Discourse Models in Passion Drama: A Comparison of English Tragedies and Persian *Tazieh*

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Abstract—**Looking at discourse in drama, this paper intends to deconstruct the cultural aspects of language used in this genre in two very different cultures, that is Western, British culture and Eastern, Persian culture, and examine the functions language serves across these cultures. Drama is selected for investigation since it is of the repartee genre and therefore allows a variety of language genres to fit in. In drama, the features which mark the social relations between two persons at the *character level* become messages about the characters at the *level of discourse* pertaining between author and reader/ audience. Of special interest are tragedies since they represent the human anguish and therefore require a lot of connotative meaning. In this study a sample of English tragedy, namely Macbeth and King Lear, and one from the Persian Passion Plays *Tazieh* (consolation), or *shabih* (simulated), namely *Hazrat AliAkbar* and *Hazrat Abbass*, are chosen for analysis. The rationale behind this selection is the similarity of motifs in writing them. For the purpose of analysis, the author has employed a model suggested by Gee (2005) in which he thinks of seven building tasks for language-in-use. The results show that although the origins of the tragedy in English and *Tazieh* in Persian differ greatly, they share many features, both from a discourse structure point of view and a literary perspective. The results confirm the view that cultural differences account for discourse tasks, not universal features of language, as depicted by the Western models of discourse.**

Index Terms—**discourse models, passion plays, language-in-use, drama, tragedy**

I. INTRODUCTION

In reading world literature, we find interesting similarities and differences which if studied properly might lead to a deeper understanding of the universalities of human thought, thus leading to a better understanding of the nature of human discourse. One way to deal with such issues is to examine literary works of the same genre so that content can be analyzed despite structural differences.

Short (1989) believes that dramatic dialogue is similar to everyday dialogue; and that methods and techniques applicable to everyday conversation are appropriate to the analysis of dramatic discourse. However, the analyst has to take into consideration the fact that drama has an embedded structure wherein one level of a discourse is nested in another. This is because, in drama, the features which mark the social relations between two persons at the *character level* become messages about the characters at the *level of discourse* pertaining between author and reader/ audience (1989, p. 149). Such relationship can be diagrammed as follows:

In a similar fashion, Burton (1980, p. 7) argues that the relationship between everyday dialogue and dramatic dialogue is based on a set of linguistic material which could uncover such relationship; and that the application of those linguistic material could not be done by "discussing sentences, phrases, alliterations, polysyllable-words, and so on.... The only possible linguistic level to use as a basis for such analysis is discourse, or more specifically, is conversation."

This study, therefore, intends to examine drama as a literary genre in English and Persian to see how tragedy in the Western sense of it, as best exemplified in some of Shakespeare's works, and *Tazieh*, a Persian type of tragedy which seems to share a lot with Western passion plays, deal with human suffering. The focus of this study has been on two well-known tragedies by Shakespeare, namely *Macbeth* and *King Lear* on the one hand and two Persian works of *Tazieh*, typical of *Shiite* tradition, namely *Hazrat AliAkbar* and *Hazrat Abbass.*

The rationale behind the selection of these works of tragedy is that all four of them are looked at as representative samples of their genre in the West and among the Shiite Moslems. Ahmadzadeh (2007) has the following to say in this regard:

As two distinct forms of drama, tragedy and *Tazieh* are closely related to religion, myth, and rituals. This invites us to a comparative study where tragedy not only shares its origin with *Tazieh* but its structure and dramatic features. In a comparative study, however, we encounter differences too.

It is mainly the differences that has been the impetus here in this study since, according to Shi-Xu (2005, p. 3), "in western cultures, language is often used as an expression of valued individual reason and self-identity", while "in eastern cultures, speech communication is generally held as a tool for maintaining relationship and harmony."

In Arp and Johnson (2006, P. 1083) we find the following about what a tragedy is and what it is meant to do:

A tragedy, so Aristotle wrote, is the imitation in dramatic form of an action that is serious and complete, with incidents arousing pity and fear wherewith it effects a catharsis of such emotions.

Tragedy is a very ancient form of literature. It is the imitation of an action which is serious and complete. The aim of a tragedy is to rouse the emotions of sympathy and fear in the soul of its spectator. Tragedy should have literary decorations like poetry, philosophy and hum our. It should be in the form of action, and not be narrative. It should also have the appropriate length to be acted on a stage. Most definitions of this type are borrowed from Aristotle, the Greek philosopher.

Tragedy has a high educative value. It makes man 'sadder and wiser' as Coleridge in *The Rhyme of The Ancient Mariner* has phrased. The combined effect of the emotions of pity and fear through which the spectator's mind goes through purges and purifies his mind, which process, in Greek, is denoted by the word Catharsis. Modern medicine has borrowed this word to mean discharge of emotions as a pressure valve.

The word tragedy has been defined differently depending on the context of use. The following are some examples:

1. a: a medieval narrative poem or tale typically describing the downfall of a great man *b* : a serious drama typically describing a conflict between the protagonist and a superior force (as destiny) and having a sorrowful or disastrous conclusion that elicits pity or terror *c* : the literary genre of tragic dramas

2. a: a disastrous event : CALAMITY *b* : MISFORTUNE

3. tragic quality or element (Merriam Webster Dictionary).

Similarly, the word *Tazieh*, with its different writings, has been defined differently in different contexts of use. The following are some examples:

Tazieh is a type of religious and national dramatic musical performance with several elements such as music (vocal and instrumental), recitation, poetry, narration and drama. Literally, the term *tazieh* means mourning rituals held in commemoration of deceased dear ones, but it refers specifically to a type of religious performance with particular rituals and traditions (Massoudieh, 1978). The primary theme of *Tazieh* is the tragedy of Karbala.

From these very limited citations, one can infer that despite the apparent differences, there are several common features between the two. The elements of poetry, narration, and, more importantly, the dramatic features of both types, are what this study intends to deal with as focal points of comparison. A very important feature of tragedy, that is its role as a catharsis, is probably the most important of its shared features with *Tazieh*. This point will be taken up later as the main drive of the present study which is to show that even in the case of a very common human experience, such as emotions and sympathy, cultural issues make the ultimate difference.

The most significant common features of popular performing arts, including *Tazieh,* are the following:

1. The scene is located amidst the people;

2. Their origins lie in the beliefs and perceptible factors of the people's lives;

3. The actors are not professional, in the sense that they do not earn a living from these performances;

4. The performances are simple and unostentatious;

5. The performances do not follow written texts, although they fall within determined general frameworks. In other words, the overall framework of the performances is determined, but the dialogues, as well as some secondary scenes, are improvised (with the exception of ritual declamations);

6. The actors come from the lower strata of the society;

7. The actors do not consider themselves apart from the audience and communicate with it in simple terms, even addressing it and requesting its acquiescence in some scenes.

These features are seemingly far from those of Shakespeare's tragedies which are rooted in Renaissance tragedy. Renaissance tragedy derives less from medieval tragedy (which randomly occurs as Fortune spins her wheel) than from the Aristotelian notion of the <u>tragic flaw</u>, a moral weakness or human error that causes the protagonist's downfall. Unlike classical tragedy, however, it tends to include subplots and comic relief. From <u>Seneca</u>, Latin tragedies in which Fortune and her wheel play a prominent role, early Renaissance tragedy borrowed the "violent and bloody plots, resounding rhetorical speeches, the frequent use of ghosts ... and sometimes the five-act structure" (*Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 6th ed., vol. I, p. 410). In his greatest tragedies (e.g. *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear* and *Macbeth*), Shakespeare transcends the conventions of Renaissance tragedy, imbuing his plays with a timeless universality.

Arp and Johnson (2006, P. 1084) believe:

Aristotle had important insights into the nature of some of the greatest tragedies and that, rightly or wrongly interpreted, his conceptions are the basis for a kind of archetypal notion of tragedy that has dominated critical thought.

The structure of Shakespearean tragedy can be summarized in the following:

The first act is the introduction, where you would meet all the characters. The second is where *complications arise. The third is the rising action where things leading up to the climax happen.* The forth is the climax or most suspenseful point. Then comes the falling action where everything is coming to an end. Finally, the catastrophe which usually results in the death of Shakespeare's hero.

One common feature of tragedy and *Tazieh* in terms of structure is the way they are named. Tragedies are often named after the hero, for instance *Othello, Macbeth*, etc. In *Tazieh*, similarly, the name of the main character is adopted, thus: *Aliakbar, Hazrat Abbass, Imam Hossein*, etc. would be the name you identify the *Taziehs* with.

II. METHOD OF ANALYSIS

To compare the discourse structure and theme of Western type of tragedy and *Tazieh*, Gee's(2005) model of discourse tasks was adopted. This model is obviously Western in nature; however, since it looks at discourse from a functional point of view, it could be employed as a tool for analysis for the time being. The author is aware of the fact that Western tools cannot account for all discourses and tries to show the need for what Shi-Xu (2005) calls a "culturally pluralist, in particular in-between-cultural, approach to language, communication and discourse." The tentative exploitation of Gee's model may be justified once compared with many other models in this area which are either ideological in nature or globalized with the assumption that Western culture fits all cases.

This model presents a framework including seven different tasks for discourse as follows:

Task one: significance

How is this piece of language being used to make certain things significant or not and in what ways?

Task two: activities

What activity or activities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e., get others to recognize as going on)?

Task three: identities

We use language to get recognized.

What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as operative)?

Task four: relationships

What sort of relationship or relationships is this piece of language seeking to enact with others (present or not)?

Task five: politics

(The distribution of social goods) What perspectives on social goods is this piece of language communicating (i.e. what is being communicated as to what is taken to be "natural", "right", "good", 'correct', 'proper', "appropriate", "valuable", the way things are, the way things ought to be, high status, low status, like me or not like me?

Task six: connections

How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things. How does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?

Task seven: sign system and knowledge

How does this piece of language privilege or disprivelge specific sign systems (e.g. Persian vs. English, etc,) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?

The Data:

Specific examples of discourse segments in the four works under scrutiny were cited to compare and contrast the role of each task. To do so, the researcher started with the introduction of each of the four works under study.

The Discourse structure in the Opening Acts of Tragedy and *Tazieh*

In Shakespeare's tragedy, the first act is the introduction, where you would meet all the characters. This part is significant since the audience will first have to know about the characters to appreciate the theme. The function of the introduction, therefore, is what seems to be normally the basic part of the structure of any drama. In *Tazieh*, however, this function does not seem essential since the specific audience as well as their previous familiarity with the time and the theme of the performance as represented in the name of it and the time of staging which coincides with the relevant main character will define this purpose. For instance, in the case of the two *Taziehs* in question, they are normally performed on the eve of their martyrdom, that is the eighth and ninth of *Moharram*, or what is called *Tasoua*. The discourse task will, therefore in the introductory part of the tragedy in the Western form of it follows a systematic order which doesn't seem proper in the structure of *Tazieh*. The following examples are samples of discourse used in the four works in question:

Macbeth: Act 1, Scene 1

A desert place.

Thunder and lightning. Enter three Witches

First Witch

When shall we three meet again In thunder, lightning, or in rain?

Second Witch

When the hurlyburly's done, When the battle's lost and won.

Third Witch

That will be ere the set of sun.

First Witch

Where the place?

Second Witch

Upon the heath.

Third Witch

There to meet with Macbeth.

First Witch

I come, Graymalkin!

Second Witch

Paddock calls.
Third Witch
Anon.
ALL
Fair is foul, and foul is fair:
Hover through the fog and filthy air.

This introductory act prepares the grounds for the theme of the story and presents a sketch of the type of characters the audience should expect to witness in the play.

King Lear Act 1, Scene 1:
King Lear's Place
Enter KENT, GLOUCESTER, and EDMUND
KENT
I thought the king had more affected the Duke of Albany than Cornwall.
GLOUCESTER
It did always seem so to us: but now, in the division of the kingdom, it appears not which of the dukes he values most; for equalities are so weighed, that curiosity in neither can make choice of either's moiety.
KENT
Is not this your son, my lord?
GLOUCESTER
His breeding, sir, hath been at my charge: I have so often blushed to acknowledge him, that now I am brazed to it.
KENT
I cannot conceive you.
GLOUCESTER
Sir, this young fellow's mother could: whereupon she grew round-wombed, and had, indeed, sir, a son for her cradle ere she had a husband for her bed. Do you smell a fault?
Enter KING LEAR, CORNWALL, ALBANY, GONERIL, REGAN, CORDELIA, and Attendants
KING LEAR
Attend the lords of France and Burgundy, Gloucester.
GLOUCESTER
I shall, my liege.

As obvious, the two introductory scenes in Macbeth and King Lear both deal clearly with the presentation of the main characters and at the same time give some hints on the theme of the drama. However, as evidenced in the next two examples from *Tazieh,* this may not be said to be the case.

Hazrat Abbas:

زينب:
عباس علمدارم نور بصر زينب
ترسم كه شود نيلي معجر به سر زينب
تا سايه تو باشد ما پرده‌نشين باشيم
بعد از تو به غارت رفت معجر ز سر زينب
اي ماه بني‌هاشم خورشيم لقا عباس
اي نور دل حيدر شمع شهدا عباس

English Transaltion:

Zeinab, Imam Hossein's sister, who is now in charge of the women in the family, is addressing Abbas, who is the strongest man in charge of protecting the privacy of the family:

Oh my Abbas, the Emblem Bearer, the sight of my vision, I am afraid I will have to be wearing black in mourning for you, While you are with us, we are safe in our privacy, After you, I shall be robbed of my head cover, Oh you Moon of the Bani Hashem, good-looking Abbas, Oh you the light of Heidar's heart, the candle of the martyrs.

What can be gathered from these four pieces of discourse in the introduction to the four plays is the significant difference between the patterns of tasks they accomplish in tragedy and *Tazieh*. The significance of the discourse in introducing the characters in tragedy on the one hand, and the fact that there is no need to do so in *Tazieh,* is a drastic difference in type of organization in the discourse structures used in the four works being scrutinized. The rise of complication as seen in the second acts of the Western tragedy, is in fact already there in *Tazieh* where the audience is familiar with the theme and there is no expectation for new developments. *Tazieh*, in fact, represents the ideological *Shiite* ritual which is not telling a story but only performed to provide the necessary atmosphere for mourning. The cultural element of exaggeration in this respect might seem similar in both Western tragedy and *Tazieh*, but it plays a different role in each, as will be shown later.

Identity in the discourse of tragedy and *Tazieh*:
Another task in the discourse of the drama is how it is used to represent the identity of the characters. The question here is:

What identity or identities is this piece of language being used to enact (i.e. get others to recognize as operative)?

The sort of language used in terms of music, metaphor, imagery, meter, rhyme, sound patterns, sonnet form, ethos tone, simile, rhythm, and other rhetorical features are also a discourse factors to be looked at here.

The following are representative examples of language pieces used in the four works with significant differences in rhetorical features:

Macbeth:

Many of the speeches in the plays of William Shakespeare are written in blank verse. The following is an example in *Macbeth*:

Tomorrow, and tomorrow, and tomorrow, Creeps in this petty pace from day to day, To the last syllable of recorded time; And all our yesterdays have lighted fools The way to dusty death. Out, out, brief candle! Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player That struts and frets his hour upon the stage And then is heard no more: it is a tale Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, Signifying nothing.

The piece of language quoted above quite clearly identifies the theme of the play which is absurdity of the type of life pictured in Macbeth. Compare this with the following a similar passage from King Lear:

King Lear:

Blow, winds, and crack your cheeks! rage! blow!

You cataracts and hurricanoes, spout Till you have drench'd our steeples, drown'd the cocks! You sulphurous and thought-executing fires, Vaunt-couriers to oak-cleaving thunderbolts, Singe my white head! And thou, all-shaking thunder, Smite flat the thick rotundity o' the world! Crack nature's moulds, an germens spill at once, That make ingrateful man.

As mentioned earlier, most of Shakespeare's speeches were in blank verse: Unrhymed verse having a regular meter, usually of iambic pentameter. The language of the antagonists in *Tazieh* is similarly in rhymed verse of iambic pentameter. This should be compared with language of the protagonists which is full of imagery and emotion. Take the two examples below from *Ibne SA'd*, the antagonist, and *AliAKbar*, the protagonist, in this case the discourse introducing evil and good in two different ways:

In the Tazieh of Hazrat Abbas:

بن‌سعد:
اي شهنشاهي که چون بر صدر زين ماواکني
با اشاره رستخيز محشري برپا کني
سيد قرآن نسب طاها لقب ياسين حسب
بايد اينک سرخط مافوق ما امضاء کني
يا که بنما بيعت ما را ز جان و دل قبول
يا که عباست روان بر جانب ميدان کني
که هل من مبارز مني حسين تشنه جگر
مبارزي بفرست يا حسين سوي لشگر

English Translation:

Ibne Sa'd (the commander of the villain army fighting against Imam Hossein) addressing the Imam:

You the King of Kings who when riding your horse, With one hint you can start a resurrection, You Noble descendant of the Holy Qura'n, of sacred origin, worthy of holy verses, You must now sign a peace treaty with our superior, You either accept our superiority, Or send your Abbas to fight us, Is there a worthy fighter from your army, Oh you tired with thirst? Send you a fighter, Oh Hossein to us!

As the tone of the discourse clearly shows, the antagonist is using a threatening voice which although rhymed to some extent lacks the beauty and feeling of the protagonist, the holy character in *Tazieh*, *Hazrat Abbas* in this case. However, it is interesting to note that despite the threat in the discourse, the words are still respectful towards the holy characters. He calls them King of Kings! Noble and sacred! This feature of the discourse in the two works being compare is of significance since it carries a cultural load, again ideological in Tazieh but not in Western tragedy.

Now compare the antagonist's speech with that of the protagonist's in the following:

عباس:
اي ولي حضرت خلاق رب‌العالمين
اي پناه بي‌کسان بي‌شرمي اعدا ببين
يا علي چندان مسافت از نجف تا کوفه نيست
سر برآر از قبر ما را بي‌سروسامان ببين
ما در اين صحرا غريب، بت‌پرستان مي‌کشند
انتقام نهروان از شاه مظلومان ببين

English translation:

Abbas, the protagonist, the Holy character addressing Imam Hossein:

Oh you sign of God, the Creator of the two worlds:

Oh you supporter of the lonely, behold the ruthlessness of the enemy, Oh Ali, it is not a long from Kufe to Najaf, Rise from your tomb and observe our helplessness, We are not at home in this desert and the idle worshipers are trying, To take revenge of Nahravan on the King of the Oppressed.

The speaker's words are now most appealing and passionate in voice. At the same time that he is speaking of loneliness, his words are melodic and full of sympathy and emotion.

It is the same in the following quotation from Aliakbar:

علی اکبر :

اي زمين كربلا تو حال اكبر را ببين

كودكان را تشنه لب اندر سر خاك ببين

آمده بابم حسين اندر زمين كربلا

دور او را لشگر بي حد و مر يكسر ببين

English Transaltion:

Alakbar, son of Imam Hossein, the protagonist in this case, is addressing the audience indirectly by talking to the Land of Karbala:

Oh, you Land of Karbakala, behold Akbar's situation:

Children thirsty on the dirt! My father Hoosein has come to Karbala, Surrounded by the innumerable army of the enemy!

Hazrat Aliakbar is in some kind of soliloquy in which he arouses the sympathy of the audience who at this point start crying to show their love for Hossein and their hatred for the antagonist, Ibne Sa'd.

This kind of soliloquy is very common in *Tazieh*, as it is in the Western tragedy. Shakespeare's plays are also notable for their use of soliloquies, in which a character makes a speech to him- or herself so the audience can understand the character's inner motivations and conflict. In Shakespearian soliloquy in early modern drama, a person on the stage speaks to himself or herself, as characters in a fiction speaking in character; this is an occasion of self-address. Furthermore, as pointed out by Hirsh (2003) Shakespearian soliloquies and "asides" are audible in the fiction of the play, bound to be overheard by any other character in the scene unless certain elements confirm that the speech is protected.

The dramatic effect of soliloquy in *Tazieh* and tragedy, therefore, seem to serve similar functions or discourse tasks. However, the similarity is only linguistic, not in effect which is arousing sympathy in *Tazieh,* and preparing the grounds for the upcoming events in Western tragedy.

Task six, according to the model presented in this study, indicates:

Task six: connections

How does this piece of language connect or disconnect things. How does it make one thing relevant or irrelevant to another?

This task seems to be what soliloquies accomplish in tragedies. However, the connection in *Tazieh* is of a different type. That is, in *Tazieh* the relevance is based on the audiences' previous awareness of the incidents, while in the tragedy, the audience is only introduced to the following incidents. In fact, soliloquies function as foreshadowing in tragedies, but as re-enforcers in *Tazieh*.

In the area of sign systems, that is English and Persian, the two types of drama in question show certain similarities. However, because of the nature of allusion in Persian which is highly ideological and at the same time loaded with complements, the seventh discourse task, namely sign system and knowledge, is of great significance. Task seven reads as follows:

How does this piece of language privilege or disprivelge specific sign systems (e.g. Persian vs. English, etc,) or different ways of knowing and believing or claims to knowledge and belief?

For Shakespeare, "natural" behavior includes love for one's family and the loyalty between subject and liege lord; mistreating kinsmen or betraying one's rightful leader is "unnatural". This naturalness or unnaturalness is shown in language used in Macbeth. When authors refer to other great works, people, and events, it's usually not accidental. One of the allusions refers to King Neptune, ruler of the seas.

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood clean from my hand?" (Act 2, Scene 2). There are also allusions in Act 1 scene 2 lines 40-41 the Golgotha reference refers to the Bible - specifically Matthew 27:33

Act 1 Scene 1 line 12 this doesn't really seem like much at all, but it refers to the Bible also, a mixture of Good and Evil, and how Jesus Christ, while the Crucifixion was bad, helped us to live on.

In King Lear, when Cordelia proclaims "O dear father, / It is thy business that I go about" (4.4.24–25), echoing a biblical passage in which Christ says, "I must go about my father's business" (Luke 2:49). This allusion reinforces Cordelia's piety and purity and consciously links her to Jesus Christ, who, of course, was a martyr to love, just as Cordelia becomes at the play's close.

These allusions are only samples of how Shakespeare employs the knowledge of the readers of the sign, English language, to transfer his message. The following quotations from the two works of *Tazieh* show a similar task of discourse.

Abbass is addressing his brother Imam Hossein in the following referring to him as Quoranic codes, as holy characters, as mythological and metaphysical figures:

عباس:

اسلام اي در اذل شيرازه بند كاف و نون

بهر تعظيم تو خسم پشت سپهر نيلگون

السلام اي عرش دوش مصطفي ماواي تو

السلام اي آسمان هفتمين شد جاي تو
السلام اي مهد جنبانت جناب جبرئيل
چيست فرمانت بفرما تو به اين عبد ذليل

English Translation:

Hail to you O the initiator of the Great Being, The world bows you in respect, Hail to you O you whose place is the shoulders of the Holy Prophet, Hail to you O you who are from the Seventh Heaven, Hail to you O you whose caretaker is Gabriel, Tell me what you decree to this humble servant of yours!

As can be seen, almost all references are allusions, rather than just plain language.

In another quotation, *Imam Hossein* is responding *Abbass* in the same type of language:

امام حسين:

عليك من بتو اي نور چشم اشرف ناس
يگانه گوهر بحر شجاعت اي عباس

Hail to you, O you the apple of the eye of the Best of the Human Beings, The only Pearl of the Ocean of Courage, You Abbass!

In both Western tragedy an in *Tazieh*, the discourse task of allusion is a means of privileging the sign system, as well as the knowledge and belief of the reader/audience.

III. DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

If Shakespeare's tragedies are to be interpreted as Greek tragedies, the major difference will still hold between *Tazieh* and Tragedy. From this point of view, *Tazieh* seems more like Greek tragedy. In the study of tragedy of these two nations, Iran and Greece, we face two distinct philosophical and social views. *Tazieh* is formed by an external conflict between two forces of power: good and evil. On the contrary, the conflict that forms the Greek tragedies is between men and gods. While the struggle in *Tazieh* finds a socio-political aspect, in Greek plays gods are the central subject. Consequently, other elements such as oppression, innocence, and nobility of the heroes receive a different interpretation since determinism is treated differently.

The present study, however, was concerned more with the type of discourse employed in the tragedies rather than their very basic philosophical rationales, although that was an ever present element in the discussion of the similarities and differences since it is the key element in the choice of discourse.

From the seven tasks of discourse compared and contrasted in the study, one can conclude that despite apparent similarities, the two types of drama, that is Western tragedy and *Tazieh*, show significant differences in function. The following is a possible interpretation of these significant differences.

1. Discourse task one, in which the language used is supposed to make certain things significant or insignificant and the way this is done, seems to be functioning differently in tragedy and *Tazieh*. Take the function of language used in soliloquy, for instance. In tragedy, soliloquy is used to provide some foregrounding for the forthcoming events. However, in *Tazieh*, this is not the case since the audience is already aware of what is going to happen. In fact soliloquy in *Tazieh* is solely a technique to heighten emotions in the audience by making references to the plight of martyrs in Karbala.

2. The type of language, specifically the rhetorical features of the language used, also serve different functions in tragedy and *Tazieh*. The protagonist and antagonist speeches in the two types of drama have little in common. As previously stated, the antagonist in *Tazieh* uses language which is not very melodic and pleasant in tone. Although the structure is similar, the antagonist usually ejaculates war calls. The interesting point, though, is that despite its lack of melody and its rough tone, it is never impolite, never insulting, never without respectful address terms. The reason seems to be the ideological taboos governing the language of the writer: Nothing justifies the use of offensive language towards the off-springs of the Holy Prophet! Compare this with the language used by the antagonists in tragedy in which the rival is described as evil and depicted as negatively as possible.

3. The relationship between characters in drama is another main function of the language used in their discourse. This is another area where the discourse function in tragedy and *Tazieh* differ significantly. The bombastic language used to describe each other, *the apple of one's eyes, the sunshine of the family, the strongest of the men, etc*. is not uncommon in both. The difference, however, is in the degree to which such language is used and the people who use it. In tragedy, the positive emotional expressions are used by people either in love or very intimate ones, or normally between parents and children. In *Tazieh*, on the other hand, much more emotional expressions and metaphors are used, even by negative characters in addressing positive ones.

In conclusion, the findings of the present study seem to suggest that discourse in tragedy shares several features with *Tazieh*, though not very often identical in the two. The similarities between the discourse used in tragedy and *Tazieh*, in turn, seem to be more related with the origins of the human thought, rather than the genre of the works. The tasks mentioned for tragedy and *Tazieh* may be either planned by the authors based on some kind of prototype, as is the case in Shakespeare's tragedies, or just an expression of the writer's inner feelings. In the case of *Tazieh*, no work of this type has been produced by people of other ideologies. That is, in the history of *Tazieh*, not a single one has been produced by non-Shiite believers. This specific characteristic has given *Tazieh* what makes this type of drama unique in

the world. It is ideological in theme, in language, in setting, in plot, in characterization, in structure, even in imagery and metaphors. The allusions are ideological in nature too.

Western Tragedy, on the other hand, has very few cases of ideological language use, even though the language is sometimes misleading. However, the major impetus in both Western Tragedy and *Tazieh*, as the Eastern type of the genre, is cultural issues. What makes *Tazieh* unique, in particular is the *Shiite* ideology rooted in the Islamic tradition of *Imama* and Persian beliefs of innocence in the descendants of the Holy Prophet, *Mohammad.*

What seems to be missing, or at least forgotten in the academic circles, is that we need a return to our own cultural values in analyzing discourse. This is absolutely necessary since it helps us build our own models in this area and do not always depend on the Western solutions. This paper is hoped to have presented one way to start doing so.

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