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PAGES¹

Public & Private

Public Spaces in Enclosure

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Foreword

News and the press in Iran are an important part of everyday life, a part of the private and public life of every citizen. There are more than 50 newspapers and other publications distributed every day in the streets of major cities. One may no longer see the same titles one would have found a few years ago on the shelves of the newsstands, but new titles always appear to fill in the gaps on the shelf. (What is interesting is that the press itself has become an important part of the news...) The large quantity of dailies, weeklies or periodicals says a lot about the intensified tendency to address social and political issues. This clearly reflects a gradual social move away from predefined codes and representations, toward the acceptance of profound cultural difference and a diversified subjectivity. As a public domain where news, opinions and dialogues are circulated, the press has led a turbulent and a fragmentary life. Because of the juridical and political confusion the press is facing, the circulation of these dialogues and opinions remain rather short-lived and often inconsistent. And this has intensified the social and political agitation in Iran, where discordant and transitory discourses of representation have come to coexist.

On the other hand, the overall sociopolitical climate in Iran undermines any attempt to construct or implement consistent or even stereotypical cultural representations, either from the inside or outside. However, attempts are still being made to suggest a homogeneous state of affairs, either by the traditionalists in Iran or by certain cultural agents in the West, in order to promote simplified representations that address “cultural localities” and “difference” in a “global world.” These misreadings, especially by onlookers from the West, tend to reduce those narratives of difference and discord (which profoundly define the cultural condition) to irrelevancy. In both cases we are dealing with

a process of projective subjectivization, by means of which the – traditionalist and/or the Western – onlooker (presup)poses the existence of a symbolic network with which he can identify, though it may or may not be relevant to reality. In other words, he designates a determinate subject position for himself through the projection of narratives other than those of the real, which always involve differentiation and dissonance.

Pages is an attempt to communicate these existing narratives. Rooted more in the context of visual arts, this periodical tries to function as a platform for exchanging thoughts and artistic projects reflecting on the sociopolitical currents in Iran and elsewhere. For its first issue, Pages will address the subject of public and private in Iran, in terms of space, appearance and activity. Through the contributions of different authors, it aims to approach different representations of public and private in cinema, photography, theater and architecture. It is hoped that the publication of this periodical will be continuous and that its later issues will include contributions of non-Iranian writers and artists, so as to widen its territories of exchange and dialogue.

Nasrin Tabatabai / Babak

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In Iran, the relation between power/authority and public space has undergone many transformations and changes. For a long time, the authority of the monarchy-state over the people, the old over the young, men over women, parents over children, et cetera, was certain and indisputable. This authority/power had a class-defined appearance in the whole society and had found a geographical form and definition. Tehran, as the administrative, economical, cultural and educational center had a certain resoluteness and authority over the rest of the country, and within Tehran itself, the northern and the rich neighborhoods had the same privilege over the deprived southern neighborhoods. Tehran was two separate cities with two different societies and cultures. Some invisible but quite thick walls separated different cultural, social and economical spaces of the city, controlling and regulating the entry of the people to different spaces. Thus, the kind and the quality of presence of the people in public spaces of the city had recognizable signs of class distinction throughout the society.

The impact that the Islamic Revolution had on the social and urban structure of Tehran and other large cities of Iran is undeniable in all respects. One of the first manifestations of the Revolution was the alteration of “public space” to “a space for the public.” As the protests began, Tehrani citizens appropriated their whole city and breached the class and space bans. “Enqelab Avenue” (Revolution Avenue, the new name for what was formerly called Shah Reza Avenue), the location of Tehran University and many bookstores, as a symbolic axis that divided the city into two northern and southern halves also considered the symbolic space of the new middle class, became the first space of encounter and then the meeting of different social classes. The beginning of the Revolution was at the same time the beginning of the death of the old authority and

the birth of a new one which, despite its freshness, was based on tradition and religion. The new authority, which was essentially different from the one in the Shah’s time, became increasingly powerful in the society during the Iran-Iraq war.

What made the new authority distinct from the previous one was indeed its lack of locality concerning geography, space and class. The new authority, having been formed on the basis of religious and revolutionary bans, indeed had no particular and classifiable social position as it had in the past, and thus it could emerge in all social classes and urban places and spaces. So, what changed the look of the city in the public spaces at the beginning of the Revolution was the replacement of the type of authority. The new authority quickly found an objective crystallization and showed itself in the new appearance and norms of the society. Despite their undeniable role in the Revolution, women, earlier than others, came under the new patriarchal authority with its revolutionary attributes, and the kind and quality of their presence in public spaces underwent an essential change. Soon, the new form and nature of the presence of women in public spaces became a norm of the Islamic society. Thereafter, not only the appearance of the people, but also their behavior in public spaces were under new rules which, this time, were based on traditional, religious and revolutionary thoughts. The new social norms, as the controlling power of the new sovereignty, gained prevalence in public spaces and determined new patterns for the presence of women and men in the city.

Thus, in the social spaces of Iran, the quality of people’s presence in public spaces came into a close relation with power, a relation that was typically new. This relation, after the Islamic Revolution, came about mainly in regard to the gender and the

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age of the people. Consequently, women and young people were more distinctly influenced by the new authority. However, because of the complexity of the social relations in Iranian society, the authority, despite its initial power and force, was subjected to continual change that was primarily caused by the phenomenon of simultaneity in different spaces and times. The simultaneities occurred due to the sovereignty of the traditional authority in a society that had an intense tendency toward globalization and adaptation to the patterns of the developed and modern world, and thus they appeared mainly in the large and modern spaces of the cities, especially in Tehran. For years (particularly before Mr. Khatami was elected as president in 1997), large squares of Tehran such as the Vanak or Vali-Asr squares, in certain moments (e.g. at occasions when revolutionary guards decided to control the public spaces for religious, social, cultural or security reasons), were capable of suddenly transforming into large enclosed spaces under the traditional rules and regulations of enclosed interior/exterior² spaces (*andaruni/biruni*), despite being spatially open and extensive and belonging to today's world. A large and crowded square of the city would suddenly transform into a place in which any appearance, behavior and presence had to follow a pattern consisting of bans and permissions. Such conflicting simultaneities in urban spaces were able to intensively change the function and even the identity of the place and space for a certain time, creating more complexity and more contradiction within the society. Therefore, what seems interesting in the urban society of Tehran in these years is the transience and temporary aspect of place/space, which causes different places to find variable meanings in different situations, without having a functional identity throughout time.

The temporary nature and the multiple aspects of space and time often pertain to places that have more modern characteristics, because traditional neighborhoods almost always have a recognized and particular identity and function. In such neighborhoods women and young people are controlled by the inhabitants who have a continuous presence and follow certain behavioral and external codes, whereas in more crowded and modern neighborhoods, because of the extensiveness of the spaces and anonymity of the people, there is no possibility of cultural and social control for the inhabitants. So, the emergence of the simultaneity phenomenon relates for the most part to the social, cultural and economic structure of the urban places and spaces. For many, the transient and temporary characteristic of space and place is a sign of the establishment of modernity in the society, because in that case, social relations, like space, would be in a "becoming" mode rather than a "being" one. These two traits, which appear in postmodern thoughts as the temporary nature of the identity, are also applicable to the society and spaces in Tehran. But here, the temporary nature and change of function of the place, like the identity of people in public spaces, relates to the tough transitory stage of the revolution and the simultaneity of certain stages: application of behavioral patterns and Islamic/traditional dress code in a city formed on the basis of a modern and up-to-date lifestyle. This experience gains a special significance in regard to the manner of women's presence in social spaces and somehow becomes a constant transition from tradition to modernity/postmodernity, from the interior space to the vast space of the global city. But in the particular case of Tehran, the reverse course is even more interesting: the sudden and temporary change of the boundless space of the global city into the enclosed space of the old interiors.

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Dislocating the Enclosed Space of the Interior Enclosure of women's space and the rule of "interior" codes are still prevalent in many old neighborhoods and traditional families. In most of the old neighborhoods, the alleys and blind alleys are located along the houses and somehow provide a space for transition from the enclosed space of home to the vast space of the city. In such neighborhoods, the neighbors, relatives and inhabitants themselves are in charge of controlling behavior, manner of presence, and even the manner of socialization of the women and young people. Therefore, if we perceive the traditional neighborhood as a kind of andaruni, then we can assume the vast space of the city as the exterior biruni, i.e., the free space, the masculine space, a space for work, a space for anonymity. Local control is almost impossible in such large urban centers where anonymity and multitude of the people bring freedom for the quality of being and of the presence of people. However, despite such freedom in vast urban spaces, at certain times, in Iran, public or semi-public spaces – streets, parks, and crowded squares of the capital – can also suddenly change into closed interior spaces with intertwined networks of enclosed spaces, bringing about bans and different codes of behavior and appearance for "the quality of being and of presence" of women and young people, limiting and "enclosing" temporarily the free and open space of the city for them. After the Revolution, this caused the concept of andaruni Afrassiabi (the interior as the controlled space and not the feminine space) to be reconstructed in different forms in the daily life of Iranian women. The prevalence of new ways of life and the generalization of urban culture alongside the rule of the Islamic morality caused the enclosed and controlled spaces such as the interiors (homes) to lose their particular local concept and gain the ability to move through space and time without any obligation to have a particular local position or physical border.

With the increasing entry of women into the urban spaces and public spheres, which contradicted the traditional viewpoints that disapproved extensive presence of women in public domain, the interior and controlled space also acquired the capability of shifting from home to neighborhood and then to the large urban spaces. That capability not only materialized in the public spaces of the cities but also somehow influenced the manner and the form of the presence of women in the city environment. In the first decade after the Revolution, the prevalence of black color in women's hijab (whether compulsory or optional) suggested most clearly the definition of the transportable andaruni. In the same way as the tall walls of old neighborhoods along the alleys are stretched repeatedly and monotonously to protect the identity of the home and the interior (the woman's place), so the remarkable homogeneity of the presence of black-covered women in public spaces of the city protected them from the sight, recognition and even imagination of the passersby. So, the important functions of hijab were de-escalation of visibility of women, establishment of homogeneity, concealment of diversity and difference, and direction of the society toward unity. The invisibility of women under the black chadors or hijab is, on the one hand, aimed at establishment of a social unity model as well as evasion from diversity in Islamic traditional society, and, on the other hand, the dislocation and the mobility of women's interior and enclosed space. Such dislocation of the enclosed space is quite similar to the mechanism that Michel Foucault mentions, in another way, as the swarming of disciplinary mechanisms in eighteenth-century France.

"While, on the one hand, the disciplinary establishments increase, their mechanisms have a certain tendency to become 'de-institutionalized,' to emerge from the closed fortresses in which they

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once functioned and to circulate in a 'free' state; the massive, compact disciplines are broken down into flexible methods of control, which may be transferred and adapted."³

Similarly, in Iran, the dislocation of the interior means delocalization of the discipline of the enclosed interior, spreading it into the large urban society. Application of the disciplinary mechanisms for homogeneity of people's presence – particularly women's presence – in public spaces was, until recently, one of the strongest visual experiences of foreign tourists or Iranians who were revisiting their country after a long time. They were immediately impressed by the lack of color and the saturation of the urban spaces with the black color of the women's coverings. After the Revolution, particularly in the last decade, with the increased presence of women and young girls in educational and professional fields, which were often under the control of traditional attitudes, black and thoroughly dark clothing were recognized as women's formal apparel. In this way, with the increased and at times uninvited presence of women in the urban spaces, places that were previously exclusive to men found new definitions which destabilized the masculine order, rules and regulations. So, to prevent the atmosphere from feminization, it required that women's physical presence be controlled as much as possible. Therefore, to re-establish the masculine order and the Islamic morality in the city, application of a new discipline quite different from the one that governed public spaces in the Shah's time was needed.

Such a discipline had to be applied primarily to the bodies and appearance of people, especially women, to establish the new order in the society and to control the people. For that purpose, the body had to be turned into a "fence" to prevent any manifestations and desires of the individual

so that he/she becomes a prototypical image with his/her manner and appearance conforming to the accepted prototype of the Islamic society. The motto "Hijab is immunity not limitation," renders the whole meaning of hijab in its new form. It indicates that on the one hand hijab, like a protective fence and a high wall, would secure and protect women against "strangers,"⁴ on the other hand it would make their presence possible in the space of the global city – here, a masculine, traditional and religious one. Foucault puts disciplinary enclosure and homogeneity of places (here, bodies) another way: "Discipline sometimes requires enclosure, the specification of a place heterogeneous to all others and closed in upon itself. It is the protected space of disciplinary monotony." In Iran, application of discipline, which would enclose women in open urban spaces, was performed first through generalization of hijab and then was followed by limitation of choice of colors, to increase even more the discipline and the homogeneity of visual spaces.

Even today, despite the variety in models and colors of women's clothing in urban spaces, black is still the dominant color in official environments. In fact, the black color of women's clothing is the best apparatus for the homogenization of the environment and omission of the "otherness" (of women) in masculine spaces. However, black is not only an imposed color in masculine (official) environments, rather, many women wear it in urban spaces as a strategy for concealing themselves from the others' looks and to increase their quiet but active presence in masculine society. Thus, in a short time, the superficial homogenization policy, which was applied to the society as the best apparatus for controlling of Islamic morals and the quality of people's presence, particularly women, paradoxically increased women's presence in different domains of the society and various public spaces.

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Since diversity and difference in a society that tends toward homogeneity would attract others' attention and would expose one's individuality and exclude one from the others, in order to have a more extensive presence in the public and often masculine spaces of the city, women had to have an absent presence in the society, a presence that could not be seen or felt. Women's tendency toward being invisible in public spaces indicates, more than any other thing, their feeling of insecurity in the city and their awareness of the violation of "interior" rules. In the Islamic morality-based society, for many girls and young women, being seen is considered as being subjected to judgment by others, and attracting dangers.

Thus, visibility in Iranian urban spaces finds dual and contradictory meanings. If, in Western societies, visibility of people brings about public security in urban spaces, for many Iranian women and young people it is equal to insecurity and being subjected to constant control by others. This controlling look is the same apparatus that Foucault refers to, in his account of the architecture of the "all-seeing" prison, Bentham's Panopticon, as the controlling instrument of a huge prison with only one jailer.⁵ The "all-seeing" prisons have a special architecture (which was later used in schools, training centers, hospitals and asylums) that would enable the supervisor to simultaneously observe all the occupants from a central tower without being seen. Thus, the visibility of an individual and his awareness of the existence of authority and the possible presence of an observer result in his/her constant obligation to comply with the discipline. Foucault mentions the correlation between the insecurity and visibility of the individual in his account of the effect of the panoptic architecture on the inmates:

"Hence the major effect of the Panopticon: to induce in the inmate a state of conscious and permanent visibility that assures the automatic functioning of power. So to arrange things that the surveillance is permanent in its effects, even if it is discontinuous in its action; that the perfection of power should tend to render its actual exercise unnecessary... Bentham laid down the principle that power should be visible and unverifiable. Visible: the inmate will constantly have before his eyes the tall outline of the central tower from which he is spied upon. Unverifiable: the inmate must never know whether he is being looked at any one moment; but he must be sure that he may always be so."⁶

In the space of large Iranian cities, women live with the same feeling of continual but secret control. Therefore, the experience of wearing black is in fact the paradoxical experience of a quality of freedom along with acceptance of enclosure and discipline. To be disciplined and similar to others allows the individual to be less subjected to others' sight and consequently free in his/her territory. But, on the other hand, the dominance of the black color and the similarity of the appearance of women, as well as the lack of a visible socio-cultural identity, tend to distort the identity boundaries and cause a lot of social problems. Prototyping and similarities had therefore caused new tensions and distorted many social definitions and signs that were intended for the readability of the society. Because of the fading of the identity signs in urban spaces, many moral deviations, particularly those of women, went unseen due to the invisibility. The lack of diverse outward models and instead, the mere presence of a dual dress pattern (chador/manteau and scarf)⁷ – which nevertheless have an important socio-cultural meaning – along with the lack of freedom of choice in clothing due to family, social, cultural, place and time requirements, all caused women to

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change their appearances quite easily on certain occasions to adapt to the environment, acquiring a defined identity which would facilitate and justify their presence in that particular place. For some, the unchallenged power of the rule of “appearance” in public spaces gradually became a means of dissimulation of the identity or changing it on required occasions. In public spaces, the new identity strategy causes that “the individual to adopt different identity strategies in his/her different social relations and, in fact, to deny his/her real capability (identity) in public spaces.”⁸

Dissimulation of identity in urban spaces is, on the other hand, indicative of the feeling of insecurity in the society. But the insecurity that women feel in Iranian public spaces is not exactly of the same nature as in the Western societies, rather it originates from the moral and traditional roots peculiar to patriarchal societies. Such a feeling of insecurity, although much diminished in recent years – unfortunately being replaced with the kind of feeling of insecurity prevailing in large urban societies of the West – has not yet much affected the manner of presence of women in the cities in particular places and times.

The Role of Time in the Enclosure of Space

“The degree to which we can move between countries, or walk about the streets at night, or venture out of hotels in foreign cities, is not just influenced by ‘capital.’ Survey after survey has shown how women’s mobility, for instance, is restricted – in a thousand different ways, from physical violence to being ogled at or made to feel quite simply ‘out of place’ – not by capital but by men.”⁹

The moral conventions and norms prevailing in Iranian urban spaces have caused our public spaces to have relatively high security compared to many

European countries. The rate of homicide, crime and rape is still much lower in Tehran than most large European and American cities. But, culturally, there is no corresponding security in our female and male mindset. For many of Iranian women, their solitary presence in the streets and public spaces late at night would not cause a real danger, rather, it would unconsciously be considered as a violation of the interior rules, one that deserves punishment. In other words, for women, fear of presence in public spaces, out of prescribed time and place, is due to the constancy of the rules of traditional thought in the streets, rather than the physical, financial or sexual insecurity that exist in Western public spaces. Furthermore, the alteration of outward and moral definitions has often caused the recognizability of right and wrong to be based on taste, expedience and culture, which can easily endanger the security and citizenship of women and even men. In Iran, there are still few women who dare to walk alone or without a male relative even in crowded streets and safe neighborhoods late at night while it is quite usual for women in European cities – at least in safe neighborhoods and crowded streets. The reality is that here, thousand-year-old subjective patterns are still governing the spaces of our cities.

The weighty cultural value of night has increased even more after the Revolution and has limited substantially the mobility of women. Traditional prejudices have caused any solitary presence of women, with any appearance, at night to be considered as a violation of the norms of the masculine territory. The presence of a woman in many public spaces late at night would be bearable only in two ways: in the street with a man who is considered to be a close male relative according to Islamic morals, or in the enclosed space of a car if she is alone. In other words, a large city like Tehran where thousands of women drive in its streets and

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frequent its different spaces in daylight without any feeling of fear or annoyance, would change, with the fall of night, into an enclosed space in which their presence would be considered as a negative act according to the interior rules.

Exit From the Andaruni

Iranian women, in urban spaces, have to cope with a complex pattern that is an odd mixture of modern life and restrictive traditional/cultural imagery. Limitations and cultural prescriptions against women in social spaces and public spheres have prevented them from fully benefiting from their situation, so that they tend to exclude themselves as “others” and deny their needs as far as possible. Although this is being diminished nowadays, civil behavior and the manner of presence of women in the city indicate that difference or otherness (among women, young people, and all those who do not conform to the prescribed patterns) is not yet accepted easily in Iranian society. That is particularly evident in the case of Afghan refugees and gypsies in Tehran. That is to say, from long ago, in the eyes of the public, those two groups have been and still are responsible for most of the offenses in the urban space. Perhaps the cause of this prejudice could be sought in their difference of appearance and, consequently, their visibility compared to other citizens. For a better understanding of women’s position in the public spaces of society from the official and traditional point of view, we can consider, as an example, the traditional place of women in public religious lectures and even in conferences or in university classes. After the Islamic Revolution, in most of the gatherings, women and men sit separately. In most cases men take the best center and front seats while women sit at the rear rows, edges and places with almost no visibility. In the same way, in some of the university classes women sit at the rear, men sit in

front. The interesting point is the positive reaction of many women to this arrangement as a tacit and agreed-upon principle. That is because marginality is equal to invisibility and, consequently, to retaining security/freedom in the public spaces.

Marginality of women and the tendency toward excluding them (compulsory and optional) from public sphere for different reasons (and even at times with physical and sexual violence) is not a phenomenon peculiar to Iran. In Western societies too, women are still seeking their civil rights and still have a more or less marginal position in public, political, economic and social domains. However, the difference between the Iranian society and Western societies is that in Iran, although women, more than ever – and in cases like higher education,¹⁰ at the same pace as Western women – have entered public spheres, the preventive walls, restrictions and marginality are still quite clearly, visibly and persistently there. Whereas in the West, many women have stood against such marginality and the order of society is increasingly tending toward admittance of the differences.

Therefore, today, to enter visibly the public sphere, Iranian women are trying in different ways and by emphasizing their “being” and “being women,” to show their different presence. The breaking of custom by young girls concerning their appearance, the acquisition of political power by women in ministries, parliament, universities where they endorse their otherness and the necessity of revision of the attitudes toward women, or the presence of Shirin Ebadi without Islamic hijab in the Nobel Prize ceremony, all indicate that Iranian women are determined to find their real position in the society and different public spheres in Iran and in the world. If, over a period of time, the “absent presence” and the invisibility of women resulted in their quiet but

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constant gains of power in different socio-political and cultural fields, today, more than ever, the public sphere and public spaces belongs to all citizens': women, men, children and old people with their differences. In the era of the globalization and of the dominance of the Internet, the time of "fenced cities" and enclosed interior spaces of andaruni, is over.

//The above text is a translation from Farsi.

1. A version of this article was first published in *Architecture & Urbanism* (April 2002, Tehran).
2. Andaruni (interior space) can be signified by different and numerous definitions and functions. Sometimes it may refer to feminine spaces where the creation of space is done by social organization and feminine order. Sometimes it may refer to the power that forms this space from outside by masculine authority, which places the whole movements, the way of being, and even eating, dressing and social relations of woman under the control of the "Lord" of the house. Architecturally, Iranian/Islamic old and traditional houses consisted of two parts: biruni and andaruni (exterior and interior). The andaruni was a private space allocated to women where no strangers were entitled to enter. But the biruni, which included the public spaces of the house such as the courtyard and drawing room, was the masculine part where women's entry required observation of Islamic dress and moral codes.
3. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1977), 211.
4. *Ibid.*, 141.
5. Many thinkers have used Foucault's *Discipline and Punish* in their studies on the control of people in different spaces. Among them is the following article in which the writer describes how the idea and the prevailing method of control in all-seeing prisons are used in today's modern societies and public sphere. In a lot of Western countries, particularly in the US, people are controlled by an invisible power through exploitation of the information gathered from people's social insurance cards or credit cards. See: Matt Hannah, "Imperfect Panopticism: Envisioning the Construction of Normal Lives," in U. Strohmayer and G. Benko, eds., *Space and Social Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).
6. Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*, 201.
7. Chador, as a traditional overall garment, hides the woman from head to toe. It is usually traditional women's choice (regardless of their financial status). Although in government jobs and from the government's point of view chador is a prior preference, women working in governmental (administrative, educational) environments use manteau and maghna'e (a large scarf that completely covers head and shoulders down to the chest) as an alternative. But modern women and women who work in the private sector have chosen manteau and scarf as a kind of modern hijab. Since Khatami's election as president, more and more modern women and young girls have tended toward various colors and latest fashions and thus diversified the space of the city while maintaining the general concept of hijab.
8. Mojtaba Sadria, "The Action of Wound, a Polyform on Identity," *Farhange Tose-é* (April 2001, Tehran), 27.
9. Doreen Massey, *Space, Place and Gender* (Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 1994), 148.
10. The number of female students who entered Iran universities since 1998 amounts to more than 50% of the whole student population. In the current year it was 63% of the total entry to Iranian.

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Raha Faridi
Ahmad Kachechian
Mina Khalili
Salma Rafiee

You can hear their voices. Their steps are heavy and they are breathless. Among the massive crowd of the streets and public passages, they put on their masks one by one to begin the new act in their city play.

“Excuse me sir... Madam, would you please... a few moments... I, ... I, ... have left my wallet, could I ask you... Toop Khooneh street, Bazaar, two more passengers, Toop Khooneh...”

Having dropped the masks, retired from the permanent play of time, they are sunken into deep negligence at the steering wheels of their cars or in the backseats of taxis so that they wouldn't wait for another tomorrow, wouldn't wait for anything else except the masks that the city would put on their faces. A new game is coming, an earthquake to arouse the national resolution or a religious occasion so that everyone can prove that they are religious or that they are not and...

We established the artist-group Arta in early 2003. There were four of us then, working in the fields of theater and cinema. We did not intend to work within a particular art form; rather we wanted to achieve multifaceted works based on our own capabilities as well as other artists' cooperation. We have based our work on experience and research, and in most of our sessions we sketch out our projects through

discussion and exchange of experiences. In October 2003 we started a project on Tehran. The idea of the project had initially originated from working with some young theater and cinema students. They worked with me for a year. It was in fact a kind of training. They wanted to experiment outside the professional space of Iranian theater. After a long search, having failed to find a suitable place for our rehearsals, we decided to use the city space i.e., parks, streets, even the mountains around the city. This led us, most of the time, to sketch out rehearsals with urban subject matter that dealt directly with people. Interestingly, sometimes in rehearsals that did not directly relate to people, they unconsciously (and sometimes consciously) entered the play.

When we decided to begin the Tehran project, we found it a good idea to include the experiences of those students in this project. Thus the young group joined Arta. Again, we went to the city space, this time with the presumption that the city space was tantamount to a theater stage and that people with their urban presence and behavior were the actors on the stage. The interesting point at the beginning was the defensive position taken by the group against the city. The members who (all but two of them) were born and had grown up in Tehran, were alien to their city and had guarded against it. That was perhaps a reflection of the contradiction that existed between their private lives and the public life in the city, a contradiction they had never encountered consciously, although they were living in its midst. Our initial works were attempts to break that guard and to directly engage the group in the realities of the city.

The open and current urban space of Tehran is a labyrinthine experience. Tehran has a contradictory urban structure. The traditional texture of the city

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still exists in some of its southern parts and some northern parts have maintained their initial rural appearance. But the city is rapidly changing to a metropolitan city that is a composition of physical, social and political heterogeneity. The young population, the contradiction between the private and the public life of the citizens, the heterogeneous architecture and the constant change of the public spaces into stages for demonstrations and different religious and traditional ceremonies are what outline the indefinite identity of the city. But as things go, Tehran could find a new identity in which life would be like a game, a game with no winning or losing. To be consciously engaged in this unconscious game would change the citizens of this city to actors. We register the dramatic behavior in the city, enter the actual conditions of this behavior, seek our roles there and recreate our findings in our plays. And we are trying to find out this significant point: If the public space of the city has the function of a theater stage, then where is its backstage?

//The above text is a translation from Farsi.

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“There is no need for arms, physical violence, material constraints. Just a gaze. An inspecting gaze, a gaze which each individual under its weight will end by interiorizing to the point that he is his own overseer, each individual thus exercising this surveillance over, and against, himself. A superb formula: power exercised continuously and for what turns out to be a minimal cost.”¹

Space & Privacy

Space in its most general sense covers a wide range of material and non-material realms that pertain to different levels of privacy. The most private space one can ever experience is the non-material space of personal thoughts and conceptions. The chances of being able to intrude into this private sphere have been considerably slim so far, so almost everyone can enjoy this intimacy without any threats. On the other hand, we can assume the outside world to be the arena that is most public in character. One can find intermediate levels of privacy within these two limits.

The formation of all sorts of space, whether public or private, has always been under the influence of the dialectics of power and the tendency to control the private realm. The contradiction between the will of individuals and the governing powers is a global circumstance. All forms of power have the obsession to operate within the furthest possible spatial limits. This will ideally include those pockets of individual private space that might influence the power in any way. But the methods and limits set to this interference have been very diverse throughout political history. Ethics and social norms have always set restrictions to the extent of interference with individual privacy and freedom, and there has always been a negotiation regarding the government’s right to control and survey. The recent changes in US policies, after the increasing fears of

terrorism, have provided the government with more extensive rights to intrude into the private sphere, claiming that it is indispensable for national security. Though the United States is widely seen as the haven for personal freedom, this is an example of how people may compromise on their right to privacy, even in a democratic society. But there are far more severe approaches in totalitarian political systems.

The organization of space is basically an architectural activity, and conditions resulting from the tension between power structures and privacy-seeking individuals can arguably be seen in the form of architectural and urban spaces, and the manners they are used. Almost all species tend to allocate certain amounts of space to their natural modes of behavior, defining specific domains according to these. But in the case of human beings, the interaction between public and private spaces is rather more complicated. The boundaries of human domains are a product of an interaction between three different factors: power, culture and technology.

The need to associate with the public versus the need for privacy forms a balance that shapes one’s attitude towards public and private spaces in a city. When the public arena shows a great degree of tolerance for different aspects of individual characters, urban space gains greatly in importance and complexity. If this tolerance is taken to an extreme, only few activities will traditionally remain within private spaces.

Privacy & Human Rights

The notion of privacy has been hard to define, and has been the object of a wide range of analytical approaches. The “archetypal” complaints regarding laws on privacy have been about the “public disclosure of private facts” and the “intrusion upon

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an individual's seclusion, solitude or private affairs".² Gavison defines privacy as "limited accessibility," with three independent but related components: secrecy (information known about an individual); anonymity (attention paid to an individual); and solitude (physical access to an individual).³ As stated in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights: "No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks on his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks."

Although privacy has been declared a basic human right, there are numerous examples of violations in many countries. The citizens of many communist states have been known to witness perpetual intrusions into their privacy by their respective totalitarian regimes. And in the West, considering the enormous development of communication and information technologies, it is becoming increasingly easy to practice surveillance over individuals, both for governmental and private organizations, for the sake of national security or economic benefits.

The definition of "human rights" has been criticized by the Iranian government, arguing that it is advocating Western values and not essentially global ones as accepted by different cultures. Therefore, the right to privacy will also be interpreted in different ways. Though it could be argued that "privacy" and the rights it implies are not clearly defined anywhere, even in the West, the comparison of existing conditions in Iran with those in democratic countries makes it quite obvious that the implemented policies regarding private life are radically different. In Iran, the ambitions of the government to penetrate the private sphere are considerably greater. On the other hand, due to the lack of resources, and the tendency of the population to safeguard their private

spaces – be it for traditional or other motives – the government has not always been very successful in this respect.

Intrusion of Power & Definition of "Illegal Act"

The dialogue about risk plays the role equivalent to taboo or sin, but the slope is tilted in the reverse direction, away from protecting the community and in favor of protecting the individual.⁴

When the concepts of "sin" and "illegality" are combined, governmental power will subsequently be merged with the overwhelming presence of God, and the idea of "surveillance" perfected in a panoptical sense. George Orwell painted a well-known picture of totalitarian powers in his novel *1984*. What is referred to as "Big Brother" can be boosted with the intangible presence of a politically defined and propagated concept of "God." In this manner, the surveillance is extended to an ultimate level that is independent of any material means. This effect can be observed within a religious political system, which can be perfectly exemplified in the existing situation in Iran.

Since the definition of an illegal act is quite flexible and shifting in practical terms in Iran, the potential limits of the interference within public and private spheres are completely vague. The application of this method of surveillance is quite practical in the case of traditional sectors of society, which still constitutes the majority. At the same time, the changing demographic situation of a growing number of youths, and the increasing development of access to non-governmental media, which in some cases are not fully controlled by the government, has led to a change.

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In ideal democratic conditions, the law is a reflection of what the majority of people consider beneficial for the whole society. So the law will almost completely conform to the preferences of people in general. In this case, the people accept the definitions of illegal acts. Whenever the gap between established social norms and the government's legal definitions is widened, private space gains in importance. Under these conditions, individuals seek refuge in every possible space which might hide their politically unacceptable behavior.

Panopticon, Surveillance & Power The automatic functioning of power has always been an intriguing theme for rulers. In ultimate conditions people will automatically act according to inclinations of power because of a constant fear of surveillance. Based on this principle, secret agents, intelligence agencies and recently, hidden cameras, have always been of great interest for powers specifically in totalitarian and non-democratic regimes. The more intangible the method of surveillance is, the more awesome it becomes. The imagination and constant fear of being surveyed in these conditions operates as a self-regulating factor. Jeremy Bentham, a utilitarian philosopher and theorist of British legal reform proposed a model prison, known as the Panopticon, in which due to a clever spatial configuration the design ensured that no prisoner could ever see the "inspector" who conducted surveillance from the privileged central location within the radial configuration. The prisoner could never know when he was being surveyed – a mental uncertainty which in itself would prove to be a crucial disciplinary instrument. This effect would lead to a perpetual sense of being under control, which would result in a condition in which the power is automatically exerted. As Foucault analyzes the Panopticon, the automatic exertion of power is achieved through the fact that it is "visible" and "unverifiable" in this situation.

Contemporary literature concerned with surveillance favors the metaphoric imagery expatiated in George Orwell's prescient vision of Oceania and, more commonly, Michel Foucault's abstraction of the panoptic. For Orwell, the future totalitarian state was exemplified by the "telescreen," the "thought police" and categorically selective social monitoring practices. According to him, the constant visibility of Big Brother served as a mechanism of repression oriented towards inducing and maintaining compliance and social order. Foucault, by contrast, understood the visible manifestations of modern surveillance as having been increasingly rendered unnecessary through the normalizing gaze of the disciplines and the constitution of self-regulating subjects. Well beyond a mechanism of repression, panoptic observation involved a productive reflection on the self to the extent that the dispersion of truth claims across a range of social institutions served to generate disciplinary practices and the exercise of power over oneself.⁵

Privacy in Tehran: A Case Study

In a traditional non-secular context, the everpresent God will have the ultimate power of observation and surveillance. God will have the ultimate power to survey every conceivable location, and no single violation of divine law will be ignored. Traditionally this principle has proved as the most sophisticated and arguably most efficient method of surveillance. According to some people the rate of crimes have been typically low in more traditional regions of Iran, and arguably religious beliefs, which lead to a self-controlling personal mentality, are a major factor in this regard. Aside from that, religious teachings which urge for all believers to "correct" the society at any time have sometimes been misused as a means to violate individual privacy and freedom. The political model in Iran has been meant to bring

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about a sort of legitimacy based both on divine and democratic foundations. The legal consequences of this criterion have formed a condition which is almost unique in the world. Even apparently secular and internationally standard regulations such as traffic laws have been argued to be part of religious rules. Religious political power as practiced in Iran is assumed to be the extension of a divine power bestowed on the leader, and the rules and laws are therefore interpreted as divine. Violation of all rules is hence considered to be a transgression with respect to God. So the legitimacy of power when correcting the people is not merely a civil one, but is extended to God's will. Contradictions of some widely accepted behaviors, which are quite legal in most parts of the world, and Islamic law, which in Iranian political system is the sole result of interpretations of religious teachings by the regime, has been the cause of an ambiguous situation in Iran. The most important aspect of this issue is that the ultimate official interpretation of divine teachings is maintained as the supreme law that can never be subject to any democratic selection or reading. So in this manner the law will not always be the result of a democratic process and will not essentially be accepted by the majority. The most well-known example of this issue is the dramatic difference between people's way of dressing in official and non-official spaces. The compulsory official dressing codes, especially in case of women, are rarely respected and followed in non-governmental spaces, and the common manner of dressing is dramatically different in private life. It could be argued that these dualities and differences in public and private features of life in Iran have contributed to the strong tendency to isolate and close private life, a tendency which is translated into public-urban and private-architectural spaces in Tehran. As far as the interference of power and individual privacy is concerned, the duality of legitimating discourse

allows the religious governments to have a flexible and almost unlimited right to control private aspects of life, which may also include private architectural spaces. As a result the relative opacity of private space increases in order to safeguard the intimacy and privacy in many cases. Of course it is not factual to study this effect regardless of traditional Iranian culture and architecture which both show a great inclination towards seclusion in private life. The urban presence in case of a majority of the young people in Tehran amounts to a perpetual escape from surveillance. Certain spots within the urban and suburban environments are hence considered safe havens for their "illegal" acts. The value of these spots increase due to the mere fact of their relative opacity to surveyors. Coffee shops, restaurants, parks and desolate urban spaces are the preferred places. The relative privacy of a car has also been of interest, and many sexual encounters between men and women take place in cars. One can also witness gatherings and open-air parties taking place in the mountain resorts and suburban areas.

The formation of housing as a private space has also been influenced by the growing demand for private space, mostly on behalf of the young generation. Apart from the general fact that the price of land and real estate has been rocketing during recent years, another factor contributing to the high demand for small dwellings and apartments is an increasing need for independent private space on the part of youth. Some have tried to mix the function of office and personal private space, resulting in an ambiguous condition that is less likely to be subject to surveillance. It is still prestigious and luxurious to own or rent an independent dwelling for almost all young people in Tehran, and the majority has to cope with the problems of life with their families. The different lifestyles of the generations are a source of conflict and quarrel in many families,

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which leads young people to a confusing situation, in which they attempt to flee both their family homes and the public spaces which are mostly under surveillance. Since many landlords fear the potential legal problems arising from the lifestyle of the youth – sexual relations, drugs and potentially illegal political activities, along with young people's other general problems – they are very reluctant to lease any property to them.

Surveillance is also associated with sex and gender in Iran. The social presence of women has been more extensively subject to surveillance, compared to that of men. Women have been traditionally more restricted in their social behaviors and outlooks, and these limitations have been imposed on them through cultural and social norms, which are used to control the people in an everyday manner. The combination of political legitimacy and the still-powerful social norms for feminine behavior has led to a condition of heightened surveillance over women.

The official policies to separate men and women in public spaces have eliminated the chance of some social experiences that are not always contradictory to Islamic law. In many cases during the last years this policy has been implemented even in places such as universities, where the risk of any sort of sexual harassment is actually low. Formation of architectural spaces has been also partially influenced by these methods. Circulation spaces have been either doubled or divided into two different zones in some public spaces, allocating separate stairways, corridors or halls to men and women. Though it could be argued that this condition might bring about a higher degree of relative privacy for women, the fact is that many people do not prefer it. Even the companionship of legally accepted couples is influenced by these measures in public spaces and facilities in many cases. The same condition can be

seen in the separation of some non-architectural spaces such as interior space of buses, which have also been divided to two separate zones. Apart from all these examples of interference of power with private aspects of life and their resulting spatial conditions, it is notable that the challenge between power and individuals is an ongoing issue, which has not been solidified into a stable and permanent condition.

An ever-increasing number of educated people are gaining access to many sources of information and new technologies, and have been familiarized with many aspects of life in other parts of the world. Therefore their approach towards lifestyle and specifically private life is dramatically changing. This transformation will subsequently cause different practical conditions in terms of the relationship between people and power. It could be argued that as the attitude of individuals towards their civil rights and specifically their right to privacy develops, the balance between the opposing wills of power and people is slightly moving towards a more democratic condition which may result in a new relationship between public and private spaces in architectural and urban environments.

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1. Michel Foucault, *Power and knowledge: selected interviews and other writings, 1972- 1977*, Colin Gordon, ed. (London/New York: Pantheon Books, 1980).
2. Ali Madanipour, *Public and Private Spaces of the City* (London: Routledge, 2003), 41.
3. *Ibid.*, 43.
4. Paulo Vaz and Fernanda Bruno, *Types of Self-Surveillance: from abnormality to individuals 'at risk'*: www.surveillance-and-society.org/journalv1i3.htm.
5. Sean P. Hier, *Probing the Surveillant Assemblage: On the Dialectics of Surveillance Practices as Processes of Social Control*: www.surveillance-and-society.org/journalv1i3.htm.

In Search of the Ideal Public Space

Babak Afraassiabi

18

After having been away for almost a year, Golrokh Kamali, the protagonist in *Sagkoshi*, a film by Bahram Beyzai, returns to Tehran after the Iran/Iraq war. At her entrance into the city of Tehran, she realizes that her home has been confiscated. Tehran is hurriedly being reconstructed, soldiers run around the streets and walls are being painted over with new slogans. For her accommodation, she is taken to a hotel room that is facing a construction site. The view from the window, where men are welding steel and constantly pass along, is present in all the shots taken from inside the hotel room. The view to the outside is a constant reminder of rapid (patriarchal) change, but more importantly, it places the room within view from outside. This of course inverts the architectural functioning of the window as a screen to the outside world – rotating, as it were, the window/screen 180 degrees, turning her privacy into a spectacle, gazed at from her window to the outside. (Her telephone conversations are constantly tapped by the hotel manager.) The room may be the exclusive spatial privacy of the female protagonist, but it is implicitly occupied by the outside world. In more than one scene we see the outside in its reflection in the mirror inside the room. The extension or the infiltration of the construction site into the hotel room signifies forced reconstructions of the private space as a necessity for ideological change; a continuous overlapping of the one onto the other is a way of maintaining total transparency in both fields.

In Iran, life in the private space has long been in contradiction with that in the public space. Obligations of behavior, mannerisms and appearances in public spaces have all contributed to its incongruity with life in private spaces. As a result certain inevitable overlapping moments of the two domains have come to effectuate their experience as highly schizophrenic and conflicting. One true

manifestation of such moments, of the “clash” between the private and the public, is to be traced in the representation of the home (as the most private) and the appearances of its inhabitants in Iranian movies. (How often have we seen a couple, either represented as married and/or being married in real life, appearing in their home, as they would have had to appear if in a public space, obeying strict codes of modesty?) This is a phenomenon often talked about and looking at its politics of display can help us to understand the representational level on which the private and the public come to contradict each other and how this contradiction finally entangles each domain even in real life.

On the one hand, the represented space is characterized as a private territory (the home within the film), but on the other hand (a less fictive one), since it is publicly displayed, it is considered a public domain. The public screening of the privacy of home is seen as its entrance into the public field with all its codifications. What is being undermined and deferred in this process of translation is the fictiveness of the screened privacy and consequently that of the modesty implied in it. Only when the fictive privacy of the home is perceived as the continuation of the real of the public domain can it become subject to codifications of appearance and behavior implied in public spaces. By its enunciation as a public domain, the image of the home is bared open to the entrance, or rather, the invasion of the dominant gaze of modesty. The image of the home is reframed within codes regarding public space, and automatically stripped of any privacy. In the end the modified image communicates more than anything the presence of the dominant gaze looking back onto us as viewers, from inside the image. The dominant gaze constantly re-enters and re-establishes itself within the image of the private, becoming an inevitable part of the image, or the image itself.

**In Search of the
Ideal Public Space**

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By constantly eliminating the boundaries between public and private, as well as the distinctions between fiction and reality, it expands its territory as far as representations of privacy and private narratives.

The (ideological) desire for a modest depiction of private spaces is kept alive through a refusal to admit the fictiveness of their cinematic modesty, the disavowal of the gap between the modified image of the private and its reality beyond control. As all disavowals are, by their very nature, split into two, the dominant gaze establishes itself on the very basis of the split between the refusal to admit the fictiveness of the image of the private and the belief in its modesty as the actual modification of the private real. However, the result is at once the disavowal and the unwanted affirmation of the lack in the modesty of the private... the lack of inconsistency between the modified image and its true referent. But more so, the lack of the dominant gaze within private spaces as truly lived.

In the end the screened space of the home is neither completely public, since it takes place within the private walls of a home, nor commonly private, since it is represented in regard to the obligatory laws implied in public appearances. This displaces the scene of the home from the totality of the fictional narrative of the film, but what is actually taking place is suppression by way of replacement, the replacement of the *mise-en-scène* of the private with that of the public and the denunciation of the image of the private as already a mismatch that constantly needs adjustment; a way of suspending the referent real of the home by representing it in its ideal proper image. The attempt is one of balancing out the two spaces of public and private and finalizing them into a single ideal (transparent) space. (The fact that Golrokh Kamali is living in a hotel room is not a coincidence. Within the narrative of the film, the

hotel room is a transitory space between the private as personal to private as collective, from who she was to who she should become. What is interesting however, is the way she inverts this space into one from which she operates her revolt towards this very process of translation and modification.)

If the cinematically modest representation of privacy is finally one beyond both the fictive narrative of the film and the reality of the private, we might conclude, it is an image wiped clean of its identificatory references. The inhabitants of this space are momentarily placed outside their true roles. But instead they are given an extra role to play, a role within a role, one that refers not to the narrative of the film but rather to that proper, ideal appearance. This extra, exterior role imposes a break in the film, but with it, there comes to emerge an extra level of identification, one that refers to a space exterior to that depicted in the film. As a viewer one easily identifies with the roles played, however false: the message is communicated and sent through, just like a TV commercial between two sequences of a film, but this time present throughout the film. This exterior role played by the actors communicates those codes that are imposed onto appearances and mannerisms in the public space, those we are implying onto ourselves even while we are watching the film in a cinema theater. We both experience the presence of the same gaze in the space we inhabit, either in front of the camera or in front of the cinema screen. This is a level of identification that is beyond any fictive realm. We, as spectators, identify the gaze inside the image with that in the outside public world.

However, this moment of disruption within the film, the cut introduced into the narrative, is a moment of truth: the manifestation of the extremity of the division and incongruity between the private and the

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In Search of the Ideal Public Space

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In front of the screen, one is caught in a space between the gaze looking onto us as inhabitants of public space, and the gaze present in the image of the private looking back onto us as viewers. Other than a position of control the gaze provides itself with its own depiction, a reflection of itself in the screened image, staging a fictive unification between the public and the private space. In this sense the kind of identification that is at work is one between the gaze and its own projection onto the image; we as viewers only activate it. As such we are deprived of any personal relationship with private or public spaces. What is passed onto us is, however, a rupture, one that we carry around going from one space to the other.

//Babak Afrassiabi is an artist living in the Netherlands.

The Split Narrative of Privacy

Atoosa Afshin Navid

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After having been away for almost a year, Golrokh Kamali, the protagonist in *Sagkoshi*, a film by Bahram Beyzai, returns to Tehran after the Iran/Iraq war. At her entrance into the city of Tehran, she realizes that her home has been confiscated. Tehran is hurriedly being reconstructed, soldiers run around the streets and walls are being painted over with new slogans. For her accommodation, she is taken to a hotel room that is facing a construction site. The view from the window, where men are welding steel and constantly pass along, is present in all the shots taken from inside the hotel room. The view to the outside is a constant reminder of rapid (patriarchal) change, but more importantly, it places the room within view from outside. This of course inverts the architectural functioning of the window as a screen to the outside world – rotating, as it were, the window/screen 180 degrees, turning her privacy into a spectacle, gazed at from her window to the outside. (Her telephone conversations are constantly tapped by the hotel manager.) The room may be the exclusive spatial privacy of the female protagonist, but it is implicitly occupied by the outside world. In more than one scene we see the outside in its reflection in the mirror inside the room. The extension or the infiltration of the construction site into the hotel room signifies forced reconstructions of the private space as a necessity for ideological change; a continuous overlapping of the one onto the other is a way of maintaining total transparency in both fields.

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Deleted Scenes

Kiarash Anvari

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1. On November 22, 1963, the assassination of John Fitzgerald Kennedy was a clear sign of the death of modernism and extreme rationalism, evidence of emergence of postmodernism. The event, at that particular date, rendered many of rational modernist thinkers and theoreticians' calculations irrelevant and symbolically put an end to a particular type of optimism and simplism in the public consciousness of the world. The United States' good-looking, well-dressed young president, with his idealistic and promising slogans – at least for the Americans – was no longer there, or at least, not on the earth! President Kennedy was now in heaven, regretfully looking down at an earth on which thereafter, since the moment the first bullet hit him, 2 x 2 was no longer 4. There were no longer any boundaries to anything.

2. On May 3, 2003, I attended the 48th Oberhausen Film Festival to present my film ... and I was born to sweet delight! ... In a marginal section of the festival named "Catastrophe: Death on the Screen," I watched a 24- minute movie by T. R. Utcho and Ant Farm titled *The Eternal Frame*, which profoundly affected my unconscious. In their movie, an American product of 1975, twelve years after Kennedy's assassination, the filmmakers intended to somehow recreate that significant historical event – at least from the Americans' viewpoint, I stress again – and to give the film a realistic look by combining it with existing archival documentaries. The most outstanding point in the film was that the very attempts of Utcho and Ant Farm were entirely shown to the viewers as documentary proof of their attempts. This unique, strange and at the same time horrible parody, which was suitably selected and screened in the festival's program strangely named "Death on the Screen," not only showed the historical and ambiguous death of one of the effective figures in the world history, but

also cried out from behind its narrative of another death: the death of boundaries. Distinguishing the boundaries between reality and imagination, truth and falsehood, documentary picture and recreated picture, and, essentially, the boundary between the world of pictures and the surrounding world, as well as the extent of faithfulness of the picture to the existing reality is no longer possible, or even if possible, would not be as significant as it was before. 3. February 11, 1979, the victory day of Iran's Islamic revolution, was, this time, hoped by our parents to be a shift toward the new world. To that date, they had not been able to keep up with the world towards postmodernism. Because of the despotic regime in Iran, before the revolution, they had not had the chance to dismiss modernism and its manifestations, nor to look forward to postmodernism, the sound of which had reached them faintly from far away, from overseas, through Jimmy Hendrix's guitar melody, Jim Morrison's anti-war lyrics and heavenly voice, Concept Rock and Pink Floyd.

4. On September 22, 1980, a year since Pink Floyd had released their uproarious album *The Wall* in which they sang of destruction of the walls and boundaries, the soldiers of the Iraqi Ba'athist regime invaded the Iranian borders. As if they too wanted to remove the boundaries. But at what cost? The Iranian people's expectation of achieving an idealistic society and keeping up with what was going on in the world again became a distant fancy for them. There were soldiers who were killed one after another and missiles and bombs were falling down on innocent people. Now everybody was hopefully thinking of peace, not even of victory. At each sound of explosion, children who would be youngsters in the coming years thought whether they would ever reach youth or whether everything would end at that very moment. At those times, everything

Deleted Scenes

Kiāraṣh Anvārī

suggested that postmodernism had arrived, but quite intangibly. Some years later, the same young people who had heard and grown up with the explosions transformed into quite strange beings.

5. And then came the time of satellites. They were coming one after another to show the wonders of the postmodern world to the people of this end of the globe, to those children who were now teenagers, who had grown up with the sound of explosions and war, who were now, seventeen years after the war, accustomed to a dual life, having learnt from their parents how to lie. The fetus of a kind of malignant, misshapen and creeping postmodernism was forming in the uterus of their minds, in the uterus of the mind of Iran's future society.

6. After the victory of the 1979 revolution, a kind of traditional and unidirectional thinking, which had not vanished but was devaluated before the revolution, dominated the Iranian society. The pre-revolutionary generation, our parents who had experienced the pre-revolutionary lifestyle, now had to adapt themselves to a new way of life. For the women of the pre-revolutionary generation who were not used to any hijab, chador or scarf, it was a bit difficult to use such things to cover their heads and faces. In the first few years after the revolution there were protests by different women's societies against that negation of freedom, but none of them were successful. (Ironically, several decades ago Shah Reza Pahlavi, the last Shah of Iran's father had forbidden the hijab and government officials were assigned to pull down women's hijabs or chadors in public!) However, the parents, not knowing how to adapt to their new way of life, were suffering a kind of duality. They had wanted a traditional society but now they could not come to terms with it; it confused them. The duality and confusion between the two poles brought about a new generation with an odd

lifestyle. Parents transmitted their duality to their children. They constantly warned their children not to mention what they saw at home or remembered from their pre-revolutionary lifestyle in schools or public places. On the other hand, those children were facing another way of life in schools and as reflected in the mass media that was very traditional and totally different from their own at home. Iranian postmodernism was forming.

7. VCRs that were once considered forbidden and against the conventions and norms of the Iranian society, were already legalized when satellite receivers and dishes arrived in Iran in 1990s. Everything changed. There was literally no house in Tehran without a dish on its roof. Now access to information and familiarity with wonders of the postmodern world was much easier than before. In the 1980s there was actually no communication with the outside world. There were only VCRs, which could be found in every house, despite being forbidden, as well as radio broadcasts that were usually jammed, and black market videocassettes which were – and still are! – traded among people. But now satellite networks were swarming in. (It is worth mentioning that owning dishes and watching satellite broadcasts is considered illicit and against the conventions of the society here.) And a few years later there came the Internet. Now everything was prepared for the birth of the offspring of a deformed postmodernism, moreover, of the Iranian kind, with an abnormally large head and a very small body.

8. Teenagers were eventually growing into young people. Now there were no more explosions and fear of death. Little by little there would come the turn of defiance. Now they had MTV and Madonna. The world of music videos had battered down the boundaries and conventions. Now everybody had hundreds of TV channels at home from each of

Deleted Scenes

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which wonderful and fascinating images flowed into the teenage eyes making them able to struggle, like amphibious creatures, between the traditions and conventions of society and what could be described as a new life, the wonders of the postmodern world which did not recognize any boundaries or conventions, and thus was very attractive.

9. We got used to lying easily and without worrying. Three to four years ago, the BBC, which is receivable here by courtesy of those dishes, televised a documentary report on one of the wonders of postmodern world. This time the wonder was we, the deformed newborn. The BBC's report showed a Tehran apartment in which a party was held. A bunch of young people, girls and boys, free from any conventions – and from any hijab, of course – were dancing to loud music and drinking something out of their glasses. Ironically, they all had entered the house in full hijab and would leave in the same way at the end of the party. People in the streets were also shown in full hijab. In the interviews, some of the young people at the party said to the reporter that they considered that way of life very exciting, some said they were accustomed to it. Now, recalling the BBC's documentary, I see that it reminds me of the parody of Kennedy's assassination in *The Eternal Frame*. The movie was produced in 1975, the BBC's report in 1999, i.e. the threshold of 2000. The movie was a recreation attempt, a parody, and the BBC report, a representation of a real life, which intrinsically is a constant recreation, without any attempt. Outside his/her home, everyone is his/her inside-the-home parody, and inside his/her home, his/her outside-the-home parody!

10. On September 11, 2001, the attack on the Twin Towers formally announced the transition from postmodernism to a new era that could perhaps be called post postmodernism. 9/11 and the

subsequent events, the Afghanistan and Iraq wars, which shocked not only the US but also the rest of the world, has now brought about a one-hundred-fold distrust. If, before 9/11, there was the slightest boundary between reality and imagination, truth and falsehood, lawfulness and lawlessness, it was totally destroyed afterwards. Did 9/11 or the subsequent wars really happen? Were a number of people really killed? Perhaps now Jean Baudrillard's remark can resolutely be believed. In a book published in 1991, Jean Baudrillard claimed that the Gulf War never happened. Considering the Persian Gulf War a postmodern phenomenon, Baudrillard believed that everything was a video game on the world's TV screen. Could we, in the same way, say that 9/11 has never happened, or that the US has never attacked Afghanistan and Iraq? Isn't all that a TV show or commercial or, as Baudrillard puts it, a TV game? And finally, can those greenish night-vision images of the Iraq war showing US soldiers in assault mode be called realities of war? Nobody would answer these questions because everything has become more complicated in the postmodern world. Now, not only we (Iranians), but the whole world is habituated to lying. 11. On November 16, 1977, one year and a few months before the Iranian revolution, I was born. 23 years later, on November 16, 2002, my film, ... and I was born to sweet delight ... was ready for screening. About a year later, in September 2002, on the first anniversary of 9/11, I made *I am a purifier*, a movie full of easily made lies: A prostitute who receives her customers while fully dressed and scarfed and goes to bed with them in the same way. This is a kind of lie we are accustomed to. And I am one of those children I described before. My name is Kiarash Anvari. I was born two years after *The Eternal Frame* was made. Autumn 2003, Tehran

//Kiarash Anvari is a filmmaker living and working in Tehran and Paris. The above text is a translation from Farsi.

A Short Report From the Border

Bahman Kiarostami

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With the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime a lot of Iranians who were eager to go on a pilgrimage to the Iraqi sacred cities took advantage of the official disorder in Iraq and illegally entered the country. In summer of 2003, particularly between late July and late August, each day three to four thousand Iranians crossed the border without permission. However, before reaching Karbala or even the first villages in Iraqi territory, many of them lost their lives. Some trod on the land mines left over from the Iran-Iraq war, some were attacked by bandits, and some others who lost their way, died of (heat and) thirst and their bodies were returned to their country. The death toll reached such an extent that the morgues in border towns were not capable of holding the increasing number of corpses. That was while the Iranian authorities repeatedly warned people against going on such trips. Even some religious leaders declared such trips as canonically prohibited. But that did not diminish the swarm of pilgrims. The above paragraph exemplifies the news stories frequently published in the press in the summer of 2003. The issue of Karbala had turned to an unsolvable problem for the (Iranian) government, while it was a fervent passion for the people. Thus I was motivated to go to the border town of Mehran to make a documentary film on the pilgrims. Mehran, located less than 150 kilometers from Iraq, is the nearest Iranian town to Karbala and therefore has the biggest share of the pilgrimage traffic. The film is not finished yet. At the moment I am editing it, coping with those twenty-odd hours of rushes. The film is entirely shot in the border town of Mehran, most of it in the public prosecutor's office. Frankly, at the beginning we intended to accompany a caravan to see what happens to the pilgrims, how they leave and how they return. But as soon as we entered the public prosecutor's office on the second day of the filming, we changed our minds. That was because any departing or arriving caravan would

end up at that place. With three to four thousand people illegally departing and the same number arriving every day, there would be about seven thousand criminals every day whose cases should be investigated in a small courthouse consisting of only a few rooms. Criminal pilgrims or pilgrim criminals, the film is about them.

//Bahman Kiarostami is a documentary filmmaker living and working in Tehran. The above text is a translation from Farsi.

Embassy of a United Europe in Tehran

Lisa Hassanzadeh

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The theme of the project is to design an embassy for a United Europe. An embassy represents the national identity of a state in very different locations and nations. Therefore my approach has been to first develop a prototype as a basis for the designs of European embassies all over the world. The developed prototype is then implanted in a chosen location – thus national context – considering the architectural peculiarities and the climate of the chosen country. Since the diplomatic relevance of the Middle Eastern countries has permanently increased after the end of the Cold War, the location I have chosen for my design is Tehran.

The building has been developed in several layers. The first two layers of the prototype deal with the questions of what the European embassy is today and will be like in the future. Layers 3 to 5 deal with the peculiarities and archetypes found in Iran and how they can be reused in the context of a European embassy.

The Prototype

Layer 1: Europe My future vision of Europe is a United Europe as one state with a common foreign policy, which is thus represented abroad via one common embassy. Next to this unity there will be a federal system with a diversity of sub-states, people and languages. Both should be represented in the European embassy.

Layer 2: The Embassy The most interesting element of an embassy in this project is its internal border. It separates the diplomatic from the public program. This border is very strict. People entering the limited public part never come in touch with the diplomatic part and vice versa. Since transparency is essential in democratic political systems, it should also be an issue in the European embassy: the embassy should

be as transparent as possible. The ambassador should be “in touch” with the people queuing up for a European visa; people visiting the embassy should get an idea of how an embassy works. In place of a strict border, a dialogue between the diplomatic and the public level of the embassy should be reached. To achieve this I decided to organize the public and the diplomatic program linearly along two paths which both lead through the whole building. The paths – and the program attached to them – can approach each other or diverge. This ever-changing relation between the two paths expresses the internal border: it ranges from highly transparent to totally closed. Today a globalization of former national problems is taking place. Foreign affairs are to meet and find a solution for these common problems. The embassy should widen this communication from a pure political level to a dialogue between societies. It should widen its public program and become a place of cultural interaction. As a piece of Europe in any cultural and political context, it should provide spaces for open discussions, lectures and art. The Building in its National Context Within the architectural peculiarities of Iran there are four elements that strike me most: the introverted patio houses with their prosperous inner life, the linear organization of the bazaars, the play of light and shadow and the climatic schemes of the ancient desert architecture. Each of them can be found back in the building and has become a specific layer in my scheme. The building mainly consists of three elements: – volumes as the load-bearing elements, which host the different programs – two paths, a public and a private one, which run along the volumes and solve all height differences within the building – a facade, which unifies the inner diversity.

Layer 3: The Introverted Patio Houses The ancient Iranian patio houses provide a wide range of public and private spaces. The inner courtyard provides a

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cool and comfortable climate in the summer and is therefore the social center of the house. Here the family meets and the guests are welcomed. It is the most public place in the house. This “public” void is created by the private rooms, which surround it. This leads to an inverse scheme: the inner courtyard as the social center of the family is separated and protected from the public street life by the most private spaces of the house, the sleeping rooms. The same scheme is translated in my design for a European embassy in Tehran. The main part of the program is placed within the volumes. The volumes are arranged next to each other as a continuous landscape forming two patios at the far ends of the building. The public foyer is placed in the front patio – the center of social life – and the diplomatic foyer is placed in the back patio. Both patios are traversed following either the diplomatic or the public path, allowing a visual dialogue between public and private.

Layer 4: The Linear Organization of the Bazaars
In most of the ancient Iranian cities the bazaar functioned as the main city structure. It is the place where the social and economic life took place. It is a system of paths directly attached to shops in which vendors offer their products. Here the border between the public path and the private shops blurs. Next to the shops, the main institutions of political and religious life are also attached to the paths. In this case there is a threshold between public path and private institution (i.e. an iwan with a corridor which is leading from the bazaar to the mosque).

This differentiation can be found back in my design for a European embassy in Tehran: the two paths in the building form a double helix giving access to the different programs. The public program is directly attached to the paths whereas the private program is indirectly attached via thresholds. These thresholds

are, for example, little bridges between path and volume or a slight difference in floor level.

Layer 5: The Play of Light and Shadow and the Climatic Schemes of the Ancient Desert Architecture
The contrasting play of shadow and light performs a major role in traditional Iranian architecture. The bright sun and heat don't allow open facades unless a big roof can provide enough shadow. Therefore openings are kept quite small, letting the bright sunlight appear as a spotlight inside the building. As in all countries the climate has a strong influence on the rhythm of public life. During summer the streets are populated in the early morning and evening hours rather than in the middle of the day.

The play of light and shadow is part of my design of the European embassy in Tehran. The building has a facade of two layers regulating the climate and the incidence of light within the building. The outer facade consists of movable slate lamellae. On the roof the slate lamellae are replaced by solar lamellae, which make the building independent from external energy support. Depending on time and season, the lamella-skin closes or opens: the building begins to “live.” It follows the rhythm of public life.

The concept of the double helix can only work if the two paths cross visually but not physically. Therefore the building has two entrances.

The public entrance is placed on street level on the east side of the building. The hill on which the building is placed recedes to create a generous, open public entrance. The entrance area functions as a public “park.” People can rest here or wait in the shadow of the trees for the sun to set.

The diplomatic entrance is placed on the west side of the building. By following the topography of the hill it enters the building on the first floor. In contrast to the public entrance the diplomatic entrance is

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kept closed and is only accessible for the diplomats and their staff.

The Material

The two paths also differ in the material used for their applications. For the diplomatic path dark cherry wood is used in order to create a sublime atmosphere. For the public path light birch wood is used, which creates open and friendly surroundings. This scheme of materials is also valid for the different programs of the embassy: dark cherry wood stands for a diplomatic program, light birch wood for a public program, and chrome for a program which is used and accessible from both paths.

Outlook

The prototype of the European embassy (the concept of the two paths) can be used as a tool to design all the other European embassies in any of the other 171 countries of the world. In combination with the peculiarities which will be found in these countries, it will lead to individual but nevertheless recognizable designs.

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