

Tradition and Identity in the Texts of Iranian Diaspora A Comparative Study

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ABSTRACT

This is an attempt to conduct a comparative study on five main Iranian diasporic texts to shed light on their points of likeness as well as discrepancies to conclude that the theme of identity in the frame of 'tradition versus modernity' may seem to be the main concern in the formation of these texts. Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Firoozeh Dumas's *Funny in Farsi*, Roxana Saberi's *Between Two Worlds*, Ramin Jahanbegloo's *Iran, Between Tradition and Modernity* and finally *In Search of the Sacred*, would be probed in this study. All of these texts hold features of diasporic texts and the main point is that although the opinions, facets and the style of each text might be different, the reflection of the writers' diverse opinions on the concept of identity in the frame of 'tradition', 'religion' and 'modernity' seems to be the same thinking ground. In other words, all of these texts try to approach the issue of tradition, modernity and identity, while reflecting various states of opinions in their standing points. Thus, this paper will attempt to demonstrate the aspects which highlight the concept of diasporic texts, including their attitudes toward tradition and modernity.

KEYWORDS: Revolution, Diaspora, Identity, Tradition, Modernity.

INTRODUCTION

Nafisi

The first text to be evaluated in this study is Azar Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran* which is a memoir that tries to depict the events happening in the revolutionary stages of Iranian society through the writer's own experiences. To give the memoir a brief view, it needs to be stated that *Reading Lolita in Tehran* has been narrated in four sections, during which Nafisi introduces several literary texts and reflects her views on Islamic Republic by connecting these literary texts to her own society. The first part of the novel deals with two texts, Nabokov's *Invitation to a Beheading* and *Lolita*. Trying to recognize links between her favorite novels and the social realities, Nafisi asserts, she has chosen *Lolita* "against the tyranny of time and politics" (1, p4). In Nafisi's mind, her students and Nafisi can understand Nabokov's books well because the world depicted in Nabokov's texts is like the society they are living in. In her view, the Islamic government is against logic and modernity, like the system in *Invitation to a Beheading* in which Cincinnatus a citizen of a fictitious country is imprisoned and sentenced to death for gnostical turpitude. A true and liberal knowledge, in Nafisi's mind, is beyond access and acceptability in the Islamic political system in Iran.

Also, on or after the second part, there is a sense of being alienated at home which commences by her arrival to Iran after some years of education in the U.S and Europe. In this section Nafisi takes the story back to her return to Iran in 1979. Nafisi expresses a sense of alienation and fear just from the first moments of her arrival in Tehran airport as she thinks she cannot understand the deeply Islamized revolutionary changes. In her view the change and the modernity for which she was hoping for was far different from the present conditions. Moving on through the memoir she introduces Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* for her students and of course for the reader because in her view this novel has an important revolutionary quality, "I myself was just beginning to discover how similar our own fate was becoming to Gatsby's. He wanted to fulfill his dream by repeating the past, and in the end he discovered that the past was dead, the present a sham, and there was no future. Was this not similar to our revolution, which had come in the name of our collective past and had wrecked our lives in the name of a dream?" (1, p96) About this theme of 'a dream about past' Ramin Jahanbegloo asserts that the idea of a return to "authentic root" or "past" was the common mood and belief among the revolutionaries in Iran before 1979 who dreamed for more pure identity against what they would call Westernization of Shah. He states in the introduction part of *Iran, Between Tradition and Modernity* that, in the eyes of intellectuals like Shariati or Al-e Ahmad, who laid the base of criticism against 'Westernization' in Iran, "Occidentosis" (or Westoxification) had infected the Iranian society and corrupted Iranian culture (2, p xiv). In this sense, to criticize this idea of 'return to an authentic tradition and

identity' the third section of the memoir has been allocated for Nafisi's accounts of the fundamentalists and the Cultural Revolution and war in early 1980s in Iran to suggest that this idea of return was just a social failure in her mind. Two literary texts shape her narrative in this part, Henry James's *Washington Square* and *Daisy Miller*. About *Daisy Miller* she asserts that "the tension between the old and the new leads to Daisy's death" (1,p140). *Daisy Miller* seems to serve as both a description of the mind of a young woman, and an overview of the traditional views of a society where she is a clear outsider in a traditional social view for Nafisi. Also in *Washington Square*, Nafisi claims that the main evil of societies is people like Dr. Sloper who misses his chance to understand and help his daughter; and Nafisi relates the story to her own experiences in Iran, as she states: "Lack of empathy was to my mind the central sin of the regime, from which all the others flowed" (1,p148).

In final section of the memoir, Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* is the novel that creates a basis for her remarks. "It is a truth universally acknowledged that a Muslim man, regardless of his fortune, must be in want of a nine-year-old virgin wife." So declared Yassi in that special tone of hers ... "Or is it a truth universally acknowledged," Manna shot back, 'that a Muslim man must be in want not just of one but of many wives?'" (1,p168) By talking about *Pride and Prejudice*, Nafisi manages to criticize religion and condition of women in Iran; and considering her attitude through the memoir, it seems that her idea on religion is outrageous as if all the religious and traditionalists were blind or corrupt: "her youngest uncle, a very *pious* man, had sexually abused her when she was barely eleven years old" (1, p33). Considering her attitude, it might be claimed that her depiction seems like a criticism on the religious entity of the society rather than picturing the tradition impartially. From her tone it might be understood that the aspired modernity and development of Iran after revolution, in which she had a share, was doomed to failure just because religion had defeated other parties of the 1979 revolution. So it can be claimed that in Nafisi's point of view 'tradition' or to be more specific in this case, religion cannot reconcile with modernity and by such a view it is notable that her memoir, mostly favors a harsh criticism on the role of religion in theocracy.

On the second thought, it seems feasible to consider revolution as an 'edge of chaos' by which societies and lives of the members of societies go through dramatic changes and complexities. Stuart Sim in his article *Chaos Theory, Complexity Theory and Criticism*, asserts that: "The edge of chaos is where systems are at their most creative as well as most unpredictable" (3,p94). The notion of 'edge of chaos' can have interesting implications for the memoirs written on the revolutionary stages of Iranian society. In chaos theory and complexity, edge of chaos is the point where unpredictable and dramatic changes can alter our lives; it is a state as if chance and determinism are present simultaneously to open another page of our lives which had not been predicted before (3, p94). For Nafisi who cannot reconcile her identity with the Islamized revolutionary changes, this edge of chaos brings about dramatic alterations not only on her views, as she blames religion for the calamities, but also on her future life by which she feels obliged to experience her second phase of diaspora life after she leaves Iran to the U.S in 1995.

Dumas

The second memoir to be considered in this study is *Funny in Farsi* in which the notion of 'tradition' and 'identity' seems conspicuous in Firoozeh Dumas's terms as well. In fact her memoir can be put into consideration through different aspects: 1: Her brief depiction of Iran before revolution; 2: identity matters of Iranian diaspora in the U.S before revolution and after revolution; 3: Her brief illustration of Iranian traditions.

First of all, her tendency in illustration of the events does not seem as bitter as Nafisi's memoir. In fact her tone is humorous and tries to be as impartial as possible. In *Funny in Farsi*, Dumas portrays how she and her family immigrated to the U.S in 1972 before revolution, their settlement and life there, their condition after revolution especially after the hostage crisis of American Embassy, and how they tried to maintain their traditions and identity there. Her portrayed view on Iran before revolution has been limited into her life in Abadan, the monarchy system before 1979, and the nationalization of oil industry in 1950s. In addition, like Nafisi's memoir, Dumas's *Funny in Farsi* attempts to take a look at Islamic Revolution of 1979 in Iran as well; yet her depiction of revolution differs from Nafisi's in a large way. First of all, it is crucial to note that she does not involve Islam or any other tradition in her illustrations as the base of the problems they were suffering; in other words although Islamic revolution put their lives in chaos, she does not criticize Islam or Muslims as in Nafisi's style. Secondly, Dumas concentrates her accounts on the events aftermath of post-revolution American Embassy crisis by which the lives of Iranians in the U.S changed dramatically. Indeed, she portrays this incident from an outside world, America, bearing its consequences thousands of miles away. In doing so, in her memoir she depicts a comparison between hospitality and behavior of Americans toward Iranians before the Embassy crisis, and the kind of behavior after the crisis. Besides, the problem of identity and maintaining her native traditions seems to be another predicament illustrated in *Funny in Farsi*. She and her family are Iranians with their own culture, religion and traditions inherited from their homeland. The first problem that they face, as Dumas portrays hilariously, is with their names: "My cousin's name, Farbod, means "Greatness." When he moved to America, all the kids called him "Farthead." My brother Farshid ("He Who

Enlightens”) became “Fartshit” (4, p62). A name can reflect a lot of facts about one’s identity, nationality, and religion. A distinguishable fact here is that, the obstacle mentioned by Dumas opens another page of diasporic life which means, although they have got their legal and full residence and are respectful, they are not fully accepted. Americans cannot pronounce their names correctly because these Iranians have been considered as ‘other’ in the U.S; and it is a matter of search for acceptance that some of these Iranians wanted to change their names to easier ones or to adopt an English middle name for themselves. In contrast to Nafisi, not only Dumas does not seem to be outrageous about the religious context of her identity but also she manages to reconcile her identity with the new world’s different cultural entities to the extent that she can. For instance if she is not Christian and deprived from Christmas parties, she tries to celebrate Iranian Nowruz. She even happens to introduce and explain about such traditions as Persian New Year, or even Islamic-Iranian marriage style in her memoir for the foreign readers. In the case of her marriage ceremonies she asks her French husband to hold the ceremony both in church and also in Iranian Islamic rituals.

In fact if the notion of ‘chaos and complexity’ was feasible in Nafisi’s case, it surely would be applicable on Dumas as well. It can be stated that, Iran’s 1979 Islamic revolution put Dumas and her family on the edge of chaos through different aspects. The revolution, in fact, made a deep impact on their diaspora lives in the U.S; though in terms of comparison with Nafisi, Dumas was experiencing these traumas not at home topo but in a host topo whose embassy diplomats were taken as prisoners in Iran and consequently the natives of the host topo started to reject the newcomers from Iran who were called terrorists. This chaotic moment caused financial, educational, and professional challenges for her and for her family members. However in her memoir not only she does not seem to turn her back at her native and religious traditions but also tries to find ways to adopt the modernities of the new world in her own ways.

Saberi

The third text that would be studied in this paper is Roxana Saberi’s *Between Two Worlds*. Her memoir is a recollection of her moving to Iran from The U.S in 2003, her life there, the revocation of her press credentials in 2006, her imprisonment in 2009, and the turning points in her beliefs while in prison and her release after one hundred days. In early 2009 she was arrested in her apartment in Tehran and taken to Evin political prison secretly. She asserts that being accused of espionage, she was forced to confess and then sentenced to eight years of imprisonment though she was released after one hundred days. Reading through the memoir it seems applicable to distinguish some outstanding elements as probing the text: 1: a brief portray of her fatherland including its cultural and traumatic ones; 2: issues such as gender, religious or ethnic minorities; 4: Politics of home topo like student movements, revolution, Iran and The U.S relations and war with Iraq; 5: being an ‘other’ at home.

Comparing her memoir with the previously studied ones by Dumas and Nafisi, some points of similarity along with its unique discrepancies become clear. To talk about its differences it is crucial to point that her father is an Iranian who immigrated to the United States years before revolution; and her mother is Japanese. Roxana as a child of parents who have diasporic entities was born in America. Not having any clues about her father land by which her last name comes from, she becomes eager to learn and study about Iran’s culture as if she is in search of a root or a lost identity (5, p4). In fact, it might be suggested that her diasporic nature carries double edges considering her non-native parents in America and her own ‘otherness’ in Iran. So it can be claimed that it is because of this hybridity that she has named her memoir *Between Two Worlds*; one world is the United States, and another one Iran. However the crucial point to consider is her emphasis on being *between* these two worlds. For her, this third space has been the core of her memoir. Saberi goes from America to Iran to learn about traditions and culture of Iran. Even after her job as a foreign correspondent over she doesn’t leave Iran because she has found herself fond of it, has made friends, fallen in love and enjoying her life as if she has found what she had lost. But happy time in this second world comes to an end when she finds herself in Evin political prison; the third world, where she is captured between two worlds. If the Islamic revolution was an edge of chaos for Dumas and Nafisi, it does not have anything to do with Saberi’s memoir, because it is thirty years after revolution at the time. The edge of chaos for Saberi takes place in *between* two worlds, in political prison by which she gets confused, meets some different kinds of people from interrogators to cellmates, learns, goes through changes and writes after all. In this different world, as she asserts, Saberi meets some other women in the prison who were courageous enough resisting against their interrogators by hunger strikes or refusing to accept wrong confessions; she narrates that by observing their valor and faith she calls them ‘Angels’ as the title of her second chapter in the book. “I envied her for her faith, which had kept her strong and helped her resist the same pressures I had surrendered to... This woman, I realized, loved God so much that she feared disappointing Him more than she feared death” (5, p144). She not only does not consider religion as the cause of the calamities she is bearing, but also starts to learn Quran from her cellmates (5, p127). However she criticizes the political system in Iran for separating modern world from religion as any ties with West

would be considered corrupt in the eyes of the government. So as an American-Iranian, she finds religion not as a base for her predicaments but a medium for strengthening her soul; as she reconciles her modern American background with the traditional Iranian entities. Like Dumas and Nafisi she has some pages about Islamic revolution, American embassy hostage crisis, and war; but the difference is that she never had touched them like Nafisi and Dumas. On the other hand one of the other noteworthy features of her memoir is that she has put a lot of room in her book for more recent incidents in Iran like student movements, gender, politics and religious minorities that all of these issues were absent in *Funny in Farsi* and *Reading Lolita in Tehran*.

Jahanbegloo

The forth text which will be considered at this stage of study is Ramin Jahanbegloo's book *Iran Between Tradition and Modernity* which is a collection of different articles about history, culture and politics of Iran. Indeed, a brief biography of Jahanbegloo will not be useless to consider in this paper.

Dr. Jahanbegloo is a well-known Iranian-Canadian philosopher. He received his BA and MA in philosophy, history and political science and later his PhD in philosophy from the Sorbonne University, France. In 1993, he taught at the Academy of Philosophy in Tehran. He has been a researcher at the French Institute for Iranian Studies and a fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University. He taught in the Department of Political Science at the University of Toronto from 1997-2001. He later served as the head of the Department of Contemporary Studies of the Cultural Research Centre in Tehran... In April 2006 he was arrested in Tehran Airport and charged with preparing a velvet revolution in Iran. He was placed in solitary confinement for four months and released on bail. He is presently a Professor of political science and a Research Fellow in the Centre for Ethics at University of Toronto and a board member of PEN Canada.(6)

Jahanbegloo as the editor of *Iran Between Tradition and Modernity*, has put an interesting introduction for commenting on issues of identity, tradition and modernity in Iran. Thus we are confronted with texts written by Iranian diaspora whose text is not a narration of his personal experiences but a study which tries to scrutinize Iranian society from an outside world. He starts his introduction by a brief look at Iran before and after Islamic revolution by which he probes the themes of tradition and religion in the context of a society in which the citizens strive for modernization and development. In his view the predicament of modernity has always been as a part of heritage for Iranians especially during the last 150 years. For him the attitude of Iranians toward modernity has been ambiguous as well as complex and this ambiguity does not stem from whether to be modernist or against it, but is subject to more complexities and intricacies. As he claims: "Time does not separate Iranian modernity from Iranian traditions at this level; it binds them together; To reject Iranian traditions entirely would be to reject our modernity as well" (2, p xi). Like the previously studied texts, Jahanbegloo as well to explain his views on the issues of tradition and modernity, starts with talking about the Islamic revolution as he thinks it has been one of the most important events of Iran and contemporary Islam. Jahanbegloo asserts: "Perceived by many as a revolt against the secular modernity of the West, the Iranian Revolution was welcomed by some Western thinkers, such as Michel Foucault, as a triumph of spiritual values over the profane world of capitalist materialism. By saying this, Foucault was actually observing the Iranian Revolution as a means of critically attacking aspects of Western culture of which he disapproved" (2, p ix). In his view the transformation of Shi'i clerics from a political force to a ruling power is the political embodiment of a historical tension between modernity and tradition. But for him, this tension does not produce a solid binary opposition of tradition versus modernity at this moment, because the issue has stemmed from deeper and more complex intricacies, especially in contemporary Iran because the meaning of tradition and modernity will vary in such a social context where, "due to the more globalized condition" (2, p ix), the extreme opposition of binaries gives its place to dialogue and exchange. In his idea the condition of contemporary Iran is more complex as he thinks identity in the frame of tradition and modernity has become a matter of intricacies in a painful transition toward democracy by moving away from radical ideas (2, p xvii). In his mind, the role of women and new generation of intellectuals in creating such a setting seems very crucial in order to generate an identity that can produce an exchanging dialogue between modernity and tradition. In such a condition, as Jahanbegloo asserts, a 'Third culture (2, p xxi)' is being created in which the process of democratization and modernization are related to each other. This creates a condition which is excluding neither modernization nor tradition and religion, an identity which is against exclusion and marginalization by its strength and ability in rejecting extreme thinking lines and binary perceptions. Therefore, it can be asserted that his text in the frames of diaspora studies can be compared to the previously studied memoirs in this paper as it aims to discuss the issues of revolution, identity, tradition and modernity. However the big distinction is that here the text is written as a study on these issues in the frame of a sociological approach not as a memoir narrating personal experiences. Like the previously studied texts, for Jahanbegloo, Islamic revolution appears to be a key issue. For his text, the revolution, like that of Nafisi and Dumas,

can mean an edge of chaos that alters a nation's sociopolitical conditions. But this time the dramatic change is not probed on Jahanbegloo as a narrator of his experiences but on a society. In his view the revolution brought about changes in social views of a people for whom identity matters of tradition and modernity used to be a matter of solid binary opposition. In his words, the transformation of fundamentalist clerics to the ruling power force, who came after just another marginalizer political system, has widened the views of contemporary generation, especially the women and the intellectuals who are in a painful transition period in which striving for democratization has earned a more pluralistic and dialogic quality. Such a generation, for whom identity means neither rejection of tradition nor demonization of west, has recognized an interaction between the process of democratization and modernization by being able to create an elastic 'third culture' which is judgmental and at the same time inclusive enough for considering issues of traditions, identity and modernity.

Nasr

The last but not the least text which would be considered in this study belongs to the book *In Search of the Sacred*, which is in the format of an interview that Ramin Jahanbegloo has made with Seyyed Hossein Nasr. The book seems crucial for this paper because Nasr is one of the leading Iranian writers and philosophers in diaspora that in the interview he reveals his biography and his views on Tradition, Iran, Islamic revolution and the way the revolution turned his life to a diaspora entity. Although the text involves very much about his profound views on philosophy and religion, this paper would only engage with his talks about Iran, and his opinions about the theme of tradition and modernity from an Iranian diaspora point of view. To have a better understanding about his attitudes and beliefs it seems very useful to have a glance at his biography presented by himself as the responses to Jahanbegloo's questions. In, *In Search of the Sacred*, he notes that he was born to a religious family with a worthy educational background. His father, whom he got a lot of impression as he asserts, was a well-known physician, philosopher, author and university dean that introduced the world of Sufi tradition, tolerance, literature, Persian culture and the theme of education to Seyyed Hossein Nasr. Nasr claims his father was the 'father of modern education in Iran' however what he wanted to do was not westernizing the educational system but to assimilate modern ideas of modern education into traditional Islamic pattern. As he states, the first phase of his diaspora life takes place when his father sends him to America when he was 12, in 1945, to pursue his education in America. However ignoring the professional opportunities in the United States he leaves back to Iran in 1958 only because he loved to be in Iran, living with his own culture and traditions and studying more about the intellectual and spiritual heritage. He starts his job as a university professor and later becomes dean of Tehran University and afterward Aryamehr University and a trusted counselor of Shah and Queen, a member of Supreme Cultural Council and Supreme Council of Education before revolution in Iran and has been a member of *Institute International de Philosophie*. At that point of his life he decides to introduce Islamic philosophy to universities, especially Aryamehr University, more seriously and calls this as his 'jihad' and duty to make Iranians more aware of their own heritage as he asserts to make a "bridge between the traditional and modern elements of our society" (7, p68). Like previously studied texts, Nasr in revealing his biography mentions about the revolutionary stages of Iran before 1979, Shah and Queen and the condition of universities that time. As a trusted figure in the court, he states that Shah was a patriot and thought that the process of very rapid modernization was beneficial for Iran. Nonetheless, Nasr thinks that the only flaw Shah made was the exclusion of Iranian religious and traditional elements in his policies. As he calls himself a link between court and the politically active *ulamas*, he asserts that the clerics did not really want to change the regime; what they wanted was to be politically included in the country. This was maybe, as he asserts, because the *ulamas* were more afraid of the communist revolutionaries that would change the traditional and social face of Iran much more dramatically. However the Islamic revolution takes place and this change puts his life on the edge of chaos. As he notes his properties and bank accounts were confiscated while he was abroad and could not get back to Islamic Republic of Iran while being an Islamic philosopher himself. This chaos in his life challenges him materially and emotionally as he claims he had nothing abroad and had to restart from zero level while having a deep nostalgia for his homeland. Therefore the second stage of his diaspora has started against his own willing as an exile in West that desperately had to look for a professional opportunity to provide his life and his family. Nevertheless this edge of chaos in his personal and social life does not alter his views on the nature of religion, traditions and culture; in fact what distinguishes him as a writer is that he tries to define tradition, identity and modernity. By stating that our contemporaries' soul is in a sense torn by different world views of tradition and modernity he calls the issue as the core problem of 20th and 21st century (7, p7). In his definition about tradition he means the heritage which leads to the Sacred and beauty and for this reason he really concerns about Islamic-Persian style of architecture and talks about his efforts as a university dean in Iran of before revolution to build Aryamehr University with such a style. Because he indeed criticizes what he calls 'desacredization' (7, p63) brought by Western world into space and society of countries like Iran. What he really considers in his nostalgia for homeland

is the loss of spirituality and the Persian-Islamic identity by this blind 'desacredization' even after Islamic revolution. For him most of Western philosophy does not consider the spiritual need of humanity for the tradition; yet, in his idea tradition and intellect should signify the Sacred and points that 'the fish begins to stink from its head' (7, p88) and this is what West ignored during the process of modernization. However he does not mean to ignore the technological and educational achievements of the West. As his view can be comparable with Jahanbegloo's, he means by plasticity the modernity and scientific achievements of West can be absorbed into traditional world views and evaluated, digested or even criticized by the cultural heritages rather than being followed blindly. So for him, the idea of tradition, specifically religion, means crucial in every aspect of life in even politics as he disagrees with the possibility of idea of a secular political system and claims it cannot be feasible even in West where, most of the policies are based on Christianity; and even for Iran he wishes for an Islamic democracy which needs to be inclusive, and in favor of preserving its Persian-Islamic heritages (7, p315).

Conclusion

As a conclusion, this study considered five well known Iranian diaspora texts all of which have their own unique features along with very significant common characteristics. First of all it is notable that the issue of identity in the frame of tradition and cultural heritage seems to be the core issue in all these texts. Nonetheless each text's background and the way it approaches this issue differs. In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, this concern was approached with a sense of cynicism by which the religious traditions were criticized for being the cause of the mishaps. However this sarcasm is not expressed in the other texts in this study; especially for Nasr this heritage is very crucial element that needs to be maintained. Besides, the second distinguished shared feature is that all of the texts consider Islamic Revolution of 1979 as one of the core elements in expressing such a concern. The revolutionary politics are pictured as a critical factor in altering the history of social and political face of the country along with the lives of all the writers in this paper as if the revolution acted like a strange attractor putting their lives on the edge of chaos. In addition, the studied memoirs in comparison with the two last texts have pictured their concern about tradition and identity heritage in a matter of more personal way. For instance Saberi has portrayed herself as an avid diaspora to learn about Persian culture, though imprisonment happens to put her on an edge of chaos in her life bringing about Islamic and religious flavor to her beliefs. In contrast, Nafisi criticizes this heritage as she recognizes this issue as the base of the fundamentalism in the politics of post-revolution era. On the other hand, Dumas who is absent from homeland since childhood, illustrates her identity calamity by the consequences of American Embassy Crisis on the lives of the Iranians in America who were marginalized and had difficulty expressing their identities in the social scenes of the hostland. Jahanbegloo and Nasr, however, approach the issue of tradition, identity and modernity in different forms of texts as they see this subject as a project for a study. As a professor of Political Science, Jahanbegloo believes that the exclusion of neither modernity, nor religion will help the society develop as he believes pluralism and elasticity in absorbing elements of tradition and modernity in Iranian society lead to creation of a 'third culture identity' which will lead to democracy. Compared to Jahanbegloo's view, Nasr gives a more detailed description on the meanings of tradition and modernity. As an Islamic-Persian philosopher he believes that not only religion and any other cultural heritages will help societies achieve true identity and serenity but also criticizes being Westernized as he distinguishes it from the process of development and keeping the identity heritages.

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