



A Case of Optimistic Empowerment: Iranian Koli Woman's Experiences of Place in Moniroo Ravanipoor's *The Koli by the Fire*

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Received 15 May 2024; accepted 27 May 2024
Published online 26 June 2024

Abstract

This article highlights the noticeable effect of Ravanipoor's *the Koli by the Fire* on bringing up the issue of women's optimistic and powerful identity in contact with a series of interconnected places in Iranian society, the genre which recounts diverse theories of identity in accordance with several people and spaces. To explore this issue further, this article embarks on *the Koli by the Fire* in the light of the theories of identity and how the author integrates the themes of identity and place into her work. The article asserts that a Koli woman's experience of place can be seen as examples of cruel optimism and empowerment since it recklessly fights against the binary distinction injected in society depending on diverse places, those which are deemed to be inappropriate for women. In particular, this article narrates the ways in which experiences of new places can empower so-called minority groups such as women. The combination of all these current thoughts, values and settings creates a context for women's happiness. Forced exile of the Koli woman thus becomes a case of woman's optimistic empowerment.

Key words: Woman; Identity; Place; Ayeneh; Moniroo Ravanipoor; *The Koli by the Fire*

Sabzevari, M. M. (2024). A Case of Optimistic Empowerment: Iranian Koli Woman's Experiences of Place in Moniroo Ravanipoor's *The Koli by the Fire*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 28(3), 12-18. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/13446>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/13446>

1. INTRODUCTION

Kolis are seemingly found in different parts of the world. Furthermore, one could trace *Kolis* not only in historical and anthropological texts but also in literary texts which have paid special attention to the details of *Koli* life and culture. It seems that all of the *Kolis* around the world have some characteristics in common such as desert wandering, speaking an Indo-European language and love for children and music (Habibi Basht, p.99). Poorafkari describes the Romani people, known as "*Kolis*" in the Persian-speaking world, as nomads who move most days of the year, have open economy and are ecologically half-dependent (i.e., they are dependent on geographical environment half of the year and independent in rest of the year), do not manage animal husbandry, deprive women of any power, have little relation with governmental agencies, and, at the same time, have a particular social structure and social life (Poorafkari, p. 303). *Kolis* (sometimes called *Luli* in classical Persian literature (are typically interested in acting and playing music, and have been associated with beauty, displacement, shamelessness, fortune-telling, witchcraft, stealing, etc. in Persian literature. However, in the 13th and 14th centuries, as mysticism gained ground in Persian literary texts, a mystical symbol (Habibi Basht, p.102).

Ravanipoor's works are expressly a conflict of identities that can be seen in the main characters; throughout this approach, she helps the characters of her novels to reach light from shadow (Sadeghi Roodsari, p.4). She considers several current issues including socialism, politics, and women's rights, what we also find in *The Koli by the Fire*. The most remarkable characteristics of her works are timelessness, placelessness and mixture of fiction and reality (Sedighi Roodsari, p.9). Ravanipoor, in *The Koli by the Fire*, reports that some researchers used to come through Koli tribes in the 50s-70s to collect information and know more about folk literature. Manes

– meaning “guest” in Bushehri accent – has the role of a researcher into Koli tribes (Kheirandish and Heidari, p.726). Gorji et al. (2012) have discussed how Ravanipoor criticizes the patriarchal atmosphere of the society in the novel in an article – “Discourse analysis of the Koli by the Fire by Moniroo Ravanipoor” – very well: “Moniroo Ravanipoor is a Koli – like novelist who has seen, tasted and experienced her fellow women’s pain. She talks about the women’s similar pain which has remained unknown” (89). In *The Koli by the Fire*, as Ravanipoor puts in an interview, it happened for the first time in Persian literature that a woman runs after a man to find him; in past novels, there was always a man who had lost her love trying to find her.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Place, in interaction with people, is defined as location in which people struggle to achieve goals and understand their existence (Harner, 2001, p.661). This kind of belongingness to place is part of social identity and creates a place-based identity what we want to deconstruct in this study. Bernardo and Palma state that the concept of Place Identity, was developed by Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff (1983, p.73). Confirming what Harner believes – place is a part of social identity – “Place identity refers to the contribution of place attributes to one’s self-identity” (Proshansky). The most significant attributes of place are meanings and values (political, social and cultural) in which identities are defined. According to what Proshansky says, the concept, place identity, is fixed and it refers to a one-way relation between identity and place. This kind of identity is completely dependent on place. The concept of place identity defines people in separate and specific territories and increases the distinction between identities. A pers (Proshansky, Fabian and Kaminoff) is valued or undervalued because she/he is part of a social group associated to a place. Place identity creates feelings in relationship with place. People feel safe affiliated with specific place. Place identity theory encourages people to invest in their local and physical environments psychologically.

2.1 Personal Identity

There is a complex view of personal identity. The nature of personal identity has been a question in philosophy, especially of late years. In Hume’s view, a person is something like a chain of mental events, related to each other as cause and effect. (Hume, p.139)

Caughey puts it more clearly, where he argues that personal identity equals “character,” which means “the style or shape of an individual thoughts and emotions” (p.178). Actually, he relies on his own Faanakkar Theory (The name “Faanakkar” is a pseudonym for the island in eastern Truk atoll, which Caughey studied during eleven months of fieldwork in 1968) that character or personal

identity is an umbrella or “a cover term for a series of expressions employed in describing an individual’s personal style” (Caughey, p.178). He also categorizes the most important character descriptors which are used to describe various identities:

“Respectfulness,” “humility,” “kindness” / “arrogance,” “haughtiness”
“Bravery,” “mastery,” “power” / “cowardice,” “weakness,” “subservience”
“Strong thought,” “competitive thought” / “weak thought,” “lazy thought” (p.179)

These categories are subject to changes and these characters can be considered unstable because every person will be judged by other persons. I have considered Caughey’s categories as the basis of investigating the main characters in Ravanipoor’s novel below.

“Names” can also be a label for identifying self and for making every individual unique. Meik Watzlavik et al. state that “Naming processes must have played an important role in the very first moments of the history of individualization” (1). In “First names as the signs of personal identity: An intercultural comparison,” names are considered as “the most important anchor points of identity” and “a determining factor in personality development” (3). In fact, names can be the image of every individual’s inner self which is involved in others’ interpretation and is re-negotiated during time. Moreover, the name of a person reflects the first sense and the first impression in others and it can be the symbol of a person’s personal identity which is interpretable in different contexts.

2.2 Collective Identity

In addition to personal identity, collective or social identity should be argued to bring together the position of people’s everyday lives and the sociocultural context in which those lives are created. Collective identity does not only make its members to involve in a group or category with the same goal but also it continues to form an individual’s sense of self or an individual’s personal identity. Furthermore, as Simon and Hastedt put it forward and conclude, positive self-aspects are very likely to function as meaningful social categories (Simon et al, p.481). In one of the most sociologically relevant recent studies, Francesca and Jasper (2001) discuss the relationship between collective identity and social movement. They conclude that:

Collective identity describes imagined as well as concrete communities, involves an act of perception and construction as well as the discovery of preexisting bonds, interests, and boundaries. It is fluid and relational, emerging out of interactions with a number of different audiences, rather than fixed. It channels words and actions, enabling some claims and deeds but delegitimizing others. It provides categories by which individuals divide up and make sense of the social world. (p.298)

Collective identity is based on some shared structural positions such as class, nation, gender, race, and ethnicity. In the present study, gender and ethnicity are focused more than the other positions. Tribe as a group brings up the matter of ethnicity, a feeling of belonging. Geographer Stuart Hall explains ethnicity in this way: "Where people share not only a culture but an ethnos (ethnos means "people" or "nation" ... from the ancient Greek), their belongingness or binding into group and place and their sense of cultural identity" (qtd. in Fouberg et al, p.149). Considering gender as a part of identity with the focus of migration, nonetheless, brings the sense of belonging which is a crucial step in the processes of identity formation and reconstruction in migrant women. In a dissertation published by Temple University Press, Jasper presents "exemplary effects of collective identities" to which I refer shortly. They state some internal and external benefits of collective identity:

Internal benefits are such as solidarity with others, pride in oneself and strengthened organizations, and external benefits include projection of power and the ability to demand rights in the name of group. There are also some risks in collective identity. The internal risks are such as imperfect fit with personal identities and solidarity restricted to one's group, and the external risks contain difficulty incorporating new identities, risk of highlighting stigma, especially for individuals, increased difficulty assimilating for individuals, increased power for certain leaders to be "representative" of the group. (Jasper, p.3)

As Jasper and McGarry presented their study on collective identity, they addressed some powerful advantages of it, which were helpful and necessary resources at the end of the twentieth century and at the beginning of the twenty-second one. With the message of pride, strength and meaningfulness, the authors remark the internal benefits of collective identity. They also opine that this type of identity projects social power in individuals and galvanizes their internal sense of being recognized as a member of a group. This power, however, may destroy the movement every individual is expecting. A strong collective identity can certainly move on to a higher position.

Collective identity is the main type of identity in this study which is combined with movements and mobilization and will be examined thoroughly the story by Moniroo Ravanipoor. By talking about collective or social identity, this study addresses two of the most significant collective identities in the modern age, race and gender as identity markers. Arguably, in Ayeneh's identity one can see how personal identity and social identity are intertwined: she is in a psychological dilemma of self and its position as a woman in society in their specified era.

2.3 Relational identity

There is also another form of identity which has been carried out in a few studies, namely, relational identity, which will be considered in the study of the female

protagonist of *The Gypsy by the Fire*. Relational identity is based on the role-relationship between two individuals. We define this role-relationship through the study and focus on the role-relationships such as daughter-father, daughter-mother and lover-beloved. These roles are interdependent and a kind of basis for social identity. In general, "the power of the relational identity construct is that it offers a conceptual tool for integrating the individual (person-based), interpersonal, and collective (role-based) levels of self" (Sluss and Ashforth, p.13). They continue that relational identity is "particularistic" (p.13) which brings expectation to each side of the role-relationship and the roles even influence each other.

Harwood, on this website, refers to another work by him and a colleague named Lin (2000), "Identity and Grandparents' Web Site", refers to some relational roles and social identities such as affiliation, pride, exchange and distance (p.307). Affiliation contains expression of love, liking and relational solidarity. Pride reflects this sense that one is proud of the other one. Exchange includes something someone gains from the relationship. And distance reflects geographical points of the relationship. Speculating about these categories helps us analyze the relational identity better.

2.4 Gender, identity and place

As previously stated, the object of this study is surveying the *Koli's* relationship with the dominant society – the relationship between the identity of a local woman and the public places in which she does not feel secure – as well as the realities and the attributes these places impose on women. This form of identity becomes more significant and controversial when the concept of gender is added, as an identity marker, to place. Traditionally, certain qualities or behaviors have been ascribed to men and women in society based on the places they experience. Feminist geographers, however, have set themselves an ambitious task: "tearing down and re-erecting the structures of discipline" by theorizing new connections between people and places. Their specific aim is to investigate, make visible and challenge the relationships between gender divisions and place divisions, to uncover their mutual constitution, and problematize something seemingly true (12), the binary distinctions injected in the society (13):

Table 1
Binary distinctions, McDowell (12)

The masculine	The feminine
Public	Private
Outside	Inside
Work	Home
Work	Leisure / pleasure
Production	Consumption
Independence	Dependence
Power	Lack of power

In general, McDowell (1999) aims for examining the extent to which women and men experience spaces differently and to show how these differences themselves are part of the social constitution of gender as well as that of place. As can be seen in the above table, the “private/public”, “inside/ outside”, and “home/work” binary distinctions are specifically connected to the notion of place, while “pleasure/work”, “consumption/production”, “dependence/independence”, and “lack of power/ power” are specifically related to the notion of identity, and these two groups are certainly interconnected based on place identity theory. These defined binary categories imposed on women can be easily deconstructed through forced movements, migration and even traveling for pleasure. It is generally accepted that women had experienced movement between places less. They were mostly bounded in private places. Feminist investigations of public spaces have often focused “on the problems and dangers that women experience outside compared with men who may take for granted their freedom in dominance of these spaces” (McDowell, p.148). McDowell tries to show that public spaces in city may be significant places for women’s escape from men’s dominance. As far as women experience different places, not only their identity will be in process but also places themselves will be in process of happening in relation to different people.

3. ANALYSIS

3.1 Ayeneh’s Personal identity and Place

To study Ayeneh’s personal identity more directly, we consider Caughey’s character descriptors and examine how she expresses her personal identity subject to different places. We also study which personal attributes and qualities in Ayeneh make her think of herself differently. The places are categorized in the following paragraphs, depending on the influence each had on Ayeneh’s personal identity:

Saffari tribe and tents

Ayeneh shows “respect” to the men of the tribe, especially to her father when she dances for Maneses through night; she earns money to put it in her father’s pocket. Ayeneh is a means of business for tribe men. Her father exploits her for his own advantage. Ayeneh dances for showing respect to her father: “Father! Do you want me to come back to the tents again? . . . She stands up unhappily” (*The Koli by the Fire* 4). Ayeneh is displeased with her father whereas she is happy far from the tents. She is “subservient” beside the men of tribe and under the umbrella of the rules of tribe. At the same time, she follows her ambitious mind and she feels “strong” inside, she feels she can gain whatever she wants: “Ayeneh can climb the palm tree and catch the moon” (*The Koli by the Fire* 3). The palm tree which grows in south of Iran is a symbol of patience and strength.

Road (from Bushehr to Shiraz)

Ayeneh is a “coward” when she is on the bus to Shiraz; She is silent and frightened. Even the bus driver wants to kick her out of the bus because she does not speak and only murmurs: “kick her out of the bus if she makes noises” (66) She even shows cowardice when the middle-aged lorry driver tries to help her: “Ayeneh squatted close to the door in the lorry frighteningly” (54). The road is defined as a place where women are in danger and trouble and men take for granted their freedom. Ayeneh shows “weakness” and is overwhelmed by the attributes the patriarchal society defines for a woman in the road. She does not defend herself and is struck dumb with fear, at first: “Ayeneh squeezes her lips to each other, does not talk and sticks to her seat” (65). But then, after a while, she feels safe and under the guard of kind-hearted lorry driver (the lorry driver who takes her from Bushehr to Shiraz and the one whose daughter studies at Shiraz University), no other man would stare at her strangely.

Cemetery (Shiraz)

Ayeneh is “faithful” to her love for Manes. Ayeneh makes friends with a woman with a burned face in a cemetery in Shiraz, an ancient cemetery whose dead bodies had died long times ago and nobody would come to this place for ritual, religious, ethnic and cultural funeral practices. The cemetery is not sacred anymore and it is a place for homeless people. The woman helps Ayeneh to find a place to sleep in the cemetery. Ayeneh is surrounded by a lot of men in cemetery at night and it is expected her to give up to one of them, but she does not sleep with any: “It happens indeed to every woman who sleeps here for the first time” (72). The woman with a burned face encourages her to beg for money but she is proud and feels “powerful” with the money father had given to her. She avoids begging: “Don’t you want to earn money? . . . No. I have money in the sack. Look! It’s a lot” (74). Money gives Ayeneh power and she does not need to sell her body or beg for money.

Hotel (Tehran)

The hotels and all lodging houses in 1980 in Iran do not allow single women to stay in. It seems that if a single woman goes to a hotel and asks for accommodation, it means she is sexually available and looks for sexual partners. The receptionist defines the single women’s identity who come to the hotels in Tehran as runaway women, “This identity card has no photo . . . Have you run away?” (142), but Ayeneh has “strong thought” since the writer helped her to be “confident” and “decisive”. Ayeneh replies: “. . . I have a relative whom I should find” (142). The receptionist asks her why she has come to Tehran and when Ayeneh tells the truth, the receptionist reacts in this way: “All the women who come to Tehran say the same thing for the first time, visiting the capital city, but after a while the hotel becomes full of men” (143). The receptionist has wrong thought and is pessimist,

however Ayeneh's coming to Tehran is goal-oriented even though the others do not believe her.

Ayeneh's personal identity is a chain of mental events related to each other, it is relation of ideas injected by the author as it is revealed at the end of the story. Ayeneh leaves Bushehr at the beginning of the novel to look for Manes and lost love and then successfully comes back to Bushehr again at the end. This life is planned for the main character by the author who involves in parts of the story openly. In four last pages of the novel, the story has been finished and we feel the presence of a new character, the real author, Moniroo Ravanipoor who reveals her connection with the author and Ayeneh. In fact, this is the real author who stands in front of the mirror and she reveals her *Koli* identity. Now, the real author and Ayeneh dance together neither for the sake of others nor for a means of earning but for the sake of themselves:

She stands in front of the mirror and asks:
'Is this you?'
'Yes, I am you'
'Shall we dance?'
'Let's dance' (216)

Since Ayeneh's name reflects its meaning, she is a pure girl like a mirror despite the fact that the *Kolis* are generally known for cunning. Ayeneh does not tell lie and declares that the only reason for *Kolis*' lies is poverty. When Manes asks Ayeneh to take a look at his palm and to tell his fortune, she replies: "No, sir... it's for gaining money" It is true. It is conceived from the beginning of the story when Ayeneh replies to Manes's questions about *Kolis*. What distinguishes Ayeneh from other *Koli* women is her ambitious and competitive thought. She does not give up to the rules of the tribe. She is curious and wants to discover the secrets in stories. On the other hand, no absolute home is defined for her. Therefore, it is easy for Ayeneh to pass the boundaries and, concerning McDowell's goal in "gender, identity and place", challenge and deconstruct the binary distinctions the patriarchal society has defined for women based on gender and place.

3.2 Ayeneh's Collective identity and Place

As a feminist writer, Moniroo Ravanipoor highlighted the tribal life of a *Koli* woman, Ayeneh, whose social or collective identity is naturally summarized in two social groups, women and *Koli* tribe. First, Ayeneh is a *Koli* and her ancestors were *Kolis*, and being a *Koli* is her cultural heritage. This received legacy represents concepts such as group, travelling and audience. Polletta and Jasper (2001) concluded that collective identity is fluid and relational, emerging out of interactions with a number of different audiences rather than fixed (p. 298). Furthermore, Ayeneh shows some similarities to other *Koli* women including love for music and art of dancing and being dark-skinned. Second, she is a woman. Ayeneh is part of these two

groups unconsciously. After experiencing lives in different places, she feels belonging to another social group, to people in streets, the streets of Tehran which will be discussed in following sections.

Tribe and tents

Ayeneh is a *Koli* girl from Saffari tribe. She is part of "us" (*Koli* tribe) which makes her different from "them" (non-*Kolis*) and in fact inferior to the other groups. Ayeneh was assumed to be a thief as a *Koli* who was wandering in the city alone: "Hey men! Watch out your pockets" (*The Koli by the Fire* 42), says a city man who knows Ayeneh and her story in the tribe. Even, Ayeneh's father treated her daughter with contempt and respected the man from outside the tribe: "He is a gentleman, dance gracefully and beautifully" (1). Ayeneh is a means of earning for men of the tribe and is actually dominated by them. Ayeneh is part of a tribe, a caravan which moves from one place to another place. They are far from the town, the modernity. They never settle in the town, therefore living in town was like a dream to Ayeneh: "A desire was driving her to the roving town – whatever was in her mind for years ... the white houses, gardens with flowers, a Manes who had sat on the stairs, on the stairs of all houses writing" (21). As you see in these lines, there are boundaries between "*Koli* tribe" and "town", between "Ayeneh" and "Manes", and also between "tents" and "Houses". Although Ayeneh is very upset with men of the tribe, she feels belonging to the tribe. This feeling is explicitly revealed once she is in lorry going to Shiraz from Bushehr. She can remember the plains along the roads where she used to sell *Kolkhong* (a kind of plant which has health benefits and grows in center and south of Iran) accompanied by other *Koli* women: "kolkhong, kolkhong" (56). In fact, this feeling of belonging becomes clearer when she is far from the tribe. Ayeneh reviews her memories from the past: "since the tribe would arrive here, it moved slow to let the women and girls of the tribe sell *Kolkhong*, as soon as it arrived in a city, an oasis or a village through the roads" (56).

However, considering Tajfel's greatest contribution to psychology (1979) will propose that the groups which people belonged to were an "important source of pride and self-esteem". At the beginning of the story, Ayeneh, the protagonist of *Koli by the Fire*, shows that she does not feel proud as a member of her tribe which is disrespected by city settlers as the majority. She does not like the rules of the tribe, either. Following Ellemers et al.'s categorization, particularly cell 5, a group member with low commitment, and negative feeling of being identified by the group concerning the threat to their group's value, tries to leave the group and to gain access to another one, a more attractive group (qtd. In Ellemers). Ayeneh does not like the tents and she is looking forward to visiting white houses in the city. She does not also like the men of tribe who force her to dance for gaining money. She is more into the houses in city (Bushehr) and

a city man, Manes, who has come there to write stories. Her individual mobility to the city relying on her youth and against the rules of tribe leads her to be excluded from the tribe. Continuing with the story, after being excluded from the tribe, Ayeneh feels high commitment to her tribe. Considering the other cell categorized by Ellemers et al., cell 4, when an individual is threatened by lack of acceptance in the group or exclusion, results in attempts to gain acceptance. Ayeneh would like to come back to the tribe even if she is beaten by the men of the tribe, she tries to gain their acceptance but they reject her again.

Streets (Tehran 1980)

Ayeneh knows the streets since she got familiar with Maryam, a university student in Shiraz: "The streets that love to be and cry out along with people" (p.124). Then in Tehran, the streets of those days of Tehran are not usual streets. Most of the people are in the streets for demonstration and after a while Ayeneh also becomes an enthusiastic street supporter. Ayeneh addresses her friends and encourage them to sell books in the sidewalk in front of Tehran University: "who can sell books in the streets?" (p.183). She sells books to gain money at first, but afterwards her friends and she becomes part of the political issues unconsciously. Ayeneh is involved in thoughts and values that place shares with her, different attributes that streets of Tehran involve her in. In fact, Ayeneh voluntarily accepts the new attributes of streets and shares some meaningful goals with other women and men. For instance, when the streets are evacuated from demonstrators with whom Ayeneh has some feelings in common, she feels alone and hopeless. This hopelessness does not last a long time. Father Youhanna finds her in the dark alley: "What are you doing here?" (196), and introduces her to the painter, Hannibal. She joins a group of artists and becomes part of them, at last.

Overall, part of Ayeneh's collective identity is reconstructed in the streets of Tehran where men and women are free to walk and appreciate the same concerns. Ayeneh's collective identity subject to streets challenges the defined binary distinctions the patriarchal society has imposed. What's more, the social landscape of streets is recreated so that men and women are equal in value and power.

3.3 Ayeneh's Relational Identity and Place

According to what Matsumoto explains and presents in detail about relational identity, it is "activated in interacting with relationship partners or in thinking about them, unconscious reminders can even activate the relational identity" (p.245). Ayeneh's relational identity is indicated through persons such as Ayeneh's father, Ayeneh's mother and Manes whom Ayeneh loves. Actually, Ayeneh defines herself in relation with these persons:

Tribe and tents

Ayeneh and her relatives live in the tents of Saffari tribe. Ayeneh's relationship with her father and mother is prominent and effective during the story which mostly happens among the tents of the tribe. At the beginning of the story, Ayeneh dances because her father asks her to dance. She is respectful to her father, surrendered and obedient, what the patriarchal rules of the tribe wants her to do: "Dance Ayeneh, do you want your mother to die?" (4). Ayeneh's father is a symbol of patriarchal society what is prominent in tribes and tents. Yet, her mother has died many years ago and Ayeneh sees her in her dreams. Ayeneh and her mother were friends when she was a child. Ayeneh could ask her mother any question she wanted even if the question was against the rules of the tribe: "why they have houses mum? ... because their fathers had houses" (10). Although the father and other men of the tribe had dictated the rules of tribe to the girls of the tribe including Ayeneh, mother had taught Ayeneh to listen to her heart and not to surrender to the traditions of the tribe: "Mother had said that you have to listen to your heart Ayeneh ... she said these words while she was dying. She was tired of musts and mustn'ts once she found the rules of the tribe absurd" (14). The mother used to think differently, different from the other women in the tribe despite the fact that she had no power in tribe, no power in political rules of the tribe. Ayeneh has got her competitive thought from her mother.

City (Bushehr/Shiraz/Tehran)

Manes is a man with olive graceful eyes who has come from the city, from Tehran, to write stories about *Kolis*. Ayeneh is happy smiling when she is with Manes. Her mind is not restricted and bound to rules and thoughts of the tribe but it is creative to go further. Ayeneh shows curiosity when she is with Manes who asks her to tell stories: "why do you ask about my mother and my grandmother, sir? For the story" (6). Ayeneh wants to know more about Manes and what his goal is in writing others' memoirs. Ayeneh feels lively and can dance for hours after talking to Manes in the city far from tents. Ayeneh falls in love with Manes in city. Afterwards, she experiences living in big cities, Shiraz and Tehran. Despite the losses she suffers from during this long journey, she gains good experiences and perceives her own potential art, talents and creativity. Hannibal, the painter, says to Ayeneh: "Hi Hi ... I bet you are the one who paints the Christ like a woman" (200). Ayeneh shows creativity and has the ability to break the traditions and rules in its best way.

Ayeneh's mother makes her believe that the rules of tribe are absurd and brings up a different mind in her daughter's brain. Ayeneh's father gives Ayeneh a great amount of money when she is castaway out of the tribe. And Manes is a man in search of whom Ayeneh gets to her own qualities.

CONCLUSION

Perhaps the most dramatic moment of *The Koli by the Fire* is when Ayeneh, the female protagonist, is forced to leave the tribe. In fact, she is forced to move away from home, a specific change that brings her danger and trouble at first and provides her opportunities to be a powerful different woman, at last. Ayeneh cannot move without drivers. Ravanipour tries to challenge and change the cliched view of lorry and bus drivers since they take a positive role in Ayeneh's life and cause her to move. In fact, the scenes are designed in the story in a way that they are not fixed in one place but always on move. Every place has its effects on Ayeneh and she learns some from each place. Place and geography actually reconstruct Ayeneh's identity. Ayeneh's personal identity is powerful and her competitive thought helps her to write her destiny again from the beginning even though she suffers a lot. Ayeneh challenges the traditions and overcomes fear to get ahead eventually. Ayeneh's collective identity as a member of *Kolis* is subject to patriarchal rules as she surrenders to the controlling power of the tribe's men. On the other hand, Ayeneh's collective identity is reshaped as an individual among people in streets, the people who are aiming to eradicate the streets of patriarchy, discrimination and binary distinctions. Ayeneh moves along the streets with men shoulder to shoulder to annihilate the oppression she has borne for long creating a uniquely compromised identity of herself. Ayeneh's relational identity is as influential as her personal identity. Ayeneh's mother forms her daughter's mind and stimulates her socially aware identity in childhood, making her experience various societies, for instance an urban life, and also Manes who illuminates her heart in youth, provoking her to coin a new perspective on life. Ayeneh, in search of love, in search of Manes, gets involved in life and experiences it and comes to herself. Moniroo Ravanipour, in the first post-modern Iranian novel, challenges the gendered binary oppositions the patriarchal society has imposed on women and shows that a woman's identity is animated and the woman merely needs to become aware of her own sense of identity confronting the problems of public places. Ayeneh's identity is not trapped in places but it is re-conceptualized, redefined and developed throughout places. The novel should be appreciated well enough since it has brought the controversial topic of becoming women identity in the streets of Iran very early, the portrait which is being displayed currently in reality after around thirty years in 2022, not being shackled to stories.

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