

Jatra Theatre as a Culture Industry: A Study of Popular Theatre from Eastern India

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Abstract

Taking the shift of cultural economy – production – of a traditional theatre form called Jatra to a hybrid theatre into account, this paper interrogates the commercialization of leisure in Odisha. Largely using Pierre Bourdieu's approaches to cultural productions, the paper theorizes that Jatra theatre has achieved the status of industry of entertainment on a medium scale for its production and transmission in an expanded market structure in modern Odisha with businesslike approach, mass patronization, management system and employment criteria. Parallel to other entertainment media, Jatra industry is a multi-million business. It is consumed by millions of audiences and mediated by the market logic. The shift can be seen at the level of expanded cultural consumption, production and participation. So, in this paper I shall delineate the field of its production

– internal hierarchy of the theatre companies – located in a wider network of social relations that configure the art for Jatra functions in a resilient manner.

Keywords: Popular culture, Cultural production, Field, Distinction, Culture industry.

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Introduction

Culture and economy are in coexistence and, as Bourdieu explains, 'cannot be understood properly without the other'. The artistic production consumed by a large audience, is mediated by the mechanisms of commercial and capitalist market. Cultural production in relation to market and patron shifts its functions and mode of production in the society. Art, in Marxist terms as Raymond Williams states, 'reflects the socio-economic structure of the society within which it is produced and presents its instances of this relationship' (Bourdieu, 1982: 33). Arthur Danto remarks that for Bourdieu choices and cultural products are made within a social and historical structure (1999: 4). In this paper I attempt to apply Bourdieu's approaches of field, distinction and habitus to understand struggle of Jatra the popular theatre form of Odisha, as an industry.

The Jatra known as *Gananatya* or *Opera*, *Nacha* of Odisha, forms a part of the world of popular culture. The traditional Jatra has undergone substantial changes in its rise and development brought about by colonialism, modernism and developed into a tradition in its own right. As a composite art form or as a theatre of mixed means – song and dance, acting, and recitation – historians declare that Jatra is a combination of multiple performative forms of other Odia folk theatre arts that emerged in different times and has emerged as the most popular form of entertainment in rural Odisha. The synthesis of syncretic popular religious practices and literature of the elite and non-elite classes, several dominant forms of Jatra emerged and eventually got shaped into a separate dramatic activity. Jatra has been capable of depicting a range of diverse and complex stories – mythology, secular themes, humor, valour of heroic characters and melodramatic events.

The form is enriched with the development of highbrow and lowbrow Odia literature. Jatra in its formative stage as dance drama was enactment of *Gita Gobinda* inside Jagannatha temple, for the kings and pundits/priests. The anti-Brahmin reformists of Bhakti movement in 15th century through vernacular language and literature created mass theatre for the lower castes and classes. The *Shudramunis*, non-elite/Vaishnavites who mostly hailed from

upper castes (but were Shudra by philosophy/*Bhavarthe Shudra*), disseminated the esoteric teachings from the Sanskrit epics written in peasant's language. Jatra in the forms of *Suanga* and *Krushna Lila* enacted stories from the literature of the *Shudramunis*. In medieval Odisha, Jatra was recognized for its potential as an autonomous art form opposing presentation of classical dramas that continued in parallel. This performing art found a convenient way to achieve 'Odia/Hindu nationalism' and reinvented itself in all dominant forms of Jatra. The emergence of Odia and domicile Bengali educated middle class critiqued the performance of 'inauthentic Odia Jatra' and called for reform in the structure and regeneration of 'Odia nationalist' narratives in Jatra performance. The revival of the glory of Odia culture, tradition and language through modern prose literature of Senapati, Ray and Rao inspired semi-educated Jatrakaras as well as the modern Odia dramatists. As a blend of religious sentiments, chauvinistic spirit and social instincts, folk and historical legend articulated nationalism and emerged 'as a powerful symbolic capital' for cultural and political mobilization. *Geetinatyas* of popular poets (e.g. Vaishnaba Pani) emerged as a resistance to Bengali dominated European type theatre, and modern Bengali Jatra of the social/secular themes. Instead, they adopted episodes from popular Hindu literature/vernacular translated epics, Puranas, folk and historical legends. Through musicals, farce, satire and allegory, poets criticized the oppressive zamindari system and anti-Odias (Bengali) for a nationalist cause.

Jatra was considered as a low art belonging to low class, caste and rural masses, by the newly emerged urban middle class. Confined to only rural Odisha, the Jatrakaras were either threatened by cinema, radio and modern theatre in the growing urban areas through the urban migrated educated class, who built modern stages in their villages. The urban modern stage of Cuttack, Puri and Bhubaneswar flourished in due time and could reach the villagers. Highly influenced by modern commercial drama companies in 1970s and Odia/Hindi cinema from late 1980s until today, Jatra subsequently became the most popular theatre in Odisha. The new economy of post-independence Odisha, new entertainment media and the continued prejudice from educated

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class did not allow the prevailing Jatra troupes to flourish. Kali Charan Pattanaik of Banki moved to Cuttack and started commercial theatre with regular stage and screen for the first time in the early 1950s. He was also the one who first brought women artists to Odia theatre. The most professional and commercial urban modern stages like *Annapurna Rangamancha* (A) of Puri and *Annapurna Rangamancha* (B)¹ of Cuttack and other theatre groups started declining in early 1970s. Some of the well known theatre artists of that time, like Babi, Dukhi Shyam, Peera, Bhanu Mati, Sujata etc. left *Annapurna* and moved away to Odia cinema. And some lesser known artists deserted *Annapurna Rangamanch* (B) of Cuttack and started *Janata* theatre at Bankabazar of Cuttack that lasted for a decade or so. In the New Theatre Movement commercial plays as well as modern experiment in theatres were carried out by Manoranjan Das, Bijay Mishra and others, who were inspired by Brecht, Freud and Sartre who produced absurd theatre. The 'Odia mind' was not prepared to accept the 'absurd' plays for long. This decline of professional urban theatre has given way to the highly commercialized theatre called Jatra in the province. The professional educated dramatists, directors and actors incorporated degrees of specialization in the dramatics of Jatra. They considered Jatra as their source of living and a form to experiment. This was the beginning of a new era of modernity in Jatra: commerce and innovation. Trained dramatists and directors like Bhanja Kishore Patnaik, Kartik Kumar Ghosh, Bijay Mishra and Sachi Das of modern theatre groups started experimenting with traditional Jatra. Two Jatra parties noteworthy here, because of their high popularity then, were Benirampur Opera and Nageshpur Opera. In 1972, Das as the production manager of Nageshpur Jatra designed double pandals/stage

– the existing square stage and the cyclorama to present simultaneous scenes or sceneries, trains, war etc. to have more effects. In fact by this period the Jatra had already crossed its folksiness and was constantly being experimented with, by some of the independent Jatra makers and modern dramatists who have been called *Gananatyakar* or *Pallikabi*. The mass poets therefore became legendary, earned fame and inspired the Jatrakaras of independent Odisha to continue the cultural activity. It is mostly concerned with the traditional value system, idealism of Indian culture – the nature of 'moral virtue', conflict

between love and family, the rural urban conflict, class, marriage, heroism of men and women, sentiments and plight of women; all with a combination of fictive and live experiences. However, the modern narratives whether crime dramas or social dramas, have always offered complicated developments in the storylines. The textual structure of Jatras of 1980s are more of crime-based plays and 90s till the date is more family-drama oriented. The writing is in the format of the conventional (popular and commercial) Hindi cinema screenplay of 1980s and late 1990s.

Socio-historical developments in creating a mass literature and thereby a mass theatre influenced the patronage, dissemination, audience, thematic concerns and style of performance, while many folk forms have declined or are in the process of disappearance from public space and memory. However, the exploration of the social and cultural conditions of the artistic production cannot be sufficient unless an analysis of the work of art in a complex social network is undertaken. Jatra has come to be known as an industry of entertainment on a medium scale for its production and transmission in an expanded market structure. It is socially located and materially produced. Thus, in this article, I shall try to delineate the social organization – the production located in a wider network of social relations that configure the art form and its internal organizational structure. An extensive ethnographic fieldwork has been undertaken in the form of interviews with producers, distributors, intermediaries along with a close observation of the audiences, who shape and redefine Jatra as a cultural product. A comparative study of the internal hierarchy (different classes of Jatra troupes) within the Jatra industry would reveal systems of stratification and class power in Odia society. The modern electronic and print media of entertainment did not jeopardize the modernized Jatra in post-80s. Rather Jatra was successfully occupying a space within television channels, cassette and CD companies. It has also attracted its coverage in local newspapers and magazines, to be transmitted for wider publicity. I shall present the complex interplay of aesthetic, social, economic, and political factors responsible for the establishment of the Jatra world in contemporary times.

Jatra as a Culture Industry

Jatra, an artistic production is consumed by a large audience and is mediated by the mechanisms of capitalist market. It has been the dominant entertainment medium since last 35 years, parallel to other entertainment media like film and television in the state. With their tendency to become popular now and again, to be revived and altered, these mobile entertainers carry a promising future. A pressing demand for entertainment leads to the creation of an industry. By responding to the social-cultural forces, it has expanded its cultural consumption, production and participation. After the abolition of zamindari system and princely kingship for nearly two decades (1950–60) Jatra parties were left either in penury or powerless. The Jatra poets became weaker and socially disconnected. The transition from sponsored patronage to the patronage of common masses through ticketing system executed by the new business class or the existing rich Jatra troupes who later took up other businesses. These developments took place due to a changing economic pattern. As the larger processes of state formation increased the political independence and rapid commercialization² of the economy in the state, the power of local elites and merchant class began to take up Jatra as a business activity.

Due to growing business interests, Jatra is changing its aesthetics by accommodating the contemporary taste of a popular class. We see the historical transition in the field, from its amateur status where the artists were rewarded and were offered hospitality, to a professional art form dominated by the business tycoons, who offer direct monetary exchange for specific art work. This resulted in the emergence of specifically instituted artist. Some of the Jatra makers created their own canon of genres through realistic plays, modern dance and songs, technical innovations (stage machineries) and spectacles, followed by a number of commercial Jatra troupes in creating a space for the institutionalization and modernization of the art form.

Today Jatra is one of the thriving industries without any official status, which generates an income, amounting to rupees 50 crore (500 million), a year approximately.³ The regular production of works of art as commodities for sale

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at a mass level and the emergence of the new patronage is involved with modern market conditions as a form of investment along with a form of prestige. Jatra as an industry has surpassed the modern Odia cinema, and it has been catering to the entertainment needs of the common masses in both urban and rural areas. Providing the entertainment needs of 85 per cent rural population through its cultural presentation, the form is seldom consecrated by the Odia intelligentsia. Although for the last five years the business of Jatra parties is facing an economic challenge vis-à-vis new private television channels, the form still struggles and continues to dominate. More than 200 small and large Jatra troupes, nearly 20,000 performers and more than 30,000 non-artists entertain 40 per cent of the rural Odia population. On an average two lakh spectators in a day watch Jatras. Among 50–60 Jatra parties, some parties have performed regularly for nearly 300 nights in certain years. The new generation performers choose it as their profession. The buying and selling of actors by a competitive market of different troupes is characteristic of contemporary professional Jatra industry. It not only provides livelihood to a large number of artists, and non-artists, but also to nearly 25 established writers and 25 directors (some of them have chosen it as their sole profession) who regularly create and compose plays for Jatra parties. The professionalization of the art form fosters competition and rivalry between the various classes – large and small – to achieve a higher status through acceptability.

Given the fact that Jatra is a medium-scale industry, following the business strategy of film industry, divides the works of art in an increased specialization that matches the diversified tasks of production. Along with modernization of the form, other small enterprises also get established. Haripur, a village in Panikoili block of Jajpur district, is called the village of Jatra *posaka* (costumes). Since 1980s, 80 per cent villagers here produce costumes for dancers, actors, and *jhallars* (colourful golden and silver thread laces) for the decoration of Jatra stages. Similarly, specialized skilled workers are engaged in making modern stages, materials for tent, bamboo poles, lights and speakers. They sell them to Jatra troupes according to their requirements. Painting and printing of Jatra play posters on order from different Jatra troupes

are also a well-grown business taken over by a few painters since 1980s. They contribute immensely in distribution of the production of the art object. Some of the known artists have been earning their living by making posters, banners, and slides for projector shows, signboards and stickers for leading Jatra troupes. Apart from poster making, there are small advertisement agents in Cuttack and Bhubaneswar who make painted curtains, sceneries, cars, and helicopters, etc. on cardboard for display in the play.

The Jatra parties run with no state patronization. The plea to the culture department by academicians⁴ and journalists to declare the growing Jatra as an industry has been there for quite a few years. They indicate that aspects like employment opportunities to a large number of artists and a businesslike approach, like the film industry *imply* the need for its official industrial status. Kulamani Barik (1997) pleads for the recognition of Jatra as an industry:

It is an oddity that government is apathetic to Jatra world. Its culture department must come forward to patronize it. It must develop an infrastructure for Jatra parties. Especially, government should do something for the poor artists who make millions laugh and weep night after night. After retirement, these artists lead miserable lives. Government should pay pension to the retired artists. Odia Jatra parties are highly popular in Bengal and Bihar. Government should undertake measures to bring market in other states for our Jatra parties. Government should be careful, so that Jatra of Odisha may not face tragedy of Annapurna (the theatre that has become extinct today). Despite making millions happy, Jatra artists have to go back to a life of misery at the end of the day. Efforts are needed to improve their lot.

By recognizing it as a powerful medium, Balakrishnan Hariharan (2008) in his article suggests that, 'maybe it is time that government wakes up to its potential, recognizes it as an industry and takes advantage of this medium for information, education and sensitization of society in its own enlightened self-interest'. Therefore, the collective urge for its status for an industry and its potential for social development is still a matter of concern. The Jatra association, however, is no longer interested in the issue of the status of industry. It is because of their inconsistent profit or no profit that results in

instabilities of their business. The proprietors are mostly dependent either on their personal business or on the profit, they make from annual Jatra business.

Similarly, the direct involvement of the government with Jatra is occasional. The Sangeet Natak Akademi of Odisha, an apex cultural body of government that aims to preserve the tradition and declares that traditional performing arts also can be created afresh,⁵ but has not paid much attention to the form, actors, directors and writers. It was only for two consecutive years (1988–89) that Sangeet Natak Akademi had organized Jatra festivals on competition basis in Bhubaneswar. Yearly special Jatra festivals are being organized by private cultural organization like *Patitapaban Sanskrutik Parishad* in Bhubaneswar city from 1996 that continue for about 15 days. Similar organizations conduct Jatra festivals in Balasore, Jagatsinghpur and in the villages of the Jatra legends like Jagannatha Pani, Gopala Dash and Baishnab Pani. There are also Jatra fan clubs in many corners of Odisha that have been rewarding and felicitating the veteran actors, playwrights and directors of Jatra world. In the wake of events like film awards, some private cultural organizations like *Panchasakha Jatra Akademi* in Balasore confer awards to veteran actors, playwrights, music directors and choreographers through a panel of judges from film, theatre and Jatra in the memory of legendary Jatrakaras⁶ in their yearly Jatra festivals. It is only since 1980 that the Akademi recognized and felicitated five Jatra artists.⁷ However, unlike Bengali Jatra artists their Odia counterparts are yet to receive the government's recognition. The fellowship or the pension granted by government is just insufficient for large chunks of artists in the Jatra industry. Since 1981–82, the state government has been granting pension to the veteran performers of Jatra as folk artists. However, the pension was a meagre amount of rupees 200 in 1981. In 1992, it went up to 300 and now from 2002 it is rupees 500. After their retirement, the artists either go back to farming or go for petty business and live a life of penury.

The Internal Hierarchy within the Jatra Industry: Classification of Jatra Troupes

As a growing business, there are categories of Jatra troupes in terms of their professionalism. They are divided into upper, middle and lower class by the producers and the consumers. Contemporary Jatra as an industry has been discussed in several scholarly articles, but a good deal of analysis is on the sources of finance and how various agents – producer, manager, committee members as distributors – with relation to power and dependency of all types of troupes is grossly neglected. Generally, the division is perceived according to the purchasing capacity of audiences as consumer and the quality of production of a Jatra troupe. To understand the industry structure, we should first consider the production and distribution of different classes of Jatra troupes that is consumed by different layers of audiences. A comparative observational technique has been used for this paper to compare the processes of production of the older Jatra institution and its modern counterpart, to understand their functions in the society. Description of the field of the smaller groups has not received its due attention because of the limited access to such troupes which mainly operate in remote villages of northern Odisha. This is nonetheless a limitation in the present research.

Pierre Bourdieu appropriately presents ‘the structure of life-style/class, its unity (of an art form) which is, hidden under the diversity and multiplicity of the set of practices performed in fields governed by different logics and therefore inducing different forms of realization’ (Bourdieu, 1993: 101). Bourdieu’s work (1992 and 1993) in understanding the principles of hierarchization of the Jatra industry as an autonomous art in modern Odisha has been useful. Jenkins mentions that ‘Bourdieu’s cultural classification for the taste arises from cultural practices that are mobilized in, struggles for social recognition or status’ (1992: 129). Following Bourdieu’s method of analysis on cultural product, I would present the whole set of relationships between producers and agents engaged in the production or the social values of the art work. To understand the internal hierarchy with the industry, I shall present the *distinction* between the different classes of troupes. Jatra as a

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cultural production is 'classified and classifies the classifier'. To articulate the 'field' of the cultural production from the broader political, economic and social structures within which it is situated, I propose to understand the 'sets of position' which bring with them various levels of capital proper to a particular field and a corresponding set of social and cultural interests specific to that position in that field. However, in the case of the present research, the folk theatre in comparison to the classical/modern theatre belongs to one class

– that is the lower class and lower-middle class. The consumers and producers can also be categorized as the class system which is inherited in the form itself. Thus, the concept of taste to make and maintain social boundaries does not seem to be applicable in my study. The classification of various Jatra troupes would entail the idea of class system within the cultural form and it also would demonstrate the coexistence of the different classes in the art world that reinforces the class order – elite, middle and low class – in society. This stratification within the Jatra industry may contribute significantly to our understanding in order to ascertain the major-class type theatre troupes that exist. The aim is the following:

1. Observe the variance and differences/hierarchies.
2. Study the emergence of various ranges or classes of Jatra. Who categorizes them and on what basis?
3. Explore as to how they are functioning on different occasions for pre-established consumers at different social levels.

Jatra troupes may be divided into different classes. Today, I find a hierarchical structure of Jatra troupes in Odisha, such as A, B, C and the *Malei*/D or amateur Jatra parties. The categorization is mostly dependent upon the financial status and they can further be classified in terms of highly-professional, semi-professional and amateur groups, which is common among its spectators. The interviews of the owners, managers, committees and the observation of live performances are taken into account for their conviction on categorization. The comparison table presented below discusses the differences between these classifications from a random selection of A class Jatra troupes situated in coastal districts.

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Classification of Jatra Troupes

A (22-25)	B (20-30)	C (25-30)	Amateur/D (60-80)
Duration of Tour			
Travel and perform 400-450 plays for 10 months or 280-300 days.	Same as A.	9 months.	4-7 months.
Geographic Spread			
These class groups can be found in Jagatsinghpur and then in Puri, Bhadrak and Balasore. Apart from the state they also travel to perform at Delhi, Surat, Kolkata and Chhatisgarh.	Same as A.	More in Jagatsinghpur, Balasore and Kendrapada.	Mostly in Northern Balasore, Jaleswar, Bhograi, Remuna, etc.
They perform both in urban areas and major villages.	Generally they perform within the state.	They travel to the border areas of West Bengal like Medinapur, Digha, Kanthi, Tikayatpur, Chhatisgarh, Rayagarh, and Sadeikala.	Only move within the adjacent areas like northern part or coastal Odisha.
Number of Production (Per year) and Occasion of Performance			
They produce two new plays in a month's time and one during the tour in a year. Sometimes present double shows – evening and night.	They produce 2 plays in a year. Rarely double shows.	A maximum of 2 new plays. Sometimes perform only record dance in the evenings, followed by the play in the night.	They produce the printed Jatra texts of the A class parties. Once a full-fledged performance in the night.
Perform in all bigger and popular <i>Melas</i> and established pandals.	Same as A.	Do stage in <i>Melas</i> but in the most popular and bigger organized <i>Melas</i> .	Participate in local village <i>Yagnas</i> and small village specific festivals.
Apart from festivals, they perform in other free time.	Same as A.	Apart from <i>Melas</i> it depends upon the committees.	Only during fairs.

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Audience Size and Composition

Around 3,000-6,000.	Rs. 2,000-3,000,	Rs. 1,500-2,000. Mostly	Rs. 500-1,000.
They comprise of all classes and castes and education.	Same as A.	the rural audiences	Very few from the upper class/caste of village and majority are from lower-class background.
Female audiences comprise 10%-20% of the majority.	Same as A.	More or less than 50%	Nearly 75%.

Investment Pattern and Annual Income (in Rupees)

For A class party one has to invest nearly Rs. 1-3 crore.	Maximum of Rs. 50 lakh.	Maximum of Rs. 50,000-1,000,00	Starts from Rs. 2,000 to 10,000.
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The annual income of the group varies from one to five crore.

Maximum of Rs. 30–50 lakh of profit they earn.	Maximum of Rs. 10 lakh.	Less than Rs. 1 lakh.
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Pattern of Hiring and Payment: Performer, Playwright and Director

They hire established professional playwrights and directors, choreographers, music directors from film, television and theatre.

Recruitment of 'banner artists'-best actors on a contractual basis for one year is basically the process. 50-60 artists (actor, dancer and singers).

The percentage of female performers is equal to that of male performers.

Mostly the producers are the creators of their Jatra. At least for one play they hire the? from outside.

Same as A, but they give chance to newcomers and train them. 30-40 artists.

Comparatively less female performers.

Rarely do they invite the well-known team of creators. Only for one play they invite best playwrights and directors.

Recruit the newcomers and less-experienced actors in their team. 20-30 artists.

2-5 female performers.

Either they learn themselves, or the actors of the high-class troupes who on their vacation are invited to produce a play.

The actors are not contractual. They are amateur actors mostly from the village drama groups. Maximum of 20 artists.

Still female impersonators are found in such class troupes.

Payment to a playwright is 30,000, a director is 50,000 and a choreographer is 10,000 and music directors are 10,000. The assistants get accordingly. However, negotiations go on.

It starts from 20,000 to a playwright and 30,000 to a director.

It starts from 10,000 to 15,000 rupees.

They learn the play, dance and compose music themselves.

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Actors are paid according to their popularity and talent. If it is a star it starts from 6 lakh of rupees or 2 lakh for 10 months contract. Female actors' payment starts from 3 lakh to 50,000 rupees.

A hero gets maximum 2 lakh to 1.5 lakh and it is divided according to the talent and his role in the plays.

For a woman actor Rupees 7,00-3,000.

starts from maximum of

3,000 and for a male

actor it is maximum of

10,000 per month.

Ownership Pattern and Background

The owners are basically from business class. Jatra is their second or third business. Most of them are educated and politically active.	Most of the B class parties are old troupes established for last 30-70 years. The ownership transfers in a family from one generation to another.	They are generally from petty business class and are semi-educated.	Mostly semi-educated. They are the performers or retired performers from higher groups.
Sometimes one owner has two troupes.	One.	One.	One.

Assets: Stage Equipment and Transports

More investment on decoration, multiple stage craft, sound system, light operation, modern musical instruments, casting through projectors, tent and chairs.

Less expenses on them. Triple stage. Lower than a B class. Double stage.

Generally this class has one luxury bus for performers, two trucks for transporting stage and tent equipments, and one car for publicity.

They have one bus for the performers and one truck for transportation. Same as C and they go for rent if more conveyance is needed.

Performance Space

It is always on the huge open field (nearly 1 acre area) at the end of the village.

Same as A.

Inside the village. Preferably in front of the temple or at the Zamindar's residence compound.

They still perform in a traditional Jatra single stage with minimum light and sound system.

They have just one mini truck to carry both their limited theatre equipment and its performers.

Same as C.

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They are booked in advance by the committee members for the whole year.	Perform in known festivals but not always the established pandals.	Not always they are contacted by the committees, they also contact the committees.
They mostly perform	Ticket sale. But	For four months (esp.
ticket show (sell), and also contract shows, sometimes free show Jatras in established pandals. The cost of ticket ranges from Rs. 30, 40, 50.	they prefer percentage shows rather perform only contract shows Rs. 30, 20 and 15.	during rainy season) ticket show Jatras and five months ticket show Jatras. Rs. 10, 15 and 20.

If they are contacted they perform or else in free time their performers go for cultivation/farming.

Free show Jatras as they are given by the committees from a collection from the villagers.

They charge if it is Rs. 40,000-45,000 Rs. 25,000-30,000,
contract show Rs. some other lower to C
60,000-65,000 per night. but higher to D
demands for Rs.

10,000-25,000. They do

not have any fixed
charges.

Rs. 5,000-10,000 They too have no fixed charges.

Organizational Structure

A top to bottom approach or hierarchical and specialization (Division of labour) is more functional. Technicians, fitters, labourers, make-up man, costume in charge, ticket collector, advertisements, script printing, cooks, drivers, assistants to major actors, etc.	The producer/owner controls directly. One manager takes the minimum responsibilities.	Same as B.	The performers do the multiple performance – acting, dancing and singing. They have maximum of 4-5 helpers. Villagers take care of the stage, sound and light management.
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The employees are provided good facilities – food, accommodation in their camps, pension system.

Less than the A class employees.

The standard of living is low compared to the two.

They are treated as lower-class actors in the host villages and are given poor facilities.

Source: Data compiled through fieldwork during 2006-2009

The above determinants divide the class of troupes. Pre-dominantly these Jatra parties are categorized according to their economic capital/status and typical popular aesthetics. The existing dominant groups as well as the viewer's make this *distinction*. They erect clearly defined boundaries between

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high, middle and low quality Jatras. The high-class Jatra parties set standards, new conventions and also the performing text for the smaller parties. The differences are apparent in the presentation of performances of same kinds of texts of different troupes of Jatra in different performative contexts. On the one hand, the process of production of Jatras in highly professional groups is combined with highly specialized effort and on the other hand, smaller ones have few specialized personnel. The gradation of Jatra parties further classifies the creators – writers, directors and artists in the world of Jatra industry of large and small troupes.

Sociologically, this classification to understand social power or inequality within an art form can be best analysed from the artistic habitus to take up or compete for one or the other positions. Habitus accordingly, is the embodied structure that generates the artists and the producers' ambitions, aspirations and dispositions. However, the different status of Jatra troupes and the producers take up different positions within their field in order to achieve the class status and accordingly the artists embed the habitus in their art works. Importantly, the artists and audiences of each field within the larger field of Jatra production participate in it and it has a 'shared value'. The field of each class reproduces the value and aesthetics that the status of institution has established.

This classification, however, is fragile and the mobility between high, middle and low class categories is observed. The effort to achieve the higher grade among the lower class is always there. Class struggle within the hierarchy, for instance D wants to possess the status of C, C wants to be B and B wants to be A, is observed. Sometimes the established troupes lose power and the surviving low class troupes surpass them. The first two class of troupes are operated in a highly competitive atmosphere. They are graded every year according to their financial profits. If D group can sustain itself for five years and gain profit from its investment, it achieves C grade status. The more commodified high/elite Jatra groups in a state of rivalry have knock-on effects that contribute to the construction of uncontested space for the already old groups by undermining them only on financial ground. The established and powerful A type groups retain their place and are not fear-stricken by the new

A class troupes. The new A class Jatra producers do not seem to thrive in the industry more than one year because of their lack of experience in managing Jatra troupes. Huge profits based on a substantial economic capital accentuate the existing high-low/rich-poor class divisions. They also contribute to the un sustainability of lower class troupes. However, the producers of C/D class of troupes predict the high chance of collapsing of the top class Jatra troupes who are equally liable to loss. Small troupes can sustain against it as they are not profit oriented because of low investment in it. This classification of the field of Jatra can be discussed through the descriptions of each class of Jatra troupes based on their production, organization, distribution systems, expenses, investment and the classes of audiences.

'A' Class or the Elite Class Jatra Troupes

Emergence of new A class parties every year indicates the proliferation of troupes as one of the profitable businesses. A few days before a festival A class mobile Jatra troupes, the chief attraction of village fairs, arrive on trucks and put up their tents, trappings on a fixed spot decided by the village Jatra committee. The top troupes of the hierarchy are generally successful before its audiences because of their winner take perspective. The dominant class struggles to increase the overall reach of their power by creating and exploiting connections between the cultural and economic fields. These groups continually transform their capital, maximizing the yield of such transformations by contesting the terms of exchange, via the rules of the game in the two fields. The potential success at the industrial expositions is measured by the group's size, its capacity to produce many different varieties of programmes, the number of workers employed and its ability to produce standardized works in quantity. The strategy to manifold the business from one troupe to establish another sister troupe is dominant in case of the elite class. For instance, Siba Prasad Lenka of Jagatsinghpur has been the owner of two Jatra troupes, namely, *Tulasi* and *Gouri Ganantya*. More strikingly, Lenka is the richest person in Jagatsinghpur, who apart from producing Jatra has also produced three Odia feature films. Ironically, he expressed that what my films did not offer in terms of profit, Jatras did. Pradip Balasamanta and Bipin Bhusan Deo of Jajpur Road are primarily business persons and partners of two

Jatra troupes – *Konark Gananatya* and *Dhauri Gananatya* and share the profit. More than 500 people including the performers are employed in both troupes. Thus, establishment of Jatra troupe has been a profession for the propertied classes of coastal Odisha who have not only modernized the form but also have contributed to change the repertoires. New rich peasant and business class are involved in consolidating and exploiting their positions in the field of production. They invest money in the Jatra troupe from the personal business – government contractors, owning mines business, transport business, cassette companies, prawn business, film productions, etc. Politicians⁸ are no exception. A few of them have been exclusively into the Jatra business. Thus, the political affiliation, business status and other respectable positions reinforce the class status of Jatra owners.

Payment, Profit and Expenditures

The financial gain is fully dependent upon the sale of Jatra plays as they perform on both ticket sale and contract show Jatra plays. If a play clicks in the market, the sale goes up to 1.5–2 lakh per show.⁹ Moreover, the ticket sale of ‘A’ class parties in a major festival varies from a low profit to high profit in consecutive days at the festival. For instance if 65,000 rupees is earned in the first night, then rupees 98,000 can be collected on the third night. Producers are well tuned with such sale. Thus, to adjust the collection they schedule low-high popular plays according to the days of performance. They perform a maximum of four to six nights in one village, depending on occasion of performance and the affordability of the village committees. These troupes call such performances ‘ticket show Jatra’. Sometimes tickets are sold in black for superhit Jatras. On the other hand, actors/major cast change the troupes every year. They give prior notice to the manager and quit at the end of the Jatra movement. Thus, the replacement of the actor goes on either by offering attractive salary or through newspaper advertisement. The brokerage, forcible shifting and kidnapping of talented actors in their Jatra troupe are also not uncommon. The actors receive annual advance amount in the beginning of a year or take payments monthly or half-yearly according to the agreement.

Star Performers as the Crux of Business

There is a growing competition between A class troupes to have the stars as they are lured by a better pay package by the rival parties. Daitari Panda, the star of Jatra, is the most popular actor of Jatra industry. It has been aptly said that what Ajit is to Bollywood, Daitari Panda is to '*Jollywood*' and is also called the '*Jollywood Shehanshah*' by *Jatra Duniya*, the popular Jatra magazine. Fans of Panda buy tickets for rupees 200 for his show. For profit motive, producers are more interested in producing plays specific to Panda as the central character. Being a versatile actor, two of his plays – *Jianta Saba*¹⁰ and *Nara Rakhayasa* have established him as the most ferocious villain in Jatra world. The producers of his party have made huge profits because of his acting. Panda is the highest paid (six lakh rupees in a year) actor who has been working for Jatra for the last 33 years. Other superstars like Lokanath Lenka, Manibhadra Biswal, etc. follow suit. Now actors from Odia films, television and music albums too join these high-class parties. The troupes are always on the lookout for beautiful, educated actors for their performances to make a successful Jatra. For instance, Anjana Nayak is a highly demanded actor for her acting as well as for her 'sex appeal' since she is also into music albums. It is now evident from the above accounts that the 'A' class party has set its standards to achieve its status. A typical 'A' class party is operated as a professional organization that follows a strict hierarchical structure as featured in the following diagram.

Diagram 1

Organizational Structure of a Highly Professional Jatra Group

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The above organizational structure is similar to all professional Jatra troupes (A and B) with slight variation in the number of employees. The structure of hierarchy follows a typical top-bottom approach. The numbers of managers are assigned specific responsibilities according to their experience either as performers or as managers of other parties. The producer takes major decisions. The lawyer is a consultant to the producer and managers. However, lawyers are not necessarily appointed by all parties. The responsibility of the lawyer lies in the negotiation of the artists' agreement, claim case and entrenchment with deceitful committees. He plays the role of a negotiator between the artists and the managers. Payments are made in a hierarchical manner depending on their status, for example, the lead actor, actress, supporting actor, villain, comedian, singer, dancers and other junior artists occupy the lowest rank of category as artist.

The differentiation is developed by a set of rising business entrepreneurs to serve the pre-established audience from middle and lower middle classes. Thus, the new organizational model developed the newly emerging professional Jatra troupes in order to promote the careers of the artists and the new conventions of performances. The best of production components – known film directors, the star performers and the price of the troupe are the factors of attraction among its consumers. Such dominant popular Jatra makers are concerned with significant changes in themes, values, modes of presentation and spectacles. More importantly, as Dimaggio (2002) analyses, they generate a constant stream of unique production and aesthetic preferences of its consumers, which may disrupt the commercial routine of the producers. The Jatra producers are more likely to achieve commercial success and popularity, as they are experienced in having quality productions due to possessions of cash, skills and social contacts. Despite the class determinism and market competition, a close analogy between control of price and control of creativity can be seen. As Sharada Prasanna Dash informs me:

We know the field better and our consumers too. Everybody produces formula stories. Producing plays centring around women's plight are market oriented and it is the contemporary formula of successful Jatra plays. That is why I prefer to

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write stories for the targeted audiences...when I produced plays like OMP Chhakarejhiati Kia, the story was based on the life of Taslima Nasrin who was unknown to Odias and that clicked in the market. (Interview: 25.04.06)

There are educated middle class audiences who have an arbitrary choice of admiration, criticism and dislike. Being conscious of their social values and cultural taste, they are aware of the works of the known playwrights and producers. They sometimes communicate on phone or write comments to the producer or the playwright with regard to the viewed play. On the other hand, the viewers of the low class Jatra troupes are left with no option of having a greater exposure to high class Jatras. They are the natural audiences – basically poor and illiterate – who have not cultivated the status of middle class audience. Continued profits and artistic merits of work are produced to evaluate works of art and differences in spectacles and performances. With the rapid changes in the taste of people, as creators of the Jatra culture they develop a tendency to innovate – changes in techniques, stage designs, and electronic gadgets and more importantly, in product generation. Improvisation in stage – like from one stage to double and multiple stages (five stages include running, moving stages) are being introduced – advanced light and sound system, modern costumes, and other spectacles like stage decoration, etc. are launched to give a new look to the art form. To introduce newness to draw a large audience, Jatra producers invest for the improvisations all round. The characteristic features of a typical A class party include the recruitment of trained and good looking actors, established playwrights, directors, musicians and choreographers from film and theatre and manager. To maintain the best standard Jatras is the mission. The elite class Jatra parties offer a packaged entertainment and spectacle, which is manufactured collectively by production-line specialists by coordinating, packaging, marketing and fitting to tested formulas that contain both pleasure and engage people in producing the standard Jatra texts.

'B' or Middle Class Jatra Parties

The major difference between A class and B class is their continuing legacy of producing Jatras. The producers of almost all B class groups continue the

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tradition of producing Jatras themselves from generations. They depend upon the income from the Jatra shows, as this is the only source of living for them. Almost all B class parties comprise the 30–70 years old Jatra troupes which struggle against their enterprising rivals. The middle class parties act as the cultural training centres for Jatra artists. More importantly, these Jatra troupes have brought significant changes to the form. In order to make the Jatra a commercial and popular theatre tradition, Jatra makers like Manorama Dash, Uttam Pala, Nagendra Mohanty, Phakir Sahani have greatly contributed to the movement and have encouraged their sons to continue the tradition.

The owners, who are in their initial years of production, were either zamindars or rich landowners or petty business persons. Until late 1980s they were the dominating Jatra parties whose living was entirely borne by the income generated by their productions. It is only in the early 1990s that they faced a challenge in marketing their production as the new capitalists started investing in the Jatra parties without having adequate experiences in Jatra production. Except for a handful of parties, by the end of 2006, two of the oldest and popular parties got closed down as they could not compete with the increasing business rivals. They had either to auction their parties or close them down forever. Some of the oldest troupes in Odisha like

Satasankha and *Radhanga* troupes got closed down. The organizational structure and market situation of their group, the lack of capital, increasing price of actors, decoration, costumes, stage equipment, etc. were the reasons of closure. During my preliminary phase of fieldwork, I explored about these two troupes as they were already struggling to survive. And when I met the producers in my second phase of fieldwork, these two troupes had closed down, they had auctioned their party's assets and the artists had relocated to other parties. The pattern of evolution of such class parties reveals that financial mismanagement or loss has been the sole cause of their irregular productions. As an involved observer, I stayed at the *Satasankha* Opera's producer's house to understand the production of Jatras in one of the oldest and middle class troupe. This troupe is known as a cultural organization or a

training centre of dance, drama and music. A diagram of the ownership structure of a B class Jatra party indicates a distinctive structure where ownership is transferred generation wise.

Diagram 2

Ownership Structure of an Old Jatra Party

The data for the diagram is sourced from my interview with Balmiki Mohanty (Sri Sri Uttarayani Opera, Satasankha, Puri). This is a typical structure of old Jatra groups that revived itself around 1960s. Constant financial difficulties of the party for the last 70 years within the competitive market challenged its producers to survive. Balmiki, the last owner of the Jatra party, in order to save the organization started truck business and managed the party. On the one hand, the pressurized Balimiki (pressure from father and of preserving the name and fame of the party) could not meet the increasing demand of higher salary by the new artists who were already comparing with their co-artists working in A class party. On the other hand, the super cyclone

of 1999 wrecked them financially as they lost their stage and tent equipment. It was extremely difficult for them to pay even their 100 employees. Apart from insufficient finance flow, hand to mouth situation – three of them (Nagendra, Surendra and Balmiki) contend that the changing occupational structure of Jatra audiences, dominance of private television channels, frequent elections and A class expensive spectacles like entrance gate design of a Jatra tent and banners, etc. were major obstacles in its financial growth. Finally, the closure or the losses in the other business which used to be the support for the Jatra party forced them to discontinue the long tradition of entertainment. On June 2006, the era of one of the first professional Jatra troupes, supported by the *Babughara*,¹¹ finally ended.

The production of Jatra as a family tradition was dominant for a long time.

Satasankha Opera was a worthy example. Similarly, Manorama Dash, the first woman producer of *Tarpur Opera* continued producing Jatra performances, sharing responsibility with her husband – manger Dibakar Dash and later handed over the production to her son. She hailed from the princely family of Kujanga and was well trained in music and drama by her musician father. Known as *Maa* in the Jatra industry, she herself selected artists even from the roadside on her way to Cuttack if she found a good-looking boy and believed in grooming him as an actor. However, because of the market pressure her son, Sharada Prassana Dash lamented about the expenses over tent, trucks, chairs, etc. for which he had sold nearly 7–8 acres of his own land. During our meeting, he indicated that he was planning to close down the party.

The desire of the B or C class types to compete with top groups clearly did not fructify. The Jatra plays of such troupes are no less than the higher parties in the production of Jatra plays. One might not find stars in such parties because they switch to the rival A class troupes for higher salary. Similarly, the selection of directors according to their payment makes the difference in directorial debut of the play. People admire the plays and their representation despite the low quality or inferior arrangement of light and sound system on the stage. The difference between the high and middle class can only be defined

in terms of the talented and known actors, good-looking female actors, dancers, singers, modern costumes, properties, expensive and technically advance stage arrangements. Their storyline bears no difference from the A class parties apart from its style of delivery by its actors with their dialogue modulation and acting calibre.

‘C’ Grade/Low-middle Class Party

The striking distinction between A/B and C class Jatra party is the ownership of the art form. The business-oriented troupes, A class parties particularly, emerged in the modern Odisha independently with a growing entrepreneur class, and the small troupes including the *Malei*/free show Jatra were confined to villages. Because of its desire to escalate the class status, it often compares itself with a B class party. The small troupes participate in *Yagna Anusthans* (institutes for sacrificial offerings) in Odisha, if not in major festivals and locations. Nevertheless, there is no uniformity of economic and social status in the class itself. There again is stratification within the C class. The classification depends upon professionalism achieving a higher-grade status before the audiences. The structure of organization is quite similar to the higher-class troupes. The market structure of C class parties varies from others, as one can find a clear distinction in their low investment, quality of performance – below standard performers, less property, stage equipment, sets and low frequency of mobility. The lower C class negotiates with organizing committees for percentage of payment.

The organization of this class party is simple as the owner manages everything. He acts as owner, manager, artist and cashier. This structure is more similar to that of the traditional Jatra troupes. For the producers, it is a prestige issue to have a Jatra party. For instance Sudhir Pati the producer of *Srikhetra Ganantya*, a top C class party, mentions that – Jatra business is like a prestige issue now a days. If I close it then people would say that he could not manage a Jatra party in his life. Once it gets closed it is the same as being *Debaliya* (bankrupt). *Srikehetra Ganantya* and similar C class troupes are now in the middle stage and they follow the same production method as the bigger parties.

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The recorded film dance shows have a primacy over the plays in such class troupes. The low class troupes produce more gratifying programmes like recorded dances for a special audience. Pati in his interview describes the demand of such dance numbers is for commercial purpose.

We are ready if audiences ask for a record dance of so and so film instead of two scenes of the play, then we immediately can show it to them. We learn it in the daytime and perform in the night. Similar is the case with stories. We alter some scenes according to their wishes. For example, if we do not have a rape scene or abuse of a woman by the villain, we have to introduce such sequence forcibly in the play. The demand of the audience can only be fulfilled by the medium of Jatra. Recently in four-five camps we were forced to show a naked dance – an album song Baba Tume Kauthu Asila Himalaya ru.... In the beginning, we perform that dance sometime after the play we have to show that dance. It is the demand of the audience through committee members who come and say please show that dance again even if you have to cut two scenes from the play. We do perform the dance as we do not have any problem as we are being paid (Pati said with great emphasis). (Interview: December 2006)

The producer fulfils the desire of being the unruly drunk, smoking, pan-chewing, resting their legs and hands audience. The 'naked record dances' appeal to them as they get bored seeing the classical or neat (Oddissi) dance numbers and lengthy plays. For a one-two hour dance numbers, most audiences do not have to invest their intellect. On the other hand, the element of sexuality attracts more audience because of the presence of young girls in scanty clothes. That is why it seems the committee members of C class enquire about the number of girls in the party before they sign the contract paper as told by Pati. The Jatra will be a flop if there are less number of girls. They only perform record dance shows in Western Odisha exclusively for about two hours in the evening for which they earn 8,000–10,000 rupees. The cost of tickets depends upon the occasion of performance. For instance, the ticket costs from 10, 15 and 20 rupees and for the play it is 25, 30 and 40 rupees.

High-class Jatra parties treat them as cheap Jatra parties because of women fetishization. The erotic movements in record dance and song programmes on live stage contain sexual appeal that draws the young mass invariably. The

popular demands of such live shows where there is a presence of the actor and performer indicate that the male spectators, in turn, are offered the pleasures of erotic voyeurism. The low class troupes aspiring for a higher-class status offer such ludic activity. Jatra plays are not given much emphasis as separate dance programmes pull in more money. They sometimes dictate the writers and directors, who occasionally direct Jatras for such class party to produce some sensational/sexual (rape or romance) scenes. The directors and writers are none but the same ones who produce high-class Jatra plays, who feel pressurized to compose such scenes that fetch good money. The reproduction of the popular plays of A and B class parties is mostly carried out in their performance of the plays. Smaller parties sometimes do not invite writers or directors as they cannot afford money. With a low investment for the process of production, the performers learn their respective role from the printed script/books themselves. These printed Jatra scripts are adapted to act out in the troupe with the permission of the owner of the respective party's scripts.

It is interesting to note here that most of the established actors start their career from such lower class groups, and slowly these experiences facilitate them for upward career mobility. Thus, the smaller Jatra parties tend to champion the business and resilience of the higher-class Jatra troupes. On the other hand, the mainstream parties not only look down upon them because of their amateurish approach but also typify them as low class Jatra parties.

'D' Grade/Malei/Free Show Jatra Parties

At the outset let me mention that due to the irregularity of performance by these performing groups and very little advertisement of their troupes, I had difficulty in accessing them. These are confined to either one small village or few remote villages in Odisha. These are called *Malei* or free show Jatra party sometimes. However, one can still distinguish a *Malei* party or sometimes it is graded as D class. The villagers who have some interest in acting themselves learn their dialogues and finance collectively the free show Jatra performances. The mutual participation in producing and consuming Jatras by the village amateurs with the unorganized troupe's plays are found to be more carnivalesque type when compared to the content, presentation and audience's

views. It is probably due to the fact that the participants are none but the amateur actors of the same village. Thus, the interaction between the participants and the observers is informal compared to the highly professional troupes. The less improvised Jatra stage and the immediate neighbour on the stage create more excitement among its viewers for a close engagement as sometimes verbal exchanges or encounters go on during the performance.

The organizing villages are economically backward. Villagers are not able to pay for tickets nor can they collect *chanda*. Hence, it can be inferred that to maintain the status quo – the power and status in the village – they upkeep the tradition of free Jatra shows for the villagers, despite their poor economic status. They also arrange food and accommodation for the performers. The low class producers are from middle class peasantry and have been performers in middle class Jatra parties. This new business class, whether continuing to produce Jatras for long time or not, control the power bloc within the segmented market. Either with direct connection with political parties or independent political candidates, these try to yield influence over their audience.

Many of my respondents suggested that the reason behind the concentration of such small cultural troupes particularly in Northern Odisha was because of impoverished economy of the region. That is why they cannot invest heavily unlike the top Jatra groups and do not travel to far distances like Western and Southern Odisha. Moreover, the owners of such troupes are from the lower economic class. There is no clear statistics of the total number of troupes of this grade as these get formed and break up in a short span of time. The business thrives on the calls/contacts, as they do not follow advance booking. Rest of the time when they have no bookings, they sit idle or go for farming or do their own personal business in their villages. Thus, it also depends on the economy and unity of the villagers. They require one small truck which is used for carrying the basic stage equipment, costumes and the artists sit on the carriage. For makeup, costumes, musical instruments they depend upon the *Chitralayas* – shops to rent musical instruments, costumes and make-up.

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Despite the incompetence of such low class troupes, these manage to survive in the society. The brokers vehemently express that because of their very low financial standard, they are susceptible to closure at any time. Problems are more acute among the artists of low class Jatra. If they do not have 50 stage shows in hand to perform, actors are not appropriately paid. Low payment to the artists, insufficient number of artists and low quality production are the major causes of poor standards. If the troupe closes down, the owner becomes bankrupt. Small party artists leave the party frequently as they join the large groups for more money. Thus, lack of proper and timely payment by the owner to their artists is the main reason for the closing down of the parties.

Concluding Remarks

To conclude the discussion, the major distinction between the high and low class parties is in terms of rural-urban divide, accumulation of economic capital/status, professionalism and the standard/quality of Jatra performance/production. The differences in external structure of the classified troupes may be seen in the above determinants. But mainly it is the investment pattern or the economic and social status of the owner that ultimately affects the standard of production and professionalism. The performing text is the same in all types of Jatra troupes. The A class produces the original text written by a hired playwright. It is reproduced on the stage by the direction of a professional director. Because of the commercial motive the lower class Jatra troupes might be cashing on the sexually appealing record dance programmes on popular demand of a section of audience, nonetheless their performances are taken seriously. They may also include scenes of violence and obscenity in their adapted plays, but the novelty of the story does not seem to be affected much. Secondly, the spectacles – advance light, sound, set and very talented actors used for the performance of the same text, produced by a top professional group, do not necessarily differentiate the presentation of the text used by a smaller group. The sharp difference can be seen in the economy of the hosting village or committee. The low purchasing power of its population indicates their inability to invite the top-class Jatra troupes. As a result, the degree of cultural choices is marginal. In contrast, the large committees are

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financially better off in the sense that the management and organizing responsibility are divided among its members. Compared to the economic status of the small troupe's host, they generate more funds to take a greater risk of loss. As they invest in organizing the event, they expect profit. The internal hierarchy within the Jatra tradition is based on the multi-layered and multi-leveled regional structure. Each class enjoys different levels of economic status of the consumers and the organizing village committee. The classifications within the art form reveal the economic and social inequalities in the society. The differential mobilization within the classified organization is absent as the Odia social relations and structure remain relatively stagnant. Economic inequalities in an agrarian society generate social contradictions in terms of class, caste and other social categories in the framework of history and tradition in the interpretation and construction of reality. Thus, the lack of entrepreneurial skill amongst Odias for instance in investing in large-scale Jatra troupes indicates the existence of a large number of tenuous low class troupes in rural Odisha.

Jatra today has been a lucrative medium-scale industry, which attracts new talent, educated and young people to join as directors, writers and artists. It has just not flourished but has achieved its unofficial industrial status. Nonetheless, with the increasing demand of the payment of the artists and competition among the high and middle class Jatra parties, the small troupes can only anticipate the prospects of continuity of the Jatra tradition as they are not following the capitalist model of business. Those who perform ticket show Jatra face the problem of financial loss and for them Jatra is like 'a gambling business'. In his concluding remarks on the future of C and D class Jatra troupes, Sudhir Pati said that the persistence of religious festivals in Odisha would always inspire Jatra to survive. Government might ban the ticket show Jatras but for the preservation purpose, it cannot stop the free show Jatra.

Market organization, production, distribution, consumption, and social structure are intertwined and are conditioned by each other. They together influence and get influenced by the cultural product. My description on the cultural economy of Jatra fits in quite accurately in Paul Dimaggio's typology of cultural-production systems in which the popular culture is generated according

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to its distinct form of organization. Popular Jatra does not fall under his mass culture type of cultural production. Rather, it is a mix of pluralistic culture and mass culture type of cultural-production systems (2002: 160). The contemporary Jatra industry is mass-cultural, 'presenting similar materials to a wide range of audiences'. The record companies, television producers and the live Jatra creators supply diverse materials through their market channels. The four types of Jatra troupes through a highly competitive market structure, with an entrepreneurial brokerage, loose market segmentation with high innovation and diversity offer the audiences the greatest variety of performative narratives. The independence of the popular-culture creators, in turn, affects the degree of innovation and diversity in the industry. However, the monetary success of Jatra cannot be the sole answer to its popularity and resilience. There is a nexus between the economics of the form and construction of the ideology of the popular narratives. The emerging market of Jatra industry coincided with the intention of modern playwrights to create Jatra plays with popular appeal in which tradition and modernity are portrayed as both dichotomy and continuity. The newly emergent hybridized Jatra serves the growing middle class well. The synthesis of cinematic technique and traditional play structure present a combination of styles of film, television, modern theatre and the existing repertoire. Such resilient traditional performances rooted within human and social contexts animate the life worlds of societies, past and present, and transmit a gamut of meanings. The existing structures decay and assimilation, acculturation and adaptation of 'newly imported modes and values' continue. In a similar way, Jatra as highly mobile is moving between cities, small towns, and villages, containing extensive rural/folk elements; it fosters social solidarity and collective memory and imagination.

! NOTES

1. The first commercial theatre of Odisha that was highly popular and commercially successful for about three decades. See for detailed study of Panigrahi (1996) and Hemant Das (1997) on Annapurna Rangamancha.

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2. For instance, Hirakud Dam, Rourkela Steel Plant and NALCO Aluminum plant, Paradeep port, the Express highway, Thermal power plant and state electrification etc. were established during 1960s and 1970s in Odisha.
3. The facts presented in the paper are drawn from the fieldwork conducted by the author during 2006–2009. The figures presented by the researcher are prone to variation on there is no single authentic source of data available.
4. Jatra scholars like Rashmi Ranjan Mohanty, Krushna Charan Behera and Niladri Bhusan Harichandan have urged for its industry status.
5. See the introduction to SNA in www.sangeetnatak.org/sna/sna1.htm
6. Like Odisha Jatra Gaurab, Natyacharjya Ragunatha Smrutisanman, Jatrasamrat Shyamsunder Mahapatra, Natyashri Artabandhu Routraysanman and pallikabi Krushnaparasad Beherasmrutisanman, (Lenka 2004).
7. They are the actor-writer Ghanashyam Swain (1980), Writer-director Raghunath Panda (1981), Actor-director Artabandhu Routray (1989), writer Jadumani Kanungo (1991) and writer-director Umakanta Behera (2007).
8. Pradip Maharathi (a candidate of BJD) of *Kalinga Ganantya* of Pipili, and Kartik Mahapatra of *Jatra Sharadabali* of Sora are members of legislative assembly and Lenka is a Sarpanch and councilor. Ravi Ray of Baghajatin is the director of the NGO called *Lokshakti* in Balasore.
9. Bidesini (2004), one of the most popular and financial successful production of Sibani Ganantya, written by Anant Ojha earned maximum of 2 lakhs rupees in 2005 per show.
10. In the play he played an insensate character that ate a live chicken every night.
11. The aristocratic and influential family in a feudal set up.

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