Study of Aesthetic Aspects of Nastaliq Script in Computer-generated Writing with Emphasis on Three Types of Sensory, Reasonable, and Esoteric Aesthetics

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Introduction

Calligraphy is the manifestation of aesthetic beauty in the world of art which has recently crossed the traditional boundaries and has found its way into computer-generated writing. The present study examined the aesthetic aspects of traditional calligraphy in historical texts with an emphasis on three types of sensory, reasonable, and esoteric aesthetic. Thereafter, the traditional calligraphy was compared to computer-generated writing to find commonalities between traditional art and technological contexts. With an emphasis on Nastaliq script, the current research aimed to answer the following questions: How sensory, reasonable, and esoteric aesthetic can be manifested in Nastaliq script? On what commonalities are these aspects of aesthetic expressed in computer-generated writing? For the purpose of the current research, the book titled "Beauty and Art in View of Islam" by Allameh Mohammad Taqi Ja'fari(1999) was used as the most useful and practical source of different opinions on aesthetics and its related concepts and questions. This book categorizes the aspects of calligraphy into three types of aesthetics, including sensory, reasonable, and esoteric aesthetics. Sensory aesthetics derives from five senses and the general atmosphere of the artwork. Reasonable aesthetics is related to the form and the constituent elements of calligraphic work and esoteric aesthetics hinges on the content and theme of the script. Another source used in the current study was the book entitled "Truth and Beauty" written by Babak Ahmadi (2008) which deals with the philosophy of beauty and the origins of aesthetics from different perspectives.

Methodology

The present research was qualitative in terms of approach and data presentation and the data were collected by content analysis of calligraphic works. Library resources and content analysis of the artworks provided the needed information and references. The artworks that underlie the current research entailed a series of computer-generated writings, including fonts and software that can generate Nastaliq script. The study was conducted on 18 samples, including 11 raditional calligraphic works and 7 computer-generated writings which were selected using a purposive sampling technique.

Findings

Diversity of opinions on beauty and its related concepts and questions in the traditional aspects of calligraphy, according to the theories of beauty, have led the findings towards three types of aesthetics. They include sensory, reasonable, and esoteric aesthetics. Sensory aesthetics is derived from the five senses and the general atmosphere of the artwork. Reasonable aesthetics is related to the form and the constituent elements of the calligraphic work, whereas esoteric aesthetics depends on the content and theme of the script. This classification is based on the studies performed on the word "aesthetics" and its different types from the perspective of "Allameh Mohammad Taqi Ja'fari" [1]. This kind of attitude is consistent with the objectives of the current study with regard to the existing harmony between traditional characteristics of Nastaliq script and different aspects of aesthetics.

From a sensory aesthetic point of view, any artwork may induce a sense of beauty since it stirs a range of emotions in the audience. This being the case, artistic creations seem to be beautiful to the extent that they give the audience aesthetic pleasure and affect their hearts. Therefore, it seems futile to use objective and computable criteria in traditional calligraphy to understand aspects of sensory aesthetics. Computer-generated writings may appeal to the eyes of some audience who are surrounded by computer-generated works. Although some of the letters are not fully visible due to overlapping, this very graphic effect may be appealing to audiences with a visual taste. On the other hand, from a reasonable aesthetic point of view, the pleasure derived from this kind of aesthetics arises out of intrinsic relationships within the artwork.

According to the definition of reasonable aesthetics, these kinds of criteria of beauty can be manifested in computerized writing since the structure of such scripts is based on the systematic rules of Nastaliq which was mentioned earlier. Given this, the four basic principles of Nastaliq script exist in computer-generated writing. These principles based on which the letter designer has applied the geometric system to Nastaliq letters include rules, ratio, location, and combination (Figure 1).
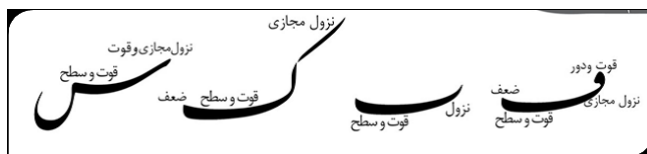

Figure 11

Observing the principles of rules, including the extrinsic characteristics of letters in computer –generated writings (Source：author)

Both extrinsic and intrinsic beauty of the script is matters of interest in esoteric aesthetics with the assumption that in the perspectives of Islamic scholars, intrinsic beauty prioritizes exterior beauty and is summarized in meaning perception. Therefore, specialized audiences, including traditionalist artists and calligraphers expect computer-based writing to convey the meaning of the words despite the adherence to calligraphic principles and rules.

Conclusion

In the existing definition of aesthetics, the audience is given a position of prominence and contributes significantly to understanding the artwork since the audience interacts with the artwork on the basis of their own sensory attitudes;

68

therefore, each viewer offers a different perception of sensory beauty. Some people find the most profound beauty in artworks when the visual beauty of the script serves the content. If that is the case, intrinsic beauty will be manifested. On the other hand, reasonable aesthetics can be tracked down in the principles of calligraphy that arise from a kind of logical reaction and systematic relationships among the structure of letters.

Footnote
1. Allameh Mohammad Taqi Jafari is one of the commentators of Nahj al-Balagha, the contemporary Muslim philosophers and Rumi1.

References
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