entire range of signification of a particular spatial structure, but also to "historicize" it..."(44)

The introduction and utilization of these concepts has always been accompanied by counter-arguments that either accounted for their ineffectiveness or refuted it. Bruno Zevi, for example, recognizing the ingenious efforts of the new trend in Italian criticism that he referred to as the "fashion for grammar", has attributed its insufficient application to the field of architecture to the scholar's preoccupation of finding "in architecture the ingredients and laws of verbal language".(45) Other critics have completely rejected such an analogy and questioned its validity. They have based their argument on the belief that architecture and language are two systems of communication that use different means, address different senses and provide different experiences. G. Morpurgo-Tagliabue clearly stated his opinion on the matter in 1968:

"What this pretended architectural language lacks in order for it to be a language is precisely the primary factor of semiosis: the heterogeneity between the signifier and the signified".(46)

The assimilation of language and art was also refuted by critics like G.G. Granger. He argued the invalidity of such an assimilation on the basis that artistic creation is not the result of a linear sequence of elements that reveal artistic expression, a basis on which the assimilation between architecture and language can also be rejected.

The relations between the elements that create architectural composition are perceived in a different way from the syntactical relations between
words in a literary expression, a distinction that is clarified when related to the classical differentiation between the narrative mode of literary expression and the presentative mode of visual expression. The elements of architectural expression create a simultaneous effect whereby the eye does not follow a sequence such as that of literary expression. Furthermore, architecture is experienced in a fashion where a direct relationship between the producer of architecture and its users is absent. Such a relationship is essential to the communication of language.

This is not to deny the expressive power and the communicative ability of visually experienced forms and sequentially experienced spaces of architecture.

The validity of the analogy between architecture and language is refuted on the basis that architecture as a field is not a code system constructed of elements with specific conventional meanings, as words are in language. However, this does not eliminate its applicability at a different level within architecture.

When the architecture of a given culture and geographical setting goes beyond fulfilling functional requirements to become a manifestation of social, economic and political characteristics of the culture that produced it, and when that formal manifestation is repeatedly used, the architectural form is given a fixed meaning, thus creating an architectural "type". Individual elements that have combined to make up the type acquire a symbolic value through their association with the meaning of the building as a whole. Such an architectural type establishes a frame of reference shaped by that culture and understood by its members, while enhancing the communicative quality of architectural forms. Most importantly, it produces architectural elements of known references; in other words it creates a language.
Once the frame of reference has been established, the elements can be rearranged to create new significances through variations of the type and allow its transformation of the type in accordance with changing cultural aspects.

The application of Al Jurjani's theory to the critical analysis of the architectural type becomes a more conceivable approach. Like the words of a language, elements of architectural type are not arranged as mere forms, or as a formal composition; they are dictated by the message and the experience the building conveys. In Al Jurjani's words, "Their significances are harmonized and their meanings arranged to the way presupposed by the mind". That is to say, if the expression of meaning in a literary work resides in the established relations between words and between each word and the whole--which Al Jurjani refers to as (nazm) construction; then the expression of meaning in architecture resides in the formal and functional arrangement of the architectural elements which constitute the "type".

This approach to resolving the duality of form and content is relative to forms of art other than literature and architecture Susan Langer, answering the question "What do dancers create?", puts it thus:

"Obviously, a dance. As I pointed out before, they do not create the material of the dance--neither their own bodies, nor the cloth that drapes them, nor the floor, nor any of the ambient space, light, musical tone, the forces of gravity, nor any other physical provisions, all these things they use to create some thing over and above what is physically there: the dance."(47)
Since the expressive and communicative quality is generated through the interrelation of words, as Al Jurjani argues, any rearrangement that takes place must have a new significance, a concept that can be examined by using an architectural type. In the Taj Mahal, for example, the traditional tomb type was used while rearranging various elements, thus creating a new significance. The traditional type of tomb (fig. 1 and 2) situated at the heart of a Charbagh garden (a four part garden divided into quadrants by water channels symbolizing the four rivers of paradise) was used as a metaphor of the gardens of paradise in which the deceased was to dwell. The Taj Mahal used the form of the Charbagh and located the tomb not at the center but at the end of the axis along the length of the garden and outside the north boundary of the Charbagh (fig. 3). The separation of the tomb and its Charbagh suggests a new meaning or a refinement of the old. The new significance as interpreted by historians is as follows:

"Since the Islamic paradise is a garden, what could be more appropriate symbol than to have the tomb, in itself a paradise, rise from a flowering garden?" (48)

(1) Plan of Tomb of Humayun, Delhi
   Entrance (A), Mausoleum (B).

(2) Plan of Tomb of Itimad-Ud-Daula, Agra.
   Entrance(A), Mausoleum(B), Pavilion(C)
The tomb is no longer situated in paradise as represented by the Charbagh garden but is situated at the end of the garden symbolizing paradise itself, a representation of a belief that paradise is situated at the end of Heaven. This interpretation is supported by the verse inscribed on the Taj Mahal written by Shah Jahan:

"Like the gardens of heaven a brilliant spot, full of fragrance like paradise fraught with ambergris, in the breadth of its court perfumes from the nose-gay of sweet-heart rise..."

(3) Plan of Taj Mahal, Agra.
Entrance Pavilion (A), Mausoleum (B), Mosque (C), Meeting House (D), Raised Tank (E)

Source: Hoag, J. "Islamic Architecture"
The Approach and Intent of the Analysis:

"The first point on which most semiologists would agree is that one simply cannot speak of 'meaning' as if it were one thing that we can all know and share. The concept 'meaning' is multivalent, has many meanings itself, and we will have to be clear which one we are discussing..." (49)

Architectural meaning is also a concept that has many connotations; therefore I feel obliged before presenting the analysis to share my conception of such a notion.

Meaning can be understood according to both its different types and the various means by which it is conveyed. I propose to divide architectural meaning into two types: literal and metaphorical. The literal meaning is conveyed through expression, a mechanism by which the building refers to itself or, more specifically, to a quality it possesses. The different qualities signified by the building can then determine three distinct subdivisions of the literal meaning. The first is the physical meaning through which the building expresses its own making. The second is the functional meaning established by the need of the society the building addresses. Thirdly, the historical meaning is achieved as the building records the point in time which produced it by virtue of its material, building technique, and style.

The application of Al Jurjani's theories as a method for the critical analysis of architectural meaning is aimed at the study of the metaphorical meaning manifested by architecture. In other words, such an application will not aim at the study of internal references, which may be conveyed by the literal meanings of a building, but rather at the external references
conveyed by the building. Since in this case architecture conveys significance outside itself, metaphorical meaning, unlike literal meaning, is not an act of expression but rather an act of representation.

Identifying the different types of meaning is not to say that a building communicates the one or the other, but to analyze how it achieves different levels of meaning in a complementary fashion. It is to demonstrate how architecture overcomes the duality of form and content through a design process which is conscious of selection and aware of associations.

Following Al Jurjani's footsteps I would like to look into the factors that determine the metaphorical meaning of a building. To begin with, there are psychological factors that dictate the creation of a metaphor as well as its comprehension. On the one hand, the psychological factors around the creation of a metaphor are related to the author, his/her inner state, degree of knowledge of the theme represented, and his/her degree of political and emotional involvement. On the other hand, there are psychological factors in relation to the reader of architecture shaped by time factor, moral stand, way of thinking, and frame of reference. Such psychological states of both author and reader of architecture are in turn determined by social, economic and political factors related to the wider context of each of their situations.

Consequently the analysis of buildings and the interpretation of metaphorical content has to rely on a set of given information available in three dimensions. The first is the physical dimension manifested in the building itself. The second is the historical dimension provided in the knowledge of the social, economical, psychological and political context that produced the building. Third is the hidden dimension, an intellectual and a psychological one; as determined by the reader's knowledge, taste
and attitude. Hence, before I proceed to the analysis of Sultan Hasan's complex, I will present both the physical and the historical frame of reference by which the analysis is guided.

The Mamluks:

The Mamluks were groups of slaves bought by the Abbasids, the Fatimids and the Ayyubids to serve as soldiers and military men, until they took the reins into their own hands in the mid-thirteenth century, succeeding their masters to the throne.

Contrary to common belief, they were not all of Turkish origin; some were Greeks, Kurds, Circassians and from numerous other homelands. Though they had different origins, and had neither group nor family ties, they established one of the most powerful dynasties in the region. The process by which slaves were purchased was a harsh and strenuous one:

"Doctors pass over the 'goods' and examine them. In this the slave is made to speak, eyesight and hearing are tested, and finally the piece of merchandise is stripped naked, looked over once more, driven hither and thither, and at a crack of a whip made to run, to walk, to leap! ...When the bargain is concluded, the new purchase is led away, and a great cry and weeping rises among the crowd that is for sale for they might be parents of such slaves." (50)

Such an experience must have left its marks on their character and reflected on their behavior.
They were known to be military slaves who often had a criminal attitude towards the locals. According to the testimony of AlMaqrizi.

"They committed numerous disorders in Egypt, attacked the inhabitants, slit their throats, plundered their wealth, made off with their wives and children without anyone being able to stop them. They even broke into the baths and dragged the women out with violence." (51)

This pattern of behavior seemed to change as soon as a Mamluk rose to power. Gaining the title of Amir or Sultan went hand in hand with demonstrating good intentions through the building of mosques and madrasas:

"All their Amirs contend among themselves in charitable works and the founding of Mosques and religious houses." (52)

Nevertheless, it was not the only reason for the competition between Amirs to construct buildings that carried their names. There are many such interpretations. Since every single Amir performed such a ritual it must have been an act of self-glorification.

There is also an economic framework on which the construction of such buildings was based. For the Mamluks, they were to provide a source of income for their descendants through the waqf system. Ibn Khaldun states:

"They sought to build many madrasas, Zawiyas, and Ribats and endowed them with waqfs which yielded income, giving share to their descendants either as supervisors of the endowment or as beneficiaries." (53)
As a result of their powerful regime and the numerous monuments they produced, Egypt under the Mamluks came to occupy a very important position in the Muslim world. It became a cultural and educational center -- especially in that it was a time during which the Mongol invasion had left Iran, Iraq and Anatolia in a state of disorder both politically and economically. Consequently, Cairo became the city of the age best described by Ibn Khaldun:

"When the cities of Persinas in Iraq, Khurasan and Transoxania fell into ruins, and sedentary culture -- which God devised for the attainment of learning and crafts -- left them, learning departed from the Persians. Today no city has a more abundant sedentary learning than Cairo, she is the Mother of the world, the Iwan of Islam, the wellspring of learning and crafts." (54)

It was neither a congregational Mosque nor a secular building to which the effort by the Mamluks to build majestically was dedicated. Instead it was

(4) Khanqah of Sultan Baybars II-1309. Source: Wiet, G. "Le Mosquee Du Caire"
directed towards building monuments that served many related functions. Madrasas, on the one hand, served the teaching of religion, law and theology; on the other hand, Zawiyas, Khanqas, and Ribats were dedicated to the practice and teaching of sufis as well as the housing of the old. In most cases, these types of buildings included accommodation for students and visitors. (Fig. 4)

The Mamluks also erected many mausoleums, either for saints or for those who died guarding and supporting the faith. (Fig. 5) They were located within the city or in cemeteries outside the city. Ibn Battuta, astonished by the degree to which they glorified the dead, states:

"The people build in the Qarafa (cemetery) beautiful domed chapels and surround them by walls, so that they look like houses, and they construct chambers in them and hire the services of the Quran readers who recite night and day in beautiful voices." (55)

They expressed little interest in continuing either the tradition of preceding dynasties in building Royal palaces, Grand Mosques and new cities or the architectural styles in which that tradition was manifested.

(2) Mosuleums in the Cemetery South of the City. Source: Wiet, G. "Le Mosquee Du Caire"
Unlike their predecessors, the Ayyubids, who continued to build in the Fatimid architectural style even though they exhibited a break from their ideological standpoint, the Mamluks inherited the Ayyubids ideology but manifested it in a new architectural style. This is not to say that Mamluk architecture had only one style. There are two distinct Mamluk periods. The first is that of the Bahri Mamluks, a period through which the transition from the Fatimid-Ayyubid style into the Mamluk and the development of a distinct Bahri Mamluk style took place. The second is the Circassian period which experienced many innovations on the bases of which the Circassian style was established.

Generally, one can characterize Mamluk architecture by its enormous scale in terms of height reinforced by the verticality of its panelled fenestrations, the large imposing portals, the extensive use of stone in different parts of the buildings including carved decoration, cautiously designed facades, their use of marble and painted wood as contrasting architectural elements, and the incorporation of a Sabil Kuttab in their buildings (a drinking water fountain on top of which is a Quranic school for orphans).

(6) Madrasa of Sarghatmich, 1356. Source: Wiet, G. "Le Mosquee Du Caire"
Sultan Hasan "The founder":

Sultan Hasan, the seventh son of AlNasir Mohamad bin Qalaun to come to power, was born in the year 735 H.-1334. He served two terms as the Sultan of Egypt. His first reign began when he came to power in 748-1347 at the age of thirteen, it lasted three years and nine months, and ended with his deposition and imprisonment in the citadel in 752-1351. He was in prison for three years and three months, a time he devoted to study and learning, and during which his brother Al Saleh was appointed Sultan.

It was during his first term that the plague called the "Black Death" struck Egypt. It reached Cairo from the north in 1348 and ended in 1349, a time during which almost one third of the population of Cairo died. Al Maqrizi provides us with a mortality rate of 10,000 people per day. His second reign lasted six years and seven months. It began with the deposition of his brother whom he succeeded to the throne, and ended with his death in 762-1361. He was killed at the age of twenty two by Amir Yalbugha Al Khasky and his body was never recovered, nor buried in the tomb he built for himself. According to AlMaqrizi, his death was no surprise to the people of Cairo, since the collapse of one of the minarets of his complex was considered a sign for the fall of his reign. It was actually thirty three days after that event that he was killed.

(7) Plan of Sultan Hasan Complex
Source: Behrens-Abouseif "Change in Function and Form..."
The Complex of Sultan Hasan:

"The college of Sultan Hasan marks the culminating point of Mamluk art. That impregnable edifice, solidly installed on its foundation, soars towards the sky with an imperial calm. It is something like a symbol of Islam envisaged in terms of its majesty..." (56)

The building of Sultan Hasan's Mosque, Madrasa and Tomb complex was begun in 757/1356 and was completed in 764/1362. According to Al Maqrizi the construction of the building was continuous for the first three years, not stopping for a single day.

The complex was situated opposite the citadel in the south eastern corner of Mamluk Cairo. The plan of the Mosque and Madrasas is a four Iwan court contained in a rectangle (fig.7), the corners of which are occupied by four houses of student cells. Each cell block belongs to one of the four-rite
madrasas, and has its own iwan (fig. 8), courtyard and its own entrance from the main courtyard. In some cases, the windows of the cells open onto the courtyard; for the most part, they open onto the street, thus giving the building its extroverted nature. East of the Mosque, a square domed chamber contains the founder's tomb (fig. 10). To the west, an enormous monumental portal (fig. 11), a vestibule, and a narrow passageway give access to the main courtyard.

Four minarets were planned for the complex. Two were to frame the portal; only one of them was built, and it later collapsed in 1360. The two other minarets flank the tomb chamber (fig. 10), one of these collapsed in 1660 but was rebuilt. The northern facade is the major facade of the building (fig. 9). It consists of wide piers with tall, narrow, fenestrations, giving the building a sense of verticality terminated by the muqarnas cornice and the crenellations that surround the top of the building.

The Analysis of Sultan Hasan Complex, Cairo:

The analysis of the complex of Sultan Hasan is aimed at the understanding of both the meaning it communicated centuries ago using the frame of reference of its time, and the meaning one experiences based on one's own frame of reference.

My comprehension of the message it delivered to its contemporaries was altered by an increasing knowledge of its architectural and historical context. At first encounter, I assessed the building as part of the Mamluk elite's tradition of building institutional establishments, in which a building not only carried their names but also stood to represent their wealth, power, and glory. It was not until pieces of history were assembled to recreate the setting in which it was built, and differences surfaced, compared to other Mamluk monuments, both subtle and significant, that I was able to interpret its content.

Sultan Hasan had acquired large sums of money from the people who perished during the Black Death epidemic and did not have any legal heirs. The building, however, was not meant to represent the wealth of its founder. As the cost of the complex reached unexpected measure, Sultan Hasan claimed:

"If it were not to be said that the King of Egypt was unable to finish a building he started, I would have abandoned its construction."(57)

In my opinion, the complex, unlike its predecessors, was not intended to represent the upper hand the ruling class held over the Egyptian people. It was rather meant to represent a challenge to the power of the ruling class. The concept stemmed from the founder's history of setting himself apart from the Mamluk elite and forming an alliance with the people of Egypt.
According to Taghribardi, Sultan Hasan had had many conflicts with the Mamluk Amirs. His imprisonment and the improper treatment he had received in the citadel compelled him to resent the Mamluks and to lose trust in them. Al-Maqrizi tells us that he was the first Mamluk Sultan to appoint members of Egypt's upper echelons to positions of high rank, including that of the Amir.

The Sultan's resentment of the Mamluks and the need to establish good relations with the people of Egypt, whom he both trusted and controlled, came to reveal itself through the analysis as the underlying concept of Sultan Hasan's complex.

The building not only disassociated itself from the chain of Mamluk monuments located in the dense fabric of the City Center, but also refused to compete with them in their striving for effect. Located in the more open area outside the center of the city and gaining a wider range of visibility, the building turned its back on those monuments. It was also specifically located opposite the citadel in order to deliver its political statement.

(12) Madrasa-mausoleum of Sultan Al-Mansur Qalawun 1384-5.
Source: Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions."
The tomb was the one architectural element in the complex which had the strongest association with its founder. It was more than a building by him, it was meant to be his resting place, an association that is unlikely to change with time. Through time, other elements, such as madrasas, could acquire associations with events, teachers, or religious leaders with whom they were affiliated. Therefore the tomb came to represent the Sultan and placed him between the rulers, represented by the citadel in which they resided and practiced their power, and the ruled, represented by the rest of the complex.

The main block of the building represented the people of Egypt through the educational, social, and religious institutions it contained. Each institution catered to a different need of the community and made reference to a different group within society. It was not the mere incorporation of the madrasas of the rites with the mosque, but rather the architectural treatment of these elements which added to the complex's new significance in representing the people.

(13) Khanqah of Sultan Baybars, Al-Gasankir 1306-7
Source: Behrens-Abouseif, "Change in Function and Form of Mamluk Religious Institutions."
In previous examples of incorporating madrasas for the four rites in one building, the madrasas were assigned cells and halls just off the main four-Iwan court, thus, sharing the courtyard and the Iwans (fig. 12-13). By integrating them, the architectural context lent them the symbolic value of unity. In the case of Sultan Hasan, the unique arrangement of the madrasas suggests a different significance. They were treated as four separate units. Each of the four madrasas had a private Iwan and courtyard. The cells of each madrasa were off the private courtyard. Isolated, yet sharing common grounds, they acquired a new significance in representing the different groups society embodied. The fact that they were located in the four corners of the main block carried the meaning to a deeper level. Their placement is symbolic of education as the corner stone of society.

The theme was further enhanced by the complex's containing a congregational mosque (Jami) for the first time in the history of such institutions. One can detect from this act how parts of the building contributed to the communication of the meaning of the whole. Like the words of a language, architectural elements with specific reference acquired different symbolic values as they entered into different sets of relations determined by the meaning to be conveyed.

The Congregational Mosque, for example, has a specific referential meaning. It refers to the gathering of all members of society under one roof to perform one ritual. This reference can acquire different metaphorical meanings; it can represent the concept of equality, order or others depending on the context into which it is entered. In the context of Sultan Hasan, the metaphorical content of the building lent it a new symbolic value. Here, it represented the unity and strength of the people of Egypt.
The metaphor manifested itself not only in the functions of the building, but also in its architectural organization and character. The alliance between Sultan Hasan and the Egyptian people offered the Sultan authority and the people protection. Consequently, the effect intended by the placement of the tomb between the complex and the citadel called for its hierarchy over other elements of the complex. The tomb acquired its hierarchy by projecting outside the rectangular mass of the main block in which all other functions were contained. This hierarchy was further reinforced by the imposing architectural features of the tomb. Crowned by the dome and flanked by two minarets, the tomb created the effect of hiding the rest of the complex, thus erecting a front both physically and politically. The entrance was skewed with respect to the building to share this front and enhance its effect, especially since this angle cannot be attributed to site constraints.

As the complex disassociated itself turning its back on the other Mamluk monuments in the city, it determined the point from which it was meant to be viewed (fig. 10). Viewed from the citadel, the tomb and the portal were unified and stood in the foreground with the main block as their support system. They represented the Sultan's need for the people's political support while maintaining his authority over them.

Situated against the eastern wall of the main block, the tomb faced the citadel, a position that placed it in front of the Qibla wall. Such a location for the tomb was unique, for the Qibla Wall contained the Mihrab with its specific religious connotation. The Mihrab designated the position from which the Imam led the prayer, a point beyond which Islam did not allow anyone to step during prayer. The unorthodox location of the tomb motivated by the political message of the building, was most provocative, and thus most revealing for its content.
"... the amount of meaning conveyed by a message is proportional to the unexpectancy of its occurrence in a context." (58)

In this case, unlike that of the Congregational Mosque, the meaning is not conveyed through association. It is rather conveyed through opposition (59), which increases the expressive power of the metaphor.

Challenging the power of the citadel, the sense of protection and defense created by the architecture is further enhanced by its scale and the fort-like character of the complex. Since the complex was located at a lower level than that of the citadel, its height had to be exaggerated. The uplifting feeling was achieved by the actual height of the building (113 ft.), the vertical treatment of its piers, the tall, narrow fenestration, and the absence of horizontal interruptions.

The political message conveyed by the complex seems to have provoked opposition to the rulers of Egypt. History records show that the complex came to house actions taken against the Mamluks at the citadel. Al-Maqrizi, in his description of the complex, states:

"... and the Jami (of Sultan Hasan) became an opponent for the citadel. In every instance of riot among the ruling class, a number of Amirs along with others climbed to the roof and launched an attack at the citadel. King Al-Zahir Barquq could not tolerate that, so he ordered the destruction of the steps leading up ..." (60)

In later occasions, the front steps were demolished, the main gate was locked, and the Maazzins were not allowed to climb up the minarets for
the call to prayer in order to stop such attacks. It was not till 825/1424 that
the building was restored to its original state. These cited historical events
further support the interpretation of the building as a metaphor for the
Sultan's alliance with the people and his disassociation from the Mamluk
ruling class.

This meaning of the building was arrived at using the frame of reference
of its time, reconstructed from available historical evidence. Therefore, it
is an attempt to reveal its intended meaning. Another is the experienced
meaning, based on one's own frame of reference, i.e., memory and
associations. The internal sequential experience, for example, resembles
for me the path of life in its processional arrangement. The focal points of
the procession are the portal and the tomb, placed at the beginning and the
end respectively, and symbolizing birth and death. The dark narrow
passageway, linking the entrance to the courtyard, with its ambiguous
sense of orientation, alludes to the early years of one's life when goals
have not yet been set. The passage leads to the courtyard, flooded with
light, and activated by the different functions taking place on all sides, an
image depicting the different directions life offers.

Eventually, all activities and directions converge in the Congregational
Mosque which reorients the course of the procession. The terminal point
is the tomb where the linear procession takes an upward direction, lent by
the verticality of the square chamber and its dome, a direction taken as the
human soul soars to the sky after physical death.

In the attempt to reveal the builder's intentions, the available historical
and physical evidence suggests more than one possible interpretation. It is
only through the process of examination and elimination that the
metaphorical content of the building surfaces. One example of this process
is the interpretation for the placement of the tomb in front of the Qibla
wall, which was based on the Sultan's history in the Holy Land. Sultan Hasan, like all Mamluks, had always taken pride and honor in controlling the holy cities of Islam. He was committed to the people of Mecca and Medina and had established good relations with their rulers. According to Lane Poole (61), Sultan Hasan had also won a victory over the King of Yemen in Mecca. Ibn Taghrirabdi, in his account of the Sultan, writes:

"... he had accomplished glorious deeds in the honored city of Mecca. His name is written on the eastern side of the holy Mosque. The existing door of the Ka'ba was made during his reign. He also provided the cover for the Ka'ba which is now placed inside it. He was charitable to the people of Mecca and Medina..."(62)

Subjected to this historical record, an interpretation of the placement of the tomb as a symbolic gesture for the Sultan's victory and achievement in the holy cities surfaced. It was refuted, however, through examination. It did not form a metaphorical meaning of the complex manifested in the set of established relations between the parts and communicated by the whole. It was rather a product of the established relation between one architectural element and another; the tomb and the mosque therefore did not constitute a metaphor for the complex as a whole.

To conclude, Sultan Hasan's complex is a manifestation of the process whereby elements of an architectural language are rearranged to convey a specific meaning. Like words, elements of the architectural type are not arranged as mere forms. The order they take is determined by the message to be communicated.

The complex used the elements of the language established by the architectural type of Mamluk institutional buildings. The creative way in
which these elements, with their established referential meanings, were composed lent the complex a new significance. The unprecedented relations between the parts contributed to the expressive power of the building in revealing its content.

AlJurjani's concept of the point of similarity as the main ingredient in the creation of a metaphor is manifested throughout the complex. The contrast between the aggressive massing of the building and the delicately carved stone and marble decorations of parts of the surfaces create a sense of tension (fig. 15). In the world of politics, there existed tension as well. Sultan Hasan's resentment towards the Mamluks initiated a state of war, while his alliance with the people initiated a state of peace due to the protection he offered them. The coexistence of both states again created the sense of tension. Tension, in this case, is the point of similarity

(14) Main Four Iwan Courtyard, Sultan Hasan  
(15) Stone decoration, Sultan Hasan  
Source: Wiet, G. "Le Mosquee Du Caire"
between the signified and the signifier, which contributed to the creation of the metaphor and allowed the building to represent its specific political context.

On the other hand, the building demonstrates the fusion between the literal and metaphorical meaning. The height and the fort-like character of the complex, for example, stand expressive of the building's strength and stability and are representative of the strength and stability of the Sultan's leadership as he allied himself with the people of Egypt.

Finally, the different ways in which the building conveys its meaning range from using associations provided by the referential meaning of architectural elements, to meaning conveyed through the interrelations between the parts and between the part and the whole, to expressions of the literal meanings of the building, and to the meanings provoked by opposition and the use of unprecedented arrangement.
Conclusion
The application of literary theories to the field of architecture offers new insights into the study of architectural work. The analogy between literature and architecture is not intended to draw systematic parallels between the two simply by transferring concepts from one realm to the another; it is rather a process of application, examination, and selection. In other words, I used literary theories as a method for analyzing architecture -- a case study. This process of analysis examined the literary concepts in an architectural context, allowing parallels to surface.

Architecture and literature, like other disciplines, share similarities at many levels, yet have their differences. Based on the understanding of this concept, and a respect for their differences, the question of analogy becomes one of appropriateness. The analogy proposed in this thesis was therefore not an analogy between two fields, but rather an analogy between concepts of relevance to both disciplines. Thus the application of theories on the creation of literary expressions was most appropriate, especially as the issue under study was architectural meaning. This issue revolved around the notion of the creative utilization of an established language and was based on the concept of architecture as a mode of communication.

Having established a method for the analysis of the metaphorical content of buildings, I consider it to be a notion that distinguishes art from mere building. Literal meaning is inherent in any building. It is the skill of making architecture expressive of its metaphorical content, which lends it such an artistic dimension. This brings me to a point I discussed previously in the thesis. In distinguishing between types of meaning, I equated literal meaning with expression, and metaphorical meaning with representation, a point I would like to modify.
Al Jurjani's concept of metaphor as a transference of meaning or attribute through fusion or association establishes bases for modifications. The metaphorical content can be conveyed by the building through expression, representation, or both, depending on the nature of the attribute being transferred. The building is expressive of its metaphorical content if it shares the attributes of its referent, i.e. an act of fusion. It is, on the other hand, representative of its metaphorical content if it does not share such an attribute and an external reference is made through association.

In the case of Sultan Hasan's complex, for example, the building through its structure, architectural organization, character, and other aspects of its literal meaning, came to express power and stability, attributes it shared with its referent. It also represented the Sultan and the people of Egypt through association and not a fusion of attributes and thus conveyed its metaphorical meaning -- its political message.

The communication of architectural meaning requires more than the skill of an artist to make it expressive of its content. To address a larger audience and to be captured by more than the trained eye of an architect, architectural meaning has to be a cultural product, a product generated and shaped by its context.

Architectural creation, like any other cultural product, has to be based on an established language developed through time and maintained by cultural continuity, a language of type. Though the term type is conventionally used to refer to mere formal elements and organizations devoid of content, it is here used to denote architectural elements of known references composed to convey meaning. The language of type consists of elements, like words, with specific references; therefore people do not only understand them but also relate to them.
The problems architectural meaning faces are due to the distortion and abuse of architectural language. Transferring language from one cultural and physical context to another, and the attempt to create a universal language for a world with distinctly different cultural languages are only two forms of such an abuse.

The concept of universal meaning can only be achieved if one acquires a high level of abstraction, thus losing the essence of meaning. The notion of meaning, in my opinion, is not an abstract one, it does not include anything and everything. It is a means of culture's selective representation of its higher ideals, way of life, and aspirations. Whether in speech or in architecture, meaning has to acquire a deeper level, a level motivated by a sense of belonging and a sense of identity.

Al Jurjani argued against two approaches to language; the first conceives of language as mere words, isolated from their context, while the second conceives of it as context only. These two approaches have their parallels in architecture. Given that architectural meaning depends on the existence of an established type, the way in which it is adopted and utilized takes different forms.

One dangerous approach views type as fragmented forms handed down to us through history, and views its meaning independent of its particular formal organization and the particular time period in which it was produced. Another uses the formal element of type devoid of any meaning; thus architectural elements are reduced to mere forms and juxtaposed in many different ways in an attempt to reconstitute a type not dictated by meaning. Elements are denied their expressive value. They are like words when composed on the basis of their sounds, thus losing their communicative and expressive value. Architectural types are not to be used as models either. Literary expressions, for example, lose their
expressive value when repeatedly quoted, and acquire a literal meaning [clichés]. Creativity lies in one's appropriate utilization of language to produce a new significance whereby distortion is avoided, continuity is maintained and innovations are accommodated.

When a type is repeated, it is somewhat different from its precedent. The element of change through repetition is inherent in any event of repetition. Changes in the process of repetition are inspired by change in context, and eventually become representative of it. If we place the event of repetition within the frame of reference of time, we observe that it can be part of a continuous evolutionary process. This continuity is established through a connection to the past and a projection into the future. The act of repetition facilitates the transformation of type, leading to the evolution of form. Based on this premise, I believe the issue of architectural meaning is one of serious importance.

It is not any less important than the issue of style, or rather not separate from it. Therefore it should play a more significant role in architectural historiography. Traditionally, architectural history addressed architectural production on bases of chronology and style, and the analogy between architectural languages is largely concerned with their formal attributes. If architectural production were to be addressed on the basis of its metaphorical meaning, architectural history might take into account the taxonomy of content. It would provide an analysis of different forms with similar content. The investigation into the different manifestations in different contexts of one conveyed meaning promises to be a rewarding task in itself.

The term "Islamic architecture," for example, presents a problematic case for historians who restrict their approach to the conventional way of categorizing architectural work. The obvious question is raised: how can
different architectural styles from different regions of the world be called "Islamic Architecture?" If one establishes a different frame of reference based on the content of architectural work, one can easily locate the common theme that links all these different styles. They are different languages, yet share a common message, a message which spreads throughout and reaches different cultures with different languages. Each manifests it in the way to which they can relate, a way they know best.


28. Ibid, pp. 139-140.

29. Ibid, p. 41.

30. Ibid, p. 298.


34. Ibid, p. 48.

35. Ibid, p. 60.


40. Ibid, p. 22.

41. Ibid.

42. Ibid.

43. Ibid, p. 21.

44. Ibid.
45. Ibid.

46. Ibid. p. 22.

47. Langer, S., Problems of Art, p. 4.


52. Ibn Battuta, "Travel in Asia and Africa," p. 54.


54. Ibid., p. 872.

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* Translations of Al Jurjani's quotes are taken from Kamel Abu Deeb's book.
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