

Alley as a «Landscape»

According to middle-aged people in major cities and for children who are living in all cities and villages of Iran, the «alley» is a place for manifestation of their social life. From early morning until sunset, the alley was a place for children to get-together and play. Later, as they grew older, they walked around the street with other children. The alley was a space for common experiences, emerging collective memories, making friendly bonds and holding wedding celebrations. It was also a place for elders to meet each other. Women sometimes considered it as a common space with their neighbors, and used to did their housework together in the alley. The alley residents were responsible for making and keep it alive; even naming the alley was their own job. Paving the front courtyard were continuing to the alley space, and it seemed was covering with forty diverse pieces, with a share for each house. If a tree was planted in an alley, then it was clear who is responsible to keep it safe. The alley was restricted to aliens. Where the alley was a dead-end, the residents asked the reason for the arrival and entering of strangers, and if it was an open way, they were used to look along the passer-by to get them out of their own privacy. The alley was a stand point and a place for collective life; Looking after the children who were playing in the alley was the responsibility of the residents according to an unwritten rule, and everyone was responsible for daily life of the alley. It was considered as a geographical territory that was representing democracy flowing in the public life of their residents in the best possible way. The alley was a symbol of sharing democracy, against the representative type of democracy, which used to establish a deep and effective relationship neither between the attorneys and appointed, nor among the constituents. Alley-based democracy was an attempt to found a social and an active contribution of space. The space in this kind of connections was not allocated to preserve the event, but instead it was meant to cause it and drive it forward. The alley space, was particularly organizing the inhabitant's daily life and their requests, as a social act that structured the relations between individuals. Moreover, with its spatial appearance, it was leading the emergence of communal experiences and the current of collective life. The alley (*Koocheh*), as its name indicates is consisted of two parts «*Koy + Che*» that refers to a place of collective living. The alley residents' perception of the physical appearance of events and their function represent a comprehensive landscape, in a manner that emerges in a physical body and is perceived in a distinct way through happenings and events which are experienced within it. This kind of perception to the alley arising from its definite inhabitants.

Alleys provide passages for passers-by with a variety of signs; however, for their inhabitants, each alley stands a landscape that emerges numerous spaces based on their collective memory. The greatest destruction happened to the current cities is the removal of alleys as a bond reason between a particular area of neighborhood. This realm and the means of perceiving it as an alley has been overlooked in modern cities with a predominance of the urban's four functions. Since then, the local communities and, consequently, the participation of their inhabitants in ruling urban life have been failed to recall.

The front cover image has been adopted from the master works of «Ali Jafari-Nodoushan» who is an artist photographer; it perfectly represents one of the picturesque alleys of Nodoushan city, reflecting its multi-layered life, even in its long-standing and damaged textures, where life still flows in them. *The photo donation to MANZAR Journal is a great favor and is highly appreciated.*

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