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A Contemplation on Ritual Landscape Representations in Kerman Province*

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Abstract

problem statement: Ritual landscapes are the result of social interaction with the surrounding environment and retell the cultural aspects of societies in various concepts like believes, faiths and religions. The religion as a cultural component is between the recognition factors human groups and is considered as an important factor in the formation of Iranian cities and their social life. Holding religious ceremonies has resulted in the addition of semantic dimension to the space framework and has created the superposition of two objective and subjective aspects resulted from this interaction of ritual landscapes. Therefore, the ritual landscape is an important factor in the recognition and perception of Iranian cities landscape and this problem clarifies the necessity of dealing with ritual landscapes in the recognition of the cities landscape.

Mythical and naturalistic beliefs has been accompanied with the formation of a close relationship between the ritual landscapes and natural elements. The formation of exclusive naturalism concept, in the form of water companion, sacred tree and place has been considered in ritual landscapes and this pattern has continued in the way of Iranians world-view. The holding form of the religious ceremonies as the actions aroused from common beliefs, has given the ritual landscapes a social nature, in such a way that some operational spaces have converted to public spaces by accepting the conceptual aspect aroused from religions and the social dimension has been flourished in these landscapes in the form of outing-pilgrimage tradition. In Kerman province ritual landscapes, beside the continuation of conceptual and social dimensions, has resulted in the formation of physical and conceptual turning points.

Questions and data collection method: This writing is formed by the question of why and quiddity of the religions effectiveness and ritual landscapes on the perception of the formed landscape and investigate the various specifications of ritual landscapes and its appearance in cities and villages of Kerman province.

Conclusion: naturalism and pluralism of the ritual landscape have affected the Iranians interaction with their surrounding environment in the form of physical pattern and common meaning. The affecting type and state in ritual landscapes in Kerman province is observed in the format of turning point and different performances that sometimes is seen in the shape of independent spaces in the natural context and sometimes in the context of cities and villages and in close relation with other spaces, and anyway, affects the perception and recognition of landscape.

Keywords: *Ritual landscape, Religion, Naturalism, Pluralism, Kerman province.*



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Introduction

A complex collection of environmental factors, livelihood relationships, beliefs, and religions is effective in traditional cities' structure. One theoretical level about this concept is focused on the recognition of the effect of religions, myths, and symbols (Bell, 2003: 6). Cities are formed by defining the society concept and by the effect of the plural mentality of the habitats and their interferences and the ritual landscapes have performed an important role in the perspective perception of Iranian cities, by originating from the mental structures of the society's people. Although, the Kerman city is formed as one of the oldest cities of Iran due to its location near special roads like "the Silk Road" and "Spice road" because of economic and military necessities (PoorAhmad, 1991: 68). Some facilities related to the worship of Mehr and Nahid could be observed in the oldest region of the city; Qal'eh Dokhtar is placed on top of a mountain that primitive traces of Kerman city is recognizable in its foothill. This castle has religious aspects beside the security function and the worship of Anahita² used to be done in it (Mansouri, 2007: 54). It could be deduced from the formation of Kerman city around the Qal'eh Dokhtar ritual landscape that the religious function had a determinative role parallel to the other functions. This problem has found diverse landscapes by passing time and livelihood is too complicated that in the following, we describe and analyze them.

Literature review

Up to the present, in scientific researches, the investigation about the ritual landscapes in Iranian culture has been done in two general areas:

Investigation about the mythical bases of Iranian religions formation and continuation of Iranian naturalisms beliefs in the papers of "The read-out of "water and tree" ancient story in Islamic era" (Javadi, 2013), "The Anahita myth in ancient Iran and Armenia" (Javadi & Nikoei, 2017) and the book: "The triplet Iranian landscape" (Mansouri & Javadi, 2018).

Investigating the social and identity dimensions of ritual landscapes in papers: "The readout of ritual landscape role in the identity formation of Iranian cities" (Abarghoei, Saboonchi & Farzin, 2017), "The readout of social beliefs in ritual ceremonies" (Javadi, 2018), "Piremorad monument, Ritual – cultural perspective of Baneh county" (Mokhles, Farzin & Javadi, 2009), "The formation of ritual urban perspective in social occasions" (Mohaddesi, 2010), "An investigation on the effect of Ashura rituals on the urban landscapes and collective memories from the perspective of citizens" (Khak zand & Teymoori gordeh, 2015).

The present writing tries to study the various ritual landscape in Kerman province by considering two main indices of "Naturalism" and "Pluralism". In the first step, the mentioned specifications are investigated in the format of the sample and then with the pattern considering their influence on the landscape perception of Kerman province (Fig. 1).

Naturalism

The ritual landscapes represent the cultural elements like naturalism for Iranian people that despite the time period transformation, have always continued their lives. Naturalism is a figure of beliefs and mental concepts continuation in the format of ritual landscapes that has been continued despite the implied changes in shape and figure. The triplet components repetition in Iran civilization cultural history and geography have formed the essence of ritual landscape that is a reflection of interaction of the Iranian with the surrounding environment and their interpretation and perception of the universe and has prepared the basis for the formation of Iranian concepts, mental meaning and beliefs (Mansouri & Javadi, 2018).

From Anahita temple to Imam-e-zaman well

In the central mosque of Joopar, the naturalism is observed in the format of ritual landscapes triplet elements that include old trees, water element in

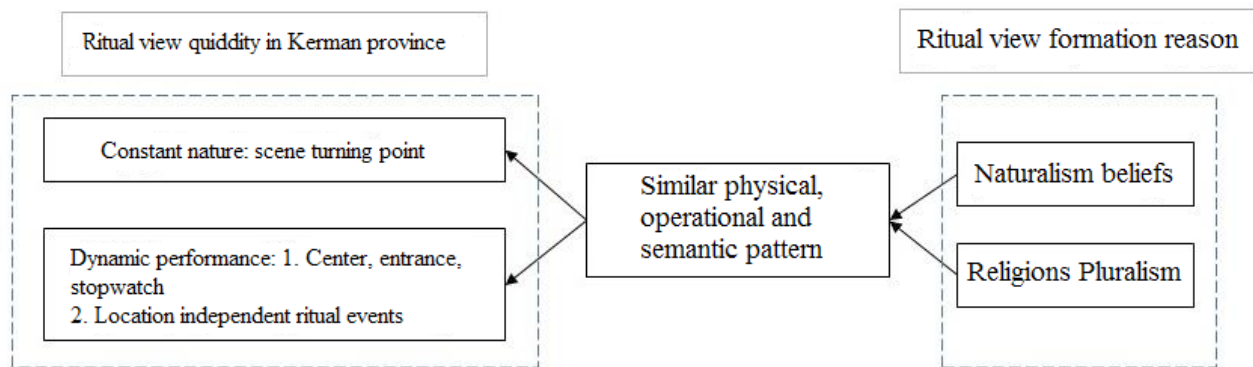


Fig. 1. The relationship between the formation bases of religious landscapes in Iran and their effectiveness type on the perception of Kerman province perception. Source: Author, 2017.

the format of well and sacred place (Chartaqi). The antiquity of the Gohar Riz Joopar Qanat is consumed to be contemporaneous to the Anahita worshipping era (PoorAhmad, 1991). Currently, the ancient Chahartaqi (that is now still observable in the mosque yard) as the representative of Islamic world-view has been replaced by mosque (that is now still observable in the mosque yard) and water, as the main element of worship in the Anahita temples, has transformed to an intermediate element of holding the religious ceremonies. The continuity of naturalism index in the ritual landscape of this mosque could be observed as the preservation of wellbore known as the Imam-e-zaman well within the Shabestan and people resorting to it. As also, in the central mosque of Joopar the well is kept beside the Qiblah as a representative of water sacredness (Fig. 2). Although the belief and practical bases related to the water sacredness returns to the clarity and blessing of Anahita goddess and also to the cleansing tradition in this ritual, its presence in the mosque is a sign of flexible continuation of ritual landscapes in the direction of cultural transformations and Iranian world-view. As far as the water as a cultural and long-lasting element, has put the mosque in the margin and it has acted as the body and behaviorist essence.

From Mehr temple to Morteza Ali fountain

Another sample of naturalism continuation in ritual landscapes of Kerman province is the Morteza Ali

fountain in Kahnuj-e Modim village. The rocky and cavernous temple that in it a fountain is flowing and nowadays is converted to Islamic sacred place that Islamic rituals like flashing candles, resorting and requesting is performed in this place (Fig. 3). Tree, fountain, rock and sacred cave as the symbol of nature that were attributed to Mehr and Anahita goddesses were worshiped in ancient Iran (Javadi, 2007: 12–22). The handwritings of people on the cave walls and statements and public culture are the sign of the place attribution to Imam Ali (Peace be upon him). Most of the Mithraism Beliefs have appeared in order to accompany with the historical and religious changes in the tradition and Islamic rituals format, as the Izad Mehr has linked with the Islamic personality of Imam Ali (Peace be upon him) and many Mithraism traditions have metamorphosed in Islamic rituals and have continued their lives (Mansouri & Javadi, 2018).

Pluralism

The rituals are among the social interactions formation factors that by having semantic, cultural and identity aspects are able to upgrade the spaces without any physical indices and characteristics to precious and identity possessor spaces (Naghizadeh, 2010: 99). The human interaction with the environment in the format of ritual landscapes and spaces has the interaction of humans with each other by holding rituals – collective and common activities – and



Fig. 2. The naturalism of the ritual landscape in the format of keeping the water element (well) within the nave. Joopar Kerman Sahebozaman mosque. Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.

gives the body of space high semantic concept and social and behavioral capabilities. The religious reproduce some part of social order ruling the society in the format of spaces and ritual landscapes and according to the social necessities, had always persistent and active role in Iranian cities.

From bath to public places

The public baths of Iran, besides the services and operational dimensions, always were ritual spaces and consequently a place for the formation of events and social interactions. The ritual nature of the bathing action as a social activity has resulted in the granting of social role to the Iranian traditional baths like Ganjali Khan Bath and has converted them to a place proper for various people meetings (Fazlollah Hamedani, 1979: 206). The spatial classification according to the social classes³ in Sarbineh (dressing room) of the Ganjali Khan Bath is the confirmation of this subject. The ritual landscape of Ganjali Khan Bath is observed in the physical structure, spatial classification, and access hierarchy. The ceremonies like matchmaking and hanabandan have been performed in the form of special traditions in there. The human patterns of women music players within the changing room spaces and hothouse besides the spatial details like niches for putting the bath tools in the walls adds the human dimension of the space. Jinn patterns on the

façade of the bathing point the effect of superstitious beliefs and popular stories in the formation of public and social space. The public use and access to the bath operational space have resulted in bolding of the ritual specification of the collective act of bath and has given the bath a social role.

From pilgrimage- recreation culture to anti-recreation culture

The companion of the sacred place – temple or shrine – and natural elements of water and trees have given the meaning concept to the ritual landscapes and has changed them to a proper base for the formation of social interactions. The feeling of social affiliation in these spaces is not just an abstract subject but is a social experience due to the presence in spiritual space (Abarghoei Fard et al., 2017). This problem has resulted in the formation of a special culture among the Iranians that in it, the recreation and pilgrimage are performed in favor of each other and its effect has been documented in the writings of travelogue writers⁶ and Folklore poems.

The ritual landscape of Shah Nematollah Wali tomb in Mahan city is a sample of ritual landscape in which, the social dimensions of rituals, besides the naturalism of the tomb space, have prepared a proper environmental quality for the formation of the pilgrimage – recreation tradition (Fig. 4). Nowadays, the management decisions in Mahan city are in contrary to the social role of the tomb and the Shah Nematullah Wali tomb ritual landscape does not have his past recreation performance and the social dimension of the rituals – that is considered as one of the reasons of effectiveness and persistence of ritual landscapes – has been neglected. Despite the past, the yard of the tomb is not a bases for the unity of the people in the format of common beliefs and recreation happens in other places of the city and as separated activity from the pilgrimage and the pilgrimage – recreation tradition, which in the past was a culture raised from the social tendencies of the habitats, has been converted to anti-worth due to



Fig. 3. The continuity of ritual landscape naturalism of the Kahnouj village Mithraism after the application change to an Islamic Praying place. Photo: Narges Ghadiani, 2017.

contradiction to the politics rolling the society.

The ritual landscapes effectiveness manner in Kerman province

The cultural factors like religious beliefs have a fundamental role in the creation of human habitat and are effective in ordering the habitats in a symbolic way (Rapoport, 1987: 19). The appearance of this effectiveness is very prominent in the Iranian city, because from the past, its urban spaces, besides the function, are defined in the connection with the sacred matter. In most of the Iranian cities, the superposition of naturalistic physical pattern and common mental and social effects has changed the ritual landscapes to physical, social and identity turning point and these landscapes have great roles in development, formation, and perception of cities and villages landscape (Abarghoei Fard et al., 2017). Sometimes this problem has been considered in Iranian cities and villages as the independent spatial shape and sometimes is present in relation and connection with other urban and rural spaces.

The physical, social and a ritual turning point

Most of the present patterns in the environment are not designed, but are self-organizing patterns and are observed in various shapes, kinds and diversities and a range of big scales to small scales (Bell, 2003). The triplet elements of the Iranian landscape are among



Fig.4. The spatial quality due to the companion of the triplet elements of ritual landscapes as the bases for the formation of pilgrimage – recreation tradition, Shah Nematollah Vali Shrine, Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.

the patterns that due to having the bases in Iranian mythical beliefs and operational aspects, exist as the specified and repeating aspect in cities and villages.

The ritual aspects due to the mentioned specifications and differences with their formation bases accept the physical, social and ritual turning point role.

The ritual landscape of Tikdar village in Kerman province is considered as the main center of the village. Presence of the elements like water, tree and sacred place in one area has resulted in the increase of its spiritual value and has organized other spaces and performances in its surroundings. It could be said that the main reason for the formation of this village in the watershed area was the need for the water element, but the thing that has brought the durability of this human society was the turning point resulted from its ritual landscape that in the central, physical and conceptual format has followed the continuation of social life of the habitat (Fig. 5).

Also, the ImamZadeh Shire Khoda in the center of Rayen city is a sample of ritual landscape as an organizing element in the city. According to the agreed and public name of Imam Zadeh and the architecture of the tomb, that has a great similarity to Chahartaqi buildings before the Islamic era, it is a ritual landscape continued from pre-Islamic period that nowadays is located in the social center of the Rayen city. Today's landscape of the tomb is like a roundabout

that is located in the intersection of two main streets of the city and by organizing the communication paths and other ritual performances like mosques have formed a semantic and physical turning point in the center of the Rayen city (Fig. 6).

Locating the ritual landscapes that form the essence of an arbitrary place in the mental structure of the Iranians, was affected by land charges and its limitations in the village context and sometimes has resulted in their formation apart from the village landscape. In the Sekonj village, due to the village locating in the slope and positioning of the ritual landscape in the downstream, the agricultural lands and residential houses are formed in the upper section of the village and the ritual landscape has, in fact, the role of independent space and entrance of the village (Fig. 7).



Fig. 5. The formation of a physical and semantic center of the village near to ritual landscape, Tikdar village of Kerman, Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.

When the ritual landscapes are formed far from the human habitats and in a pristine and natural context, they still continue their function as the independent turning point. As an on the way praying room in the route of the Sirch village and the spatial quality of the ritual landscape of the praying room has converted it to a turning point scene beside the road route that naturally acts as a stop-over.

The ritual landscape independent of the location

Another method of ritual landscape affecting the Kerman city landscape is recognizable in the holding pattern of mourning ceremony in Bazaar and Ganjali Khan Complex. The specifications like repeatability in a specified place and time and symbolic and social nature causes the relation and interaction of the rituals with three main elements of the city i.e. body,



Fig. 6. The formation of a social and operational center of the city in the ritual landscape of ImamZadeh Shire Khoda, Rayen Kerman, Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.

meaning and activity (Alalhesabi & Paikan, 2015: 77). The Moharram mourning traditions with annual repetition and its symbolic concepts, affect the central part of the historic city of Kerman. Since the rituals are among the most important social interactions forming factors, they gave meaning to the city body by having the unique spiritual aspect and also have affected the public perception of the citizens from the city landscape in ritual and the occasional landscape.

In the historic core of the Kerman city, the mourning ritual-landscape in the city landscape has flourished in the body of operational spaces like the Ganjali Khan Bazaar, Sanbزه Meydan and Cistern complex besides the ritual and permanent spaces like mosques affected by the publicity of the operational spaces, affects greatly the perception of the citizens from the city and their social life.

Conclusion

The rituals as the practical reflection of the spiritual concepts like myths and beliefs have continued his life accompanied by historical religious transformations and relying on the semantic aspect had reproduced the cultural values. Iranians, by utilization of the proportional ritual cloth with their historic changes to their beliefs and connecting them to the new religion myths and beliefs, had guaranteed its durability during the time.

During the time, the mental structure of the Iranians from an appropriate space has formed in the format of a naturalistic body and the crystallization of the common social beliefs and faiths in the format of the rituals have given the ritual landscapes an active social role. Also, the emergence of common beliefs of the society members in a collective method besides the naturalistic specifications, is the underlie of the continuation and durability of the ritual landscapes and their effects on the Iranian city landscape and its habitant's social livelihood.

Ritual landscapes in cities and villages of Kerman province act as the turning point of the scene – physical

and semantic – and has organized the body, activities and social life around itself. The ritual landscapes as the turning points have common natures but include different performances like the city center and village, entrance and on the way stop-over. The technique and the emergence type and locating the ritual in cities including the Kerman province are not dependent do not depend on the location and sometimes the specified time semantic concept like the mourning period has the



Fig. 7. The formation of semantic and social center of gravity of the village in the format of ritual landscape in the entrance of it, affected by land changes of Sekonj village in Kerman, Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.



Fig. 8. Ritual landscape as a physical and semantic turning point in the virgin and natural space, the route of Kerman to Sirch village, Photo: Hamideh Abarghoei Fard, 2017.

formation of the ritual landscape in the landscape of cities and villages in the following (Fig. 8).

Endnote

1. Anahita in ancient Iran was one of the greatest and most popular Aryan and Mazdayasna goddesses and in Iranian beliefs, was considered as the water goddess, the guardian angel of the fountains and rains and the symbol of fertility and love (Taheri, 2014: 7).

2. According to the social classifications in the Safavid era, the changing room of the bath was divided to six booths that each booth was for a specific class of the society i.e. descendant of the Holy Prophet, clergymen, chainan, lords, merchants and peasants (Zangi Abadi, 1991: 50).

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