

## The Trilogy of Ritual Landscape

A ritual landscape is a combination of 'Place', 'Event', and 'Manifestation' in which the latter one is stronger than the others. In a ritual landscape 'observation' and 'participation' are considered as the main elements. The key actors in ritual landscape are the ordinary people as the audiences who participate in comprehending the play are of the same type. The ritual landscape is not the narrator of history, similar to what is happening to the myth; but instead it speaks of desires, concerns, and worldviews of past times. Therefore, criticizing it as a real fact and a narrator of history might have the anti-cultural consequences. The religious ceremony of Carpet-Washing (Persian: Qālī shūyān) held in Mashhad-e Ardahal is one of the ritual landscapes in which there is a combination of two traditional ceremonies belong to the Iranian Pre-Islamic and Post-Islamic cultures both in one ceremony. The event is held on the second Friday of the month of Mehr (October), which is according to the calendar of the propitious times (Saad) in ancient Iran, and its story is based on the blood revenge for an offense committed against the Imamzadeh. The symbols used in the ceremony has such a diverse and combinational aspects that decoding them can expose many ways for understanding the Iranian culture. Although the carpet-washing ceremony is kind of landscape that has gradually formed with many historical developments, but recent actions toward them with the aim of ideological interpreting might jeopardize its historical and mythological dimension. It should be noted that the ritual landscape cannot necessarily be evaluated by rational interpretation and its useful outcome addressing the utilitarianism; Rather, it is more appropriate to be considered as a manifestation of past culture in relation to the place. The combination of two rituals of 'Choob-Dastan' (People with sticks in their hands) and the emotional ceremony of 'Nohe-Khani' (a musical performance and mourning for Imam Hussein during the Moharam) together with the simultaneous participation of the actors and audiences in the ceremony, brings a special feeling toward an important event happened in the past of this territory, which its connection with the Imamzadeh's blood revenge gives the ceremony a sense of justice; as a final word, the ritual landscape of Qālī shūyān must be preserved.

Seyed Amir Mansouri  
amansoor@ut.ac.ir

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