

"Road" with the Landscape Approach

"Road" is a strange phenomenon in human life. In the beginning, it is only a path to reach somewhere. On this path, what is important is the destination. The question is how one can reach the destination in a short time and which path is the shortest. The story of the donkey is a good example in this case. For the animal, reaching the destination in a short time is the only rule that its instinct dictates. Every other purpose related to road is incompatible with the case of the donkey; however, for humans the story does not end at this point.

After determining the path, the act of coming and going begins. The passengers who head towards the destination take this path every day. These passengers no longer face the first day's question because the destination has already been defined. The question that they have is like the demand that civilized individuals have. Civilized individuals have liberated themselves from the leash of ordinary life and they pay attention to new capacities: capacities that life beyond ordinary living can provide. Civilized individuals think of growth, spirituality, culture and art and they try to manage their time and their living environment in a way that they can meet their "higher needs" while primitive man was only busy with satisfying his primary needs and ensuring his survival.

After its emergence, "road" adopted new roles because of the frequent use of humans, new experiences and the production of individual and collective memories as well as connecting two points together. "Road" becomes a spectacle for viewing nature and it Pictures the outside world for spectators from a specific point. In this role, "road" is a frame, a special choice out of endless possibilities for viewing nature; it channels the subjective role of viewers and it makes them watch a specific choice from the surrounding environment. At the same time, road increasingly limits the scope of one's choices by passing through specific areas.

On the other hand, the means of transportation force passengers to view the outside environment from a relatively fixed position and for a long period of time. This situation increases the role of memory production by the outside environment. The repetition of these memories turn the road landscape into certain symbols which play the role of creating an identity for the viewers. All passengers watch their scenery from a fixed point.

This incident is like the function of the street in the landscape of Iranian gardens. Unlike its Chinese and English counterparts, an Iranian garden helps viewers to see a selection of its scenery on its main streets and in a completely guided manner, with a solid hedge of trees. This helps all viewers to see the garden as a single unity, thereby producing a collective memory.

This way, in the continuation of its life, "road" turns into a landscape which portrays the surrounding environment as well as being part of the environment itself. In this case, its adopts two roles of "subjective" and "objective" in confronting the outside environment: it forms part of the outside world and it portrays it as well. "Road" with the landscape approach is no longer an element which connects two points together as humans have more demands compared to the story of the donkey on the basis of their nature and their mentality. That is why the path is no longer evaluated with the criterion of "the shortest" and "the road's landscapes" are not entrusted to those who use it on the periphery; rather, the expectation is that in the process of designating the road, the natural and historical elements of the landscape play their part as well and after building the road, the surrounding landscape create a collective memory for those who use the road and this should be done with thoughtful – not subjective and biased – planning.

In a beautiful portrait, Meisam Khalilpour Pictures the mountains and the desert through the language of the road. In that portrait, the continuous layers that give beauty and identity to the land are clearly evident in a way that the gifted photographer exquisitely plays with the landscape light in his collection.