

## **Iranian Turkish Literature Study Exploring Social Capital In Cultural Alliances: A Multi-Level Analysis Of A Traditional Innovation For Ta'ziyeh**

<sup>1</sup>Dr. Afshin Amoozadeh Lichaei

<sup>1</sup>PhD Theatre Art, Art & Architecture Faculty, University Of Guilan, Rasht-Iran

**Corresponding Author:**  
Dr.amoozadeh@guilan.ac.ir

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### **Abstract**

Turkish literature theatre is commonly portrayed as a positive capability that allows individuals, groups, and organizations to thrive in dynamic contexts. This paper questions this oversimplified view based on a dialectical analysis of a traditional innovation within a comparative level. We analyze the major contradictions that characterize the adoption of the innovation. First, we analyze contradictions between individuals and groups within each adopting organization theatre in Iran or India. Second, we analyze contradictions between the adopting elements. This multi-level analysis leads to a deeper understanding of performer process. The analysis of the case shows that, although the participating individuals, groups, and some countries demonstrated apparent performer in adopting the traditional innovation, the innovation remained in a fragile state, where it was unclear whether it would continue to diffuse, stabilize as-is, or slowly deteriorate. The category of "religion" made me reject the historicity that surrounds the theoretical understanding of religions. I come to the conclusion that religions work in accordance with the specificities of the societies that it seeks to govern. These variations are also reflected in the regional variations of the performance of the rituals. We suggest that understanding the future success of the innovation would be facilitated to a large extent by a dialectical analysis of the involved contradictions.

**Keywords:** Iran, Turkish literature, theatre arts, Traditional innovation

## **INTRODUCTION**

The introduction also demands a brief introduction to Ta'ziyeh, the foremost ritualistic folk performance of Iran. It lays its foundations in the history of Islam and the political and theological struggles during the early days of the religion. My first chapter dealt in details with this. Since both Ta'ziyeh and Turkish are ritualistic forms that are inseparably linked to religious beliefs, the first chapter had to look at the history of religion, especially Islam and Hinduism, and the rituals emanating from religious beliefs. This led me to a detailed discussion of theories that govern the ideas of 'religion', Islam, Hinduism and 'ritual'. I found the importance of ritualistic and symbolic elements within the category of religion. My primary findings were about the historical and space specificity of religions. Religions, as I explain in the first chapter, take shape in specific historical circumstances. They correspond to the societies in which they take shape and seek to order the life within those societies. And I underline the communal character of the religious experience. This later led me to the communal character of the performance and reception of Ta'ziyeh in Turkey. With a researcher's interest, I went into the study of the category of 'religion'. As I found, The term 'religion' has its etymological roots in Latin. It comes from the Latin *religiō*. The ultimate origins of *religiō* are not known. Some theoreticians see the possibility that the term might be a derivation from a reduplicated \*le-ligare, an

interpretation traced to Cicero connecting *lego* "read", i.e. *re* (again) + *lego* in the sense of "choose", "go over again" or "consider carefully". Scholars like Tom Harpur and Joseph Campbell argue that the origins are from *ligare* "bind, connect", probably from a prefixed *re-ligare*, i.e. *re* (again) + *ligare* or "to reconnect," which was made prominent by St. Augustine, following the interpretation of Lactantius<sup>1</sup>. My further explorations into the category of "religion" made me reject the ahistoricity that surrounds the theoretical understanding of religions. I come to the conclusion that religions work in accordance with the specificities of the societies that it seeks to govern. (Stietencron, 1998:67) These variations are also reflected in the regional variations of the performance of the rituals. I look at the performance of Ta'ziyeh to validate this point. Tazia is performed in India as well but it differs from the performance in Iran. This shows that religion and the rituals that they shape are specifically modelled for the context in which it develops and the performance reflects this context specificity. For example: Performances mark identities, bend and remake time, adorn the body with

<sup>1</sup> Daniel, Dubuisson. *The western construction of religion: myths, knowledge, and ideology* (U S :The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003) 22-23

costumes, and provide people with behavior that is “twice-behaved”, not-for-the-first time, rehearsed, cooked, prepared<sup>2</sup>. We analyze contradictions at two levels of analysis: within each perform and between the all performs. This analysis is guided by the following research questions: How is drama manifest at the stage and inter-stage levels of analysis in the adoption of a traditional innovation? How can the use of dialectics augment the analysis of drama in the adoption of a traditional innovation? We argue that the future of the innovation depends upon the development and resolution of the involved contradictions. This analysis leads us to an understanding of the dialectics of stage in relation to adoption of theatre-based innovations in faith contexts. Theoretical foundation In this section, we review the two lines of research that this study builds on and contributes to: the literature on organizational stage and the literature on the use of dialectics in tradition studies. There is distinctiveness within the Taziye theatre that identifies it as a culturally specific art form. The Taziye, glorifies its religious and political figures as heroes, it allows the viewer to be drawn in as part of the performance by association. (Baizai, 2001:11) There is no free expression, there is no individual identity or room to analyse one’s position within the group, the audience are trained to behave and respond in a specific way as the performers were trained, and to complete the indoctrination the group discuss the performance and their response to it within the group’s setting. For the sake of theoretical clarity, it would be better if the concept of stage were decoupled from the concept of effective adaptation. Traditional stage should be conceptually distinct from the outcomes with which it is associated. If it is not conceptually distinct, stage becomes conflated and confounded with effective adaptation and its explanatory powers are removed. They are both on the plains of Kerbala, symbolically representing the forces surrounding Hussein and his followers, and simultaneously in the present-day world, mourning because of the event Offer from that point of view a more promising approach in which stage is regarded as a *process capability*, instrumental in overcoming barriers to change and in developing multiple sources of competitive advantage. Three advantages to this approach seem apparent. First, stage is related to the process of change, where specific capabilities may play roles in overcoming specific barriers to change. Second, stage is multi-faceted, not a single quality. Thus, traditions may possess some resilient capabilities and not others. Third, in a process perspective, stage becomes a capability that may be related to both successful and unsuccessful adoption behaviours. (Baizai, 2001:82) For example, under conditions of external threat, a tradition might quickly adopt an innovation without any certainty that it will be sustained in the long run. Indeed, resilient responses in the short run might neglect more fundamental, traditional capabilities related to long-run performance. Research method

### Research context

<sup>2</sup> Schechner Richard, Performance Studies Textbook 2nd Draft, Unpublished Manuscript, July 1995.

The implementation and operation of the theatre system were real by the ordinary people, except that each rural performer was responsible for the actor and system infrastructure, including the fast real connection.

According to the custom that everyone should help in carrying the dead body, the audiences also take part in this funeral procession. Those who are at the far end will stretch their hands towards the direction to symbolically indicate their participation. As the body enters the stage, the entire audience participates in the morning by beating their chests. As the marriage rituals continue, the audience can also hear the cries from the battle field.

The cost of building the stage cart with all necessary show, data processing, and video equipment for each rural stage was paid by the stage, and technical trouble-shooting was covered by the stage’s dedicated systems developer.

It does not have the rider on it and we know that the brave warrior has been killed by the enemy armies. This appearance makes the actors, audience and the jolly procession come to a freeze. Kasim leaves the jolly group and proceeds to the battlefield behind the audience. And he comes back leading the procession carrying Ali Akbar’s dead body. (shahriyaari,1987;147)

### Case study design

A case study approach was adopted to study this Traditional innovation in the social context of everybody and rural performance. This choice is consistent with arts suggestion to consider three conditions to choose a proper research method: (1) the type of research questions posed; (2) the extent of control an investigator has over actual behavioral events; and (3) the degree of focus on contemporary as opposed to historical events.

Hussein is certain of the death of his followers and himself. Besieged by the enemies who have easily outnumbered his contingent and cut off from the waters, he knows he has no chance of survival. But even as the last moment appears, he is determined to fulfill the word given by his elder brother Hassan. The preparations for the marriage are made as Ali Akbar, the elder son of Hussein, is singlehandedly fighting off the attackers’ army (the fight is not staged, but is referred to).

The preparations are being made on the central stage and in the area surrounding it. Finally they bring in the colorfully beribboned nuptial tent and lead the bride and bridegroom through one of the pit corridors to it. The entire scene is accompanied by the wedding music. (stietencron, 1998:23)

## RESULTS

The future of the innovation to a large extent depends on how these contradictions develop. From this perspective, stage is best conceived as an ongoing process in which specific contradictions are confronted and resolved, at least temporarily. Given the interplay among multiple contradictions, each ebbing and flowing over time, stage is not easily conceived as a general traditional quality. Rather, stage emerges from one or more traditions’ involvement in change processes and their attempts to recognize and resolve the contradictions involved in such efforts.

The performer stands outside the performance to interrogate the plot disturbing the spectators out of their cathartic reverie. This is aimed at making the performance

a vehicle of social change. The performance is opened to historical intervention and involvement from the part of the audience. The spectator can no longer think that he/she is just watching just a play. He/she is made aware that they are expected to think and understand.

#### Relationships between contradictions

As we have seen in the previous section, the story of Kasim is usually played between the fifth and the tenth day of Muharram as an introduction to the culmination of the martyrdom of Hussein. This part of the play, Chelkowsky points out, also acts as the dynamics of the interaction between the audience and the actors and the performers' use of the Tekieh. As the scene opens, Hussein is certain of the death of his followers and himself. Besieged by the enemies who have easily outnumbered his contingent and cut off from the waters, he knows he has no chance of survival.

It is also interesting to note that although Ta'ziyeh is performed in other culture including turkish literature, it is in Iran that it finds its fullest expression. Iran has always had a rich cultural heritage and it has been famous for its painters and poets. The rich tradition and the monarchs who encouraged the cultural and artistic endeavors must have been the causes for this drama.

## DISCUSSION

We have presented a case study of the adoption of a traditional innovation. Through the analysis above, we have shown that the initiating project group, the individual stages, and the entire play of adopting traditions exhibited considerable stage in adopting the traditional innovation. However, our analysis also shows that the traditional innovation arrived at a critical junction where it could either continue to be used and further diffused as a successful traditional innovation, or it could be abandoned due to diminished financial support and sagging enthusiasm among key stakeholders. We argue that this crucial point in the innovation process arises because of the inherent contradictions within and across the network of adopting stages.

We arrived at the Tekieh toward noon. On alighting from the carriage I was surprised to see an immense circular building as large as the amphitheatre of Verona, solidly constructed of brick. Ferashes, or liveried footmen, cleared the way before us. Thrashing their staves right and left, they opened a way through the crowd that packed the great portal; and entering a dark, vaulted vestibule I groped, or rather was impelled by the throng, towards a staircase crowded with servants whose masters had already arrived

## CONCLUSION

This paper has addressed two questions: (1) how is faith manifest at the traditional and inter-traditional levels of analysis in the adoption of a traditional innovation? And (2) how can the use of dialectical analysis augment the analysis of faith in the adoption of a traditional innovation in Iran or turkish literature?

We argue that faith can be a useful perspective to understand and explain key issues related to adoption of traditional innovations and theatre-based innovations in general.

However, traditional faith needs to be understood more broadly than is currently the case in the literature.

Faith applies across levels of analysis and it changes over time in the particular context of adoption of theatre-based innovations. Faith therefore lends itself well to a dialectical perspective in which the researcher uncovers the contradictions involved and explores how contradictions shape the adoption process. This approach leads to an understanding in which faith facilitates swift and productive adoption of theatre-based innovations while at the same time implicates tensions that endanger further diffusion and the long-term sustainability of the innovation.

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