

Dramatic Gamification in Bassim Altayeb's *Izayza*

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Abstract:

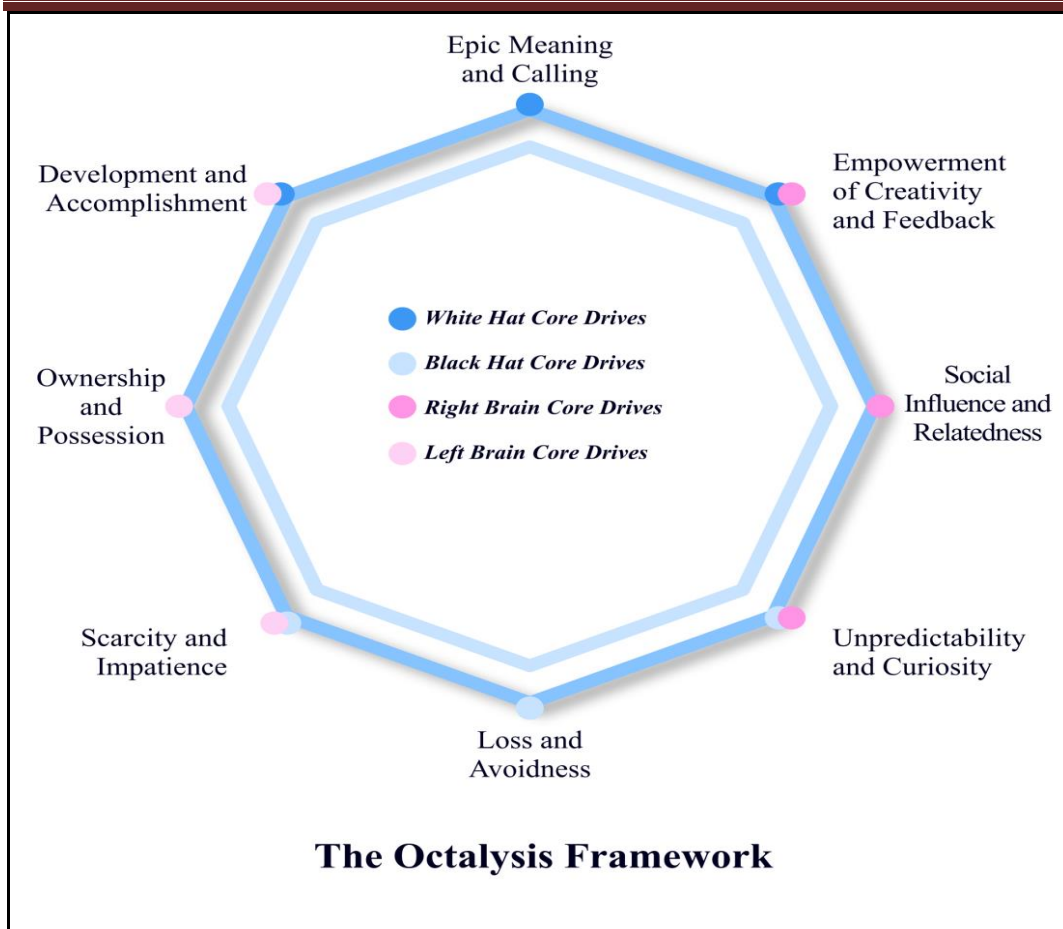
This paper delves into gamification, or the use of game elements in non-gaming environments. This paper Reflects on the existing game elements in *Izayza* by Bassim Altayeb while aiming to show the influence of those elements and how this play carries itself in terms of balancing the resulting emotions and thoughts that the reader/the audience gets. It also revolves around how *Izayza* incorporates gamification to create an experimental environment for its spectators in coordination with the message of the play. The play's unique integration of the audience into the performance, blurring the lines between actors and viewers, reinforces its gamified nature. While maintaining a serious tone, *Izayza* aligns with the concept that playing and the dramatic arts are not mutually exclusive, providing a thought-provoking and immersive experience for its participants. Lastly, this intersection suggests a relationship between games and drama.

Keywords: Gamification, Games, *Izayza*, Octalysis Framework, Drama

Introduction:

The game designer Jane McGonigal highlights that games may provide almost infinite possibilities, particularly since games were invented to save people from famine (McGonigal 2012). Generally, and without having to go back in time, games offer many benefits to the world like inspiring a positive impact on the brain, inspiring thinking skills like problem-solving, collaboration and teamwork, and encouraging creativity (Werbach and Hunter, 2012). Those multiple benefits and how much power games have over people have led to the serious study of games and what makes a game what it is, generally the components of games are called game elements. The benefits of games have led to the use of game elements in multiple fields including business, education, the media and many more (Simoes, 2015). It is mostly used to increase people's interest in something. Using game elements to benefit non-gaming contexts is called gamification (Christians, 2018). Werbach and Hunter (2012), creators of the first college gamification course, define gamification as “The use of game elements and game design techniques in non-game contexts.” Gamification is usually designed to inspire changes in behaviour and actions and increase user engagement and the desire to be involved we the gamified system (Christians, 2018).

Using gamification was later developed to less of an arbitrary inclusion of game elements to a field where strategies of successful gamification are suggested. Yu-Kai Chou, a game designer, suggested the Octalysis Framework in his book Actionable Gamification which shows all the game elements that make a game capable of influencing and motivating people to play games. In other words, he clarified what game elements can be used in non-gaming fields and called them Core Drives (see Figure 1). The Octalysis is a framework to gamify and a lens to see and analyse gamification in already gamified systems. It has eight elements that are called Core Drives and those Core Drives are concepts that involve the use of game techniques. The framework consists of eight Core Drives: (1) Epic Meaning & Calling, (2) Development & Accomplishment, (3) Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback, (4) Ownership & Possession, (5) Social Influence & Relatedness, (6) Scarcity & Impatience, (7) Unpredictability & Curiosity, and (8) Loss & Avoidance.



(Figure 1)

Each Core Drive has a specific set of techniques used to empower it. This framework can be read in two ways. The first is Right Brain and Left Brain Gamification, which focuses on whether the gamification creates creativity or logic. The second is the White Hat and Black Hat, which analyses whether the Core Drives cause people to be intrinsically or extrinsically motivated to achieve the goal of the gamified system (Chou, 2019). A system that shows any of those Core Drives, is well designed and archives the goals it was designed for counts as gamified, as it does not need all the Core Drives to be considered gamified.

Izayza is a melancholic and pessimistic Iraqi play. The play was written by Bassim Altayeb and some the actors of the play. The premier of the play was set in a house instead of a typical stage, called the Drama Forum House in 2014. The audience of the play was divided into tens, and each ten would follow a guide- actor into the rooms of the house where the action takes place. They go to different rooms, and each room represents a different scene, with different atmospheres and music (Altayeb et al.). The house in the play may suggest an entire country that seems to have been under the influence of a bad omen or a *Izayza*. The word *Izayza* refers to witchcraft made

of animal bones that cause bad fortune or problems. This witchcraft is known in society as it used to cause harm to others.

The play Izayza consists of three acts, where only the second act is long, while the first is an introduction before the audience goes to different rooms. The second act shows the different rooms, and the third act concludes the play where the audience gathers again (in the central hall of the house). *Izayza* reflects on the state of the country - Iraq- and what is happening in society from crimes, abuse and injustice. The play shows the effects of the past wars, starting with the bad education, violence seen every day, and even the destruction of the family institute (Yousif, 2015). *Izayza* is like a nightmare, showing how reality in itself has been a nightmare, yet when it is over, the audience is left with a reality that offers hope for change. According to Aljafal the play archives this through the overall atmosphere of the play, it shows that even when everything is destroyed, something can be done about it. The gamification elements of core Drives are shown in this play from the highest to lowest levels, starting with the Right Brain Core Drive, and then the Left Brain Core Drives.

Unpredictability & Curiosity

Unpredictability & Curiosity is the Core Drive of constant engagement due to ambiguity and not being able to predict the next event. Unpredictability & Curiosity involves elements like mystery and randomness (Chou, 2019). The play mostly portrays gamification through this Core Drive in unpredictable events, narrative shifts, thematic shifts, and the confusion caused by involving the audience and facing characters-actors that play both roles simultaneously. As the audience shifts from one room to another, they face a new topic, a new number of characters and most importantly the themes of each room continue to be personal, overwhelming and in many ways socially conscious and triggering.

Nothing stays the same in the play. Some of the audience sit and some stand. They move even inside and outside the building, sometimes the audience is either sitting or standing. The actors vary in age, and even the chairs used in the scenes vary (Habib, 2015). All those elements contribute to both Unpredictability & Curiosity which all contribute to creating the feeling of being gamified. One of the early game elements in the play is the Oracle Effect technique which is allowing people to make guesses by giving them hints (Chou, 2019). This is shown in room titles that match the scenes like “A Message to the Director” and “Bad Education.” The rooms are not different just in the title but have different settings from a hospital to a kitchen or on the stairs, which adds more to the unpredictability. Since

each group goes to a different room, this means that each group sees the scenes in a different order increasing ambiguity and curiosity.

Unpredictability is based on creating patterns and breaking them, the absence of clear patterns or the illusion of a pattern. This play has a hint of patterns in terms of social themes, yet there is no clear guide that would make one able to guess the upcoming events. *Izayza* opens with music and dancing to Iraqi music. Then a man with black clothes and strange makeup is on the second floor trying to balance himself on a piece of wood. From peaceful welcoming, a shift as the actors' "movement changed into something like a big quarrel that is a mixture of hysterical dance" (Altayeb et al.), giving the feeling that something is wrong (Habib, 2015). These unexplained quick shifts and events are the start of increasing curiosity and ambiguity.

At the start of the play, the first row of the audience is in front of tea bags hanging from the ceiling, the actors put cups up to make the tea, and then serve it to the audience. The second row of the audience is given Cola. then while moving with coordination, they take selfies together. This coordination and calculated movement are the element that makes this welcoming start still feel unnatural like a play and in a somewhat of a fake reality, as it includes randomness and ambiguity. This does not stop as suddenly a recorded voice is heard. The voice speaks of a strange object that fell on the country and has caused destruction. The narrative shifts into many verbs that describe what happened: "It was destroyed and destroyed, deformed, distorted, turned, diluted, returned, moved forward, swayed, and fell down, invaded, built, woke up, spoiled" (Altayeb et al). This shift in the text, is another form of unpredictability, as it does not match the rest of the play nor does it make sense.

later, the coordination of the actors changes from smiles to anger and sadness, from peaceful to violent. They start fighting until there is chaotic hysteric dancing. This time it is not a traditional Iraqi song but a Pink Floyd song. Making music is another broken pattern in the play (Altayeb et al.). Then the director starts talking out of nowhere saying that he has a surprise he would announce later, and continues to ask random questions that shift the narrative into directly addressing the audience:

Would you kill yourself or not? You, young woman, would your family cut your throat or not? And you, what would you say to your God? And you, are you going to stay sick forever, or will you get some treatment? And you'll entertain people and build a cinema? And you, would you predict the future and will you be born again? And you, do you have something to say? (Altayeb et al.).

Those questions have nothing in common except that they are all about each person and their life, what would ever happen to them, and what they would choose to be. Although those questions are intense and gloomy, the atmosphere shifts again in Act Two, as the actors act friendly and smiley. A man tells the audience to forget everything that bothers them and think about their loved ones. Another shift of tone happens, as the actor states: "Think of those young men who were killed and smile" (Altayeb et al.), he continues to remind them of past massacres and tells them that if the future generation knows about all that has happened, they would feel disappointed and lose faith in those who witness it happen and did nothing. This shows how the play confuses emotions and thoughts through its constant shifts. It continuously shifts from calm, friendly and hospital to sudden intense speeches that make them confused and shocked. The play also makes people feel guilty for smiling when there is death and crimes.

In Act Two, the play starts with the scene "Family Disintegration" where Ahmed, tells the story of how his mother a thirteen-year-old girl was forced to marry a man to end a family feud. Although such incidents happen occasionally, they are rarely publicly criticised, since many people seem to view such marriages as solutions, which is the start of the most unpredictable aspect of the play, the themes in *Izayza*. This scene does not stop at showing broken childhood through forced marriages. The more the story moves on the worse it got for him where he even was beaten by a teacher and had to drop out. In Ahmed's life with no responsible adults, he feels happy when his parents get divorced. After many incidents of abuse by his stepmother, he moved back home to his grandparents and mother as they beat him less. There he finds a wedding he dances happily to find out that it is his mother's wedding, marking the sudden end of the scene (Altayeb et al.). Ahmed's narration leaves one to expect a good turn of events but it never happens. Ironically his mother was a victim but also abused her child. Curiosity is also present in why the two families argue and why giving a child as a bride would be a solution to a feud. Another aspect is why no one cares for Ahmed, and if all the characters are victims of society, who then is to be blamed.

In "A Message to the Director," the audience faces unpredictability in shifts of theme and narrative as they find a man sitting in front of a typewriter and reciting a message. The message is by an actor who expresses his/her emotion about the play. The actor is frustrated with the scenes of death and because the extras must suffer. The actor says that they are forced to stay away from what the director would not forbid, and they explain the director's ideas and force them

on everyone. The actor is forced to speak on behalf of the weak to seek help from the only one who can save them, the director.

If things are to stay like this, I wish to you end the whole project and start a new one, another life without these

They deformed your image and changed your ideas. I've said all I have to say (Altayeb et al.).

Then the actor apologises for not welcoming the audience and concludes the scene with “He loves me and loves you all too, and listens to the youngest among you” (Altayeb et al.). The last lines make it even more clear that he is talking about God and people who use God’s words to commit injustice. The scene starts normally like it is not related to social problems and then shifts into the depth of a daring problem. In the scene “The Change Hairdresser,” a shift happens, each interaction includes one audience member and two performers (Habib, 2015). Karam and Safa try to sell beauty products to the audience and then start arguing about what to sell then shift again to saying that the best makeup and product is a smile (Altayeb et al.). The conversation shows the pressure people face to conform to beauty standards and appearances. It shows that beauty is different to each person, and what others should do to be more beautiful also differs. This scene handles a minor social problem and it is not expected to find a scene about beauty or face creams and how society judges and forces beauty standards, as it might not be considered a problem when it is already part of society.

A shift of setting happens in the scene “A Young Man’s Suicide” which is held in a photography studio. The audience enters one by one. The actor tells them to put their heads in the camera box, and then they see the actor’s face saying he now must speak about an important topic. The man talks about the one thing everyone has thought about before, which is death. He fears dying but not death itself, he would rather commit suicide than die in an explosion or lose a limb and live suffering under the pity of others. He does not want to live or die in pain; he wants to die peacefully without having his mother go through the suffering of washing his dead body (Altayeb et al.). This portrays the suffering of society and a fear greater than death; it is to know that a mother might have to see their child die before them because of a crime or a terrorist attack. From death, the pain of mothers and death, in “A Psychological Patient” a man is sitting alone in the darkness, lying on a bed as if it is a hospital. Yet the room has unusual furniture a fridge, and chairs and furniture for the audience to sit on. The scene starts with the character opening the fridge to get some light. Then the character starts talking about his

problems with illness and how he was treated from multiple illnesses. Despite all that he could not heal from a contagious horrible illness:

In order not to infect you, I'll tell you that I am a liar, I am a hypocrite; ... I doubt the nearest person to me. I do wrong to others and never apologise, asking why I should give value to such people. I really hate it if I meet a successful person; I hate them and start looking for their mistakes to make them fall. Thank you for listening. This helped a lot in my treatment (Altayeb et al.).

What is strange is how he describes his ill situation as a behavioural issue that can negatively affect personal relationships and social interactions. Strangely the ill man tries to heal by taking responsibility and being honest. This shift from physical and mental illness highlights how this situation is not other problems, it does not go away if people act like it does not exist, and it must be tackled face to face.

A quick shift happens to a more relaxed setting of a class. Yet the scene is gloomy with no hint of hope, this makes pessimism a pattern of the play. In the scene "Bad Education" a teacher complains about the loss of morals and the ruin of society (Habib, 2015). Unpredictability arises when the teacher tells them that the curriculum has been changed. All the changes revolve around teaching matters of immigration and wars. They must learn to recognize different weapons and their sounds and how to jump from explosions or when being followed by a car with no licence plate (Altayeb et al.). Those changes reflect a harsh reality that is not often spoken of. The scene shows how school is teaching things that Iraqi people are not using in their troubled lives due to the continuous political uproar. This scene reflects serious issues that everyone will recognise unlike some of the previous scenes, since forced marriages and social standards's danger might not be recognised.

In the scene "Predictions" a young woman is seated on the first step of a staircase. She randomly climbs up one step after each prediction. The young woman makes a series of positive predictions, other predictions reflect how underdeveloped the country has been. Some of the young women's predictions are unpredictable and create curiosity, among them is that Iraq will create a device that can actually detect explosives, or the winner of The Voice in 2030 will be Osama bin Laden's grandson. Sunnis and Shias will break their fast together during Ramadan. The scene also starts as if it is optimistic that things would change and rapidly mentions things that would realistically never happen and highlights social problems along the way. She also predicts that houses will be built with icons, even a button to make

your uncle leave when he visits. And in 2070 Iraqi men will stop abusing women, and in 2080 a man will govern Iraq who prioritises the country's interests over his own. The young woman does not mention those events chronologically rather they are organised to make a comic sense. The scene's comic statements make it less intense for the audience. Those comic statements are the Mischief technique of funny and unexpected conversations (Chou, 2019).

The scene “Female Suppression” shifts from problems that affect the entire country to a specific group of society, women. The scene is set in a kitchen, where an actress angrily peels vegetables. The audience sits at the table too. Where the previous scenes let one imagine that they are about to witness a woman who defends the rights of women, they are met with the exact opposite as each new story the woman tells is unpredictable. The actress blamed women and their clothes for getting raped. She glorifies the idea of girls not being allowed to play, as they must be married and leave their childhood behind. She despises girls who change their religion and believes this happens because their parents allowed them to get an education. She suggests oppressive means to end such happenings. She believes that a divorce is always the woman’s fault even if the husband was a drunk gambler. The scene ends with the actress asking the audience to leave the room as it might all be on fire (Altayeb et al.). The actress directly displays some of the social opinions society has about women. The play already highlighted liars and hypocrites shift into people who judge others; and blame women for everything. The scene shows how some people view women's rights as superficial and trivial rather than needs and requirements. Further, the scene silences all opposing opinions where only the actress speaks with no interruptions (Habib, 2015).

In “Spontaneous Opinions” the scenes shift to an encounter in a small room. There, an audience member sits on a chair facing a young boy Khalid, who asks them to put on headphones. Through the headphones, the audience member hears a young girl expressing her hopes for a better future and a safe world with no scammers and honest people. Then, the boy, Khalid, asks for a promise from the audience member to make his dreams come true. Then the light goes off and the audience member leaves (Altayeb et al.). The play here shifts from traditional storytelling to being more direct with a phone call and asking people to make changes.

In “3D” the scene is set in what looks like a cinema hall. The viewers are instructed to take their seats and wear 3D glasses while eating chips. They depict the events from 9/11, including the

following violence and death in Baghdad. The air blows over the audience, and their seats move in tandem with the sound effects to create an immersive experience that allows them to sense the images on the screen. When the ending of Act Two is announced, the audience gathers and listens to people playing music. As if they are drawn by the music, the actors enter the yard one by one with music and sleep at the audience's feet (Altayeb et al.). The play still puts the audience at the heart of the play but it does it differently and unexpectedly each time. In Act Three, an actor on the stage holds a microphone and addresses the audience directly again like in Act One. The actor urges everyone to save themselves and not forget the important things in life: smiling and peace and then emphasises the need to take responsibility for mistakes. Then, the actor announces the surprise mentioned earlier, the surprise is that he will die a natural death. The actor thanks the ones responsible from various ministries, and Iraqi parliament for contributing to his death. The play here shifts to a positive atmosphere where smiles are a valuable part of human life to death and directly blames the government for the misery of people.

Social Influence & Relatedness

This Core Drive is the desire to be like others, belong to a group and be connected. It is based on how others want to be like other people or better themselves. One type of this Core Drive is how people have more tendency to buy the things nostalgic to them or how people are drawn to “people, places, or events” that they consider relatable (Chou, 2019). This Core Drive is best used at the start of an experience as it makes it more engaging and influencing (Chou). Social Influence & Relatedness thrive over the human desire to be connected with others and form attachments that last the need to have interactions with others (Baumeister & Tierney, 2012), especially readers' interpretations are based on their personal experiences.

Izayza starts by creating a warm welcoming atmosphere as they “receive the audience with big smiles” and offering drinks to the audience (Altayeb et al.). This event alone creates familiarity since they are offering popular drinks usually to their guests, increasing the feeling that they are a united group of people in a familiar home-like setting.

The root cause of interaction is having similarities and things in common and this play works on this aspect and is based on connections and relatability. The play allows many moments of “identification for the audiences to reflect upon and react to” (Habib, 2015). The play's title itself is a means of provoking interest and

emotion through stimulating social memory. The play uses topics that concern every Iraqi to increase the interest of the audience (Habib), along with traditional music on multiple occasions, which is an element that increases reliability and familiarity (Altayeb et al.). Furthermore, it uses colloquial language (Habib, 2015).

In *Izayza* the scenes are like sessions for the characters to vent and say what is frustrating them (Habib, 2015). The performance of the actors makes the audience wonder if they are telling their own stories or if they are just acting. *Izayza* also gives a feeling of affinity between the actors and the audience (Habib, 2015), this feeling contributes highly to this Core Drive. In this play, the audience is close to the characters who tell them their personal stories as if they are trusting them with it. They are either hearing the characters read messages to them, sitting at the table with the character or getting a phone call from the character. The audience is put in an emotional state and the topics or issues portrayed in the play become more personal to them. This feeling is increased by the stage of the performance being a house creates “a sense of intimacy and closeness” (Naser, 2015) and in the settings like how one performance of “A Psychological Patient” was acted in a living room creating familiarity with the audience (Naser). Further, the character speaking for their ‘illness’ makes one search for their own (Al Etabi, 2015), which is relatable since no human is without flaws.

This Core Drive also works on the empathetic side of humanity. When people can relate to someone, they tend to be more empathetic (Chou, 2019). Since they all live in the audience members and audience are from the same country, they are most likely to have been through similar situations or know someone who has, and if they did not, then people still would feel for the ones they share nationality and land with. It also relates to the Elitism technique which allows players or users to “form a prideful group based on ethnicity, beliefs, or common interests also makes them feel like they are part of a larger cause” (Chou, 2019). This is ready-made since they share nationality and share the same fears. In the last scene with the man’s declaration that he will die naturally, that is met with happiness, celebration and dance, as it is a concern for many people who had to live in war (Habib, 2015). Yet the play creates a small group of people and involves them in an experience where they are conditioned to empathise and see the painful and dark side of their society. they are also more likely to be a group of shared social beliefs and people who stand against some unpleasant traditions. The chances of people being influenced by the play increase since they are in a group, people are

driven to act like their social group even if no one knows they did (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003). According to psychologist Herbert Kelman (1958), social influence happens in different ways and for reasons which are compliance, identification, and internalization. Compliance is when a person accepts being influenced by others because they assume they will be rewarded or gain favour. The play allows this, especially compliance, to happen since anyone can recognise that they are supposed to empathise and do something about the state of the country, they are likely to fall for compliance when surrounded by a group with a specific set of beliefs and expectations. People are likely to talk about the play to seem more rightful and good. consequently, they feel an internal reward and the applause of others who believe in similar values.

Izayza portrays many concerns that allow relatability that mainly revolves around the desperate need for change and the consequences of all the political turmoils and wars. It also shows how the conditions of the country have made even the dream of safety and a better life seem impossible (Altayeb et al.). This play also reflects on social issues like the newly exported bad morals (Al Etabi, 2015), and how human cruelty and hypocrisy have prevailed in society and the pretence of morals. It highlights the pressure people face to fit into society's standards of behaviour, beliefs and beauty too (Altayeb et al.). *Izayza* also reflects on social situations including the oppression women face especially those who stand against the patriarchy (Aljafal, 2015) and how society interferes in a helpless woman's attempt to save themselves from a stolen childhood and poverty. Yet the same society is silent when faced with the abuse of children. It shows how one can be a victim of their family, how abusers are the product of a broken society, and that they are victims too. All this is possible due to the use of Social Influence and the rest of the Core Drives.

Izayza does not leave behind issues caused by religious conflict, it shows those who kill and steal in the name of religion when religion should be used for people to better themselves instead (Yousif, 2015), and those who kill others based on their names and religion. Some problems *Izayza* indicates are problems with politics and a need for better infrastructure and development in the country. It shows more problems like how even the devices brought to protect people work against them, and how if a woman managed to be the prime minister it is not a sign that things will change since people still have to protest against the government. It also points out how Iraqi people feel that they need to buy the country since it does not feel like it is theirs anymore. It raises questions about who owns and controls the country

(Altayeb et al.). It shows those who kill and steal in the name of religion when religion should be used for people to better themselves instead (Yousif, 2015).

Izayza does not just list issues, but it reflects issues close to the struggle of people, like the fear that people have in common like the fear of the future (Habib, 2015). It points out specific fears like the fear of death by an explosion and other secret feelings that grew in the hearts of people and how they envy those who die naturally. The problems in the play are ones that people either participate in, have witnessed in their society, or are victims of, making it a play that would touch the heart of each person who has suffered due to all those problems.

Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback

Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback is “when users are engaged in a creative process where they repeatedly figure new things out and try different combinations” (Chou, 2019). It means trying to figure out what is happening in a gamified environment, this Core Drive usually leads to increasing thoughts results from this Core Drive (Brannon & Brock, 2001) All the scenes are direct, and even the message of the play is stated to the audience in Scene Three. Yet Abdjabar Al Etabi believes the play’s diversity evokes the imagination (2015). The play keeps one entertained in attempts to figure out the next room, from topics to settings to numbers of actors or if they will sit or stand, and all the other details that change from scene to scene, whether it would be a kitchen gain or a living room or a different section of a hospital.

Izayza includes the Choice Perception Technique, which gives people the freedom to make choices even when they are not necessarily meaningful choices but rather empowering (Chou, 2019). Many choices start from the performers who are free to improvise when the audience interacts with them (Naser, 2015). The audience gets to interact and refuse to do everything they are told, they can refuse the drinks and choose a seat they like (Naeem, 2014). The essence of this technique is allowing choices that might not be necessarily important yet they are empowering and freeing, moreover, the text of the play narrates what the audience does, which shows how those moments are planned parts of the play rather than actual freedom. In terms of other forms of freedom, attempting to correctly diagnose the illness of society or if there is a problem in the first place is left to the audience. The play does not show answers or solutions on how to change the situation. The play has a positive impact as it showcases the need for solutions instead of despair. This play carries

hope for helping society through meaningful drama that aspires to motivate others (Yousif, 2015). The audience is then left to decide what to do and what means are best to solve their problems. And lastly, they are free to act upon their new thoughts rather than pushed into action. This is both freedom of choice and leads them to feel like they are doing more meaningful actions.

This play's not allowing much freedom of creativity makes it less effective in increasing thoughts at high levels (Brannon & Brock, 2001). Yet there is a hint of allowing the imagination with the Blank Fills Technique. The play shows fragments of moments, and the nature of the play falls under the Blank Fills technique, although the play gives the full life of some characters like Ahmed the audience is not shown what happens after all the suffering (Altayeb et al.). The play also leaves behind many details about other characters. The audience does not know the background story of Zainab or Khaied. Those details are unfinished and unfinished things make people overthink (Baumeister & Tierney, 2012).

Epic Meaning & Calling Epic

This Core Drive is “when a person believes they are doing something greater than themselves” (Chou, 2019). This Core Drive works when people are called to save a situation, or they are the only ones acting to help (Chou). Choosing to be part of an audience is not different from choosing to play a game, even if they volunteer, they still get that feeling that they have been chosen to do something and the same concept applies to readers who willingly choose to read controversial books. Since the message of *Izayza* is many about human rights, the ones involved in it will feel as if they are doing something good, and that they are special for doing something others did not choose to do. The Meaning & Calling Core Drive makes people feel important (Mishra & Kotecha, 2017). This is how the play gives positive feelings to the audience even though it is of gloomy topics.

Being deviated from the traditional story-telling, the play is of fictional conversations and that means it uses the Narrative technique. The play also uses the Higher Meaning technique, as it is about topics or problems that have troubled people despite their differences. It reflects the concerns and thoughts of the Iraqi people including the audience and readers. It shows the unfiltered reality and pushes people to change (Habib, 2015). This means that *Izayza* calls people to notice what is happening in the country and the scene “Spontaneous Opinions” is a direct way of making people feel responsible for changing society. This is evident from the early moments of the play

where the director makes the play personal and makes them take the stance of more than just a viewer, he states “You, young woman, would your family cut your throat or not? And you, what would you say to your God? And you, are you going to stay sick forever, or will you get some treatment?” (Altayeb et al.). The play later directly asks people to take responsibility for their actions even in kindness to others and for one’s self which is unexpected in comparison to how the play was going. Characters also directly tell the audience to change things “My name is Zainab. I am ten years old. You are older than me and can do anything in this country. You can make this country beautiful” (Altayeb et al.). Later the character Khalid states: “I don’t want to see weapons, blood, or wars. Promise me that you will make my dreams come true.” The play utilises Meaning by making the play solely patriotic and concerns every Iraqi and it uses Calling to make people realise that they can make changes. People may not be able to do much about politics yet they can do something about the other topics mentioned like child marriage or hypocrisy are all matters that can be changed and within the reach of hands.

Ownership & Possession

Ownership & Possession represent “the motivation that is driven by our feelings of owning something, and consequently, the desire to improve, protect, and obtain more of it” (Chou, 2019). It is empowered by a person’s sense of identity and the desire to protect one’s possessions. According to Yu-Kai Chou, this Core Drive includes wanting to improve a possession like one’s country. The play directly uses this Core Drive, through the feelings of ownership one has for one country whether they are patriotic or not. It constantly reminds its audience of the importance of one’s country for them as citizens, along with what happens if they lose ownership of the country, showing all the things that happen due to the wars. The play shows that peace only happens when people who live in the country have a say in what happens to it and who own the country: “I am sure Iraq will buy its own mind and be at rest” (Altayeb et al.). *This Act* also directly states that the country needs people to work for it and not for their interests: “I predict in 2080 Iraq will be governed by a man who will see the interest of the country before his personal interests” (Altayeb et al.). *Izayza* shows that a country is not just a piece of land but it is one’s home that is looked after for the people to live happily. The characters call to look at the country and feel responsible towards its state and the characters warn of how the country is going to be divided saying “The citizen should know how many parts their country is going to be divided into” (Altayeb et al.). All those lines

help remind people of creating ownership of the country, making the play more personal as it is about their possessions. This also works alongside and strengthens Meaning & Calling.

Izayza attempts to make the audience feel a strong sense of nationality and ownership that there is no space left for the Core Drives Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback or for Development & Accomplishment. Ownership & Possession, are one of the main drives of the play, According to Chou this Core Drive can lead to irrationality. When not designed properly, it leads to selfishness (Chou, 2019). This explains why the play is solely focused on nationality and the state of people with no scene concerned with multiple themes, as this makes it less overwhelming. The negative side of this Core Drive is that it can kill creativity when it is used in a higher percentage or designed poorly (Chou). This could be witnessed in *Izayza* as it leaves very little space for the imagination to work. Since the audience is part of this play, then they somehow would feel as if they also own it.

Ownership also comes within the play as attachment with the Monitor Attachment technique. It is “a game technique that allows people to develop more ownership towards something, such that they are constantly monitoring or paying attention to it” (Chou, 2019). The audience is watching stories about Ahmed’s life along with pictures, they monitor his troubled life from before birth till he has lost all hopes of a happy family. The audience is left attached and consequently more affected by the story and upcoming stories.

Development & Accomplishment

This Core Drive is built on making people overcome challenges to make them feel like they are progressing and developing. This is the Core Drive where people are driven by a sense of growth and a need to accomplish a targeted goal (Chou, 2019). As a theme, *Izayza* is a work where everyone must work to find solutions and stop this *Izayza* (Al Etabi, 2015). They must watch each scene and find out what is wrong here and what could fix this situation, they must become explorers of social issues.

Each scene in the play is different, each scene is a challenge that they must conquer. Understanding and going through each scene is a form of the Boss Fights technique which is “a sequence of tasks and challenges where the player must battle and defeat a certain number of powerful enemies” (Kanazawa, 2022). Each scene is something to be defeated until the understanding of the message of the play as a final boss. This challenge is not just a mental one but an emotional one that leads to feelings of emotional accomplishment. Emotional

accomplishments are an important part of this Core Drive (Chou, 2019). The play puts the audience face to face with what they would rather avoid (Naser, 2015), since those topics are hard for people to listen to, especially when they are put up close and made vulnerable. The sensitive topics of death and oppression are challenging for anyone to go through, especially when they are realistic and from their own lives and suffering. Furthermore, the play was made to make it a kind of drama therapy, where one is treated by facing reality.

The missing details of the play make it more challenging as in each scene they face stories that end and start suddenly, even if there is not much for the imagination to work with, there is still space to overthink about stories that are already emotionally and intellectually intriguing. The play also uses the Step-by-step tutorial technique which is the use of “interactive messages” (Kanazawa, 2022) and warm interactions with players. Which motivates them to continue a hard challenge (Kanazawa). This is seen in Act One’s welcome of the audience with drinks along with the director's speeches from the beginning of the play as they are directed to go to specific rooms and do as required. The director also interacts with them tells them to wait for a surprise and later on announces his surprise making the play interactive not only verbally but mentally.

Scarcity & Impatience

Scarcity & Impatience is the Core Drive of “wanting something simply because it is extremely rare, exclusive, or immediately unattainable” (Chou, 2019). Scarcity makes people put a higher value on what is characterised by it (Brannon & Brock, 2001). This play is different, it is a spontaneous performance that attracts people through the senses including music and dark comedy. The play also puts the audience in a spiral of emotions, and it does not have a clear traditional structure (Habib, 2015). The play allows one to interact with the stage, and the actors and most importantly they get to meet the director of the play. Most importantly, in the play *Izayza*, the line between reality and performance is blurred, making the play unique in itself.

Scarcity is a theme in *Izayza* as there is something unattainable that the characters seek and hope for. According to Chou, people want to have things just because at some point in time they could not obtain them (Chou, 2019). With the help of Social Influence & Relatedness, the audience and readers are also affected by this feeling or at least reminded of the desperate need for peace, safety and human rights that have become exclusive and scarce in their society.

Limitation causes impatience (Chou, 2019), in this play conflict falls under limitation. While plays usually clarify the conflict the characters are facing, it is somewhat unclear in this play. It gives a feeling that something was left out of the stage and hidden is driving the character's actions (Habib, 2015).). The characters are in a conflict with the unknown, representing what the country has been going through (Habib). Limitation is evident in how the play directly blames society and asks people to change, it leaves no space for people to depend on theories or assumptions since according to the psychologists Brannon and Brock (2001) assumptions result from a lack of information.

Loss & Avoidance

This Core Drive is simply “it’s the motivation to avoid something negative from happening” (Chou, 2019). It comes naturally that people do not want all that effort to go to waste, and would refuse to quit (Chou). *Izayza* does not take much mental effort on the part of the audience or the readers to understand the play or its themes. However, it is deeply emotional and makes the audience prone to feel like they have lost their country, rights and peace of mind. Tolating those kind of themes requires emotional effort.

One technique used in this play is playing on the Rightful Heritage Technique, which is when a system first makes a user believe something rightfully belongs to them if they do not do the desired action they lose what belongs to them. The Rightful Heritage technique in this play is connected to the feeling of Ownership. In this play is human rights and the right to happiness and safety. *Izayza* drives people to demand their right to a decent happy life where no child is forced to live with an abusive family, no woman or child is forced into marriage, and no one is killed for having different beliefs. *Izayza* shows how people get so used to living in bad conditions that they forget their rights as fellow humans. Yu-kai Chou also highlights the importance of identity to people and how they fight for what counts as identity. Loss & Avoidance work well with other Core Drives, especially when people do not want to lose the thing they view as higher than themselves (Chou, 2019). People view nationality and humanity as above them. The play emphasises nationality as identity, participants do not lose anything while being involved in this play, yet they are made to feel an approaching danger if they lose their country then they subsequently lose what lies beyond it, their rights and their freedom.

Another technique used in *Izayza* is the Scarlet Letter Technique. It is to make feel people shame for not participating and being as good as the others (Chou, 2013). *Izayza* makes one feel a rollercoaster of emotions including shame for living in such times (Al Etabi, 2015), from the start of the play: “Don’t ever think of telling them about the destiny of the 1700 young men who were not saved, this might make them lost confidence in you” (Altayeb et al.). *Izayza* makes one feel uncomfortable if not shamed for the state of their society and makes them remember that they are responsible for it and must do something. This feeling is increased by removing the traditional stage and making the audience closer to the play. The audience is also made into bystanders of the scenes and not just viewers, reminding them of their role as bystanders in life too, when they should be active members of society and shape its beliefs.

How the Core Drives Work

Izayza is dominant in the Right Brain Core Drives. It is also highly Unpredictable. Its level of Curiosity could be of two edges as it can be viewed as emotional with the topics that are hard to face, and the audience might rather avoid thinking about it if it is too personal for them. Social Influence & Relatedness is also high in *Izayza*. The play creates familiarity and compliance with the portrayal of a lot of social issues that people can easily relate to, although they are mainly political and social it still includes personal fears and the intense pressure one feels to survive in a society with so many issues. This aspect leaves little space for an Iraqi to not be under the influence of this Core Drive. With Empowerment of Creativity & Feedback, this Core Drive is weak compared to the other Right Brain Core Drive although the mysteries and Blank Fills support creativity, there is little space for freedom of interpretation or contribution to the play. Those right brain Core Drives create feelings of power, creativity and joy (Chou, 2019). Since they are intrinsic motivators, they have long-term influence (Zichermann & Cunningham 2011). Meaning that the influence of this play is less likely to be temporary and for a short time.

The Left Brain Core drives, which are associated with logic (Chou, 2019), almost equal the previous ones. Development & Accomplishment is present in the play since each scene is an emotional and mental challenge for the audience due to the intensity of the scenes with the audience at the center. Ownership & Possession are at the core of each thought and line in the play, making the play about their possession (or country). The main themes of the play from the struggle of the citizens to those who own the country all fall under

the Ownership & Possession Core Drive. The Social Influence & Relatedness Core Drive also strengthens it. The use of Ownership & Possession with Unpredictability can have an obsessive result, where the players would do anything to win (Chou, 2019). This can be translated into the play into a strong willingness to follow the message of the play.

Scarcity & Impatience is not high in the play and have little influence. The neutral Core Drive Epic Meaning & Calling Epic is at a high level in this play since it directly calls to find solutions for the state of society, act upon them, and save others who have struggled and had no one to save them. It provides positive feelings and makes them feel important (Mishra & Kotecha, 2017). The other neutral Core Drive is Loss & Avoidance is not strong and it has no negative effect and drives no obsessive actions since it is linked to the fear of losing identity and rightful rights. *Izayza's* patriotic theme or the entire play and its message become something they defend. The strength of this effect depends on how much they care about their country. The nature of the play as its unique and balanced nature, especially since it focuses on one topic and includes no side characters or romance or anything distracting, helps give space for people to sense the influence of the Left Brain Core Drives too.

Despite not having a typical storyline that has the power to sell visions (Chou, 2019), and having sad themes, the play is successful in delivering its message. The scenes with no background and silenced opposing opinions (Habib, 2015), make people make their own ideas rather and feel strongly attached to those opinions. Another strong influence is being in a group (Aarts & Dijksterhuis, 2003), this leaves the audience in a state of accepting the beliefs presented around them people.

From the beginning, the play breaks the walls between the performers and the audience (Habib, 2015), they are part of the show. The play seeks to establish a connection with the audience and engage with them. They are interactions from the performer to the receiver, that leave a possibility of a reverse interaction from the audience (Habib). The audience is playing a role similar to that of a Non-Player character (NPCs) which is one crucial similarity between *Izayza* and games. *Izayza* is a play where the audience matters in the show (Al Etabi, 2015). The audience is not just viewers they are the centre of the play, they are not the same as the actors, yet they are still different from ordinary audiences. The play's integration makes the audience feel important (Habib, 2015). They leave space for the audience to interact with the play. Although the characters do not do much, they

are not different from the role of non-Player Characters (NPCs) in a video game.

In terms of The White Hat and Black Hat Core Drives, the play balances those two groups mainly because of the Calling in the play that attracts as much attention as the Unpredictability is still one of the main causes of unpredictability. Although this play can be viewed as simple, it has the power to influence with slight feelings of negativity, it makes people feel like they are doing good if they respond to the play's calling

Conclusion

Although the play seems lacking in themes and ideas, its Core Drives balance each other leaving no negative effect in sight. Gamification is evident in this play, yet it is still possible to consider the play as a game rather than just being gamified. According to Jane McGonigal (2012), all games have four things in common: “a goal, rules, a feedback system, and voluntary participation.” The play is of voluntary participation. The play has a goal, to find the Izayza, it is voluntary, there are rules, and they must follow their guide and do as told. There is also feedback through the direct speeches of the play, that can be used to know if they are getting closer to finding out that the people are the ones who should be fixing things despite who caused the chaos or threw the Izayza. Although this play is serious, games are not far from being serious either. People are assumed to play games to have fun and stay away from their responsibilities, but they play games although those games feel like responsibility and even stress them out (Chou, 2019). To Sutton-Smith (2001) play is not far away from seriousness, depth or the uneasy aspects of life that could be the guiding atmosphere of drama and could be assumed as the difference between games and drama when it is another similarity. Sutton-Smith also believes that play may be just a way to let out and manage feelings of existential angst it is a way for people to try and save themselves. Furthermore, the director Altayeb calls the play a game, saying “Let's play this game. It depends on believing. If you believe whatever I am going to say, you'll enjoy your time a lot, deal?” (Altayeb et al.). Although the directors seem to make important statements, that bring the audience back to reality, those moments make *Izayza* a truly gamified environment that alternates reality with the world of games in the most subtle and productive ways.

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عناصر الألعاب المسرحية في إعززة للكاتب باسم الطيب

المستخلص

يدور هذا البحث حول مفهوم استخدام عناصر الألعاب لتحويل الشيء أو بيئة معينة الي بيئة مشابهة للألعاب. يتناول هذا البحث عناصر الألعاب المتواجدة في مسرحية إعززة للكاتب باسم الطيب، فيما يعد هدف البحث هو إثبات وجود هذه العناصر متضمناً تأثيرها أو مدى نفوذ تأثيرها. يضع هذا البحث اعتباراً لأهمية التوازن بين عناصر الألعاب وتوازن تأثيرها على عواطف وآراء الجمهور باعتباره الهدف من استخدام عناصر الألعاب. كما أن عناصر الألعاب تخلق بيئة تجريبية تتناغم مع رسالة المسرحية، كما أن محو الحدود بين الممثلين والمشاهدين يعزز الانطباع بتواجد عناصر الألعاب في المسرحية.

مع أن مسرحية إعززة تتسم بالجدية وإشعار الجمهور بالأسى، إلا أنها تتماشى مع الفكرة التي تشير أن اللعب والمسرح ليسا معزولين عن بعض أو متناقضين جوهرياً بما أن المسرحية توفر تجربة فكرية تفاعلية للجمهور المشارك. أخيراً أن هذا البحث يقترح وجود علاقة بين الألعاب والمسرح.

الكلمات المفتاحية: عناصر الألعاب، التحليل الثماني، إعززة، المسرح