

# Similarity and Dissimilarity of the Performance Show and Passion-reading

Ali Askar Alizadeh Moghaddam

Scientific membership of the Faculty of Art and Architecture, Zabol University, Iran.

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## Abstract

The First and Second World Wars as well as the development of industry and machine life had great effect on human life and his lack of identity. The effect of performance show is a type of performing arts that attempts to fully reflect the human, world, good and evil. On the other hand, passion-reading with roots in Iranian myths and archetypes is considered as one of the original Iranian shows, which has similarities and differences with the performance show. The present study aimed to compare the similarities and dissimilarities of the two theatrical genres from the perspectives of actors, audiences, decoration, symbols and signs, and atmosphere. The methodology used in this study was bibliographic-analytical method and the main questions was how this long traditional show can be so similar to the performance show of the 20th century. How was performance show formed? Can be a performance show considered a type of passion-reading

**Keywords:** Performance, Passion-reading, Similarity, Dissimilarity, Genre

## 1. RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Dr. Jaber Anaseri spent his life on various stage functions of passion-reading. Bolukbashi is one of the researchers with many studies in this field. Concerning performance art, Richard Schechner scientifically and academically taught this type of art and conducted many studies. Conferences have been held on performance and experience in cafes, streets and garages. However, what has not been addressed or less focused is the similarities and dissimilarities between performance show and the traditional art of passion-reading and the action of visual and auditory elements, especially the audience.

**1. The theatrical proper moments are a public process** that invites the public from the time of creation and formation in the mind to the stage of performance to share. Therefore, the interaction and development of the theater must be considered in relation to the other people from all over the world. In this context, knowledge about methods, theories, and genres, as well as awareness of various perceptions in the cultural field of the world is an important strategy for the development of the theater art.

**2. Performance is a controversial basic concept.** Executive agents and theorists are in a scientific dispute about forms and types of performance, which makes this field of art be of various types. Body art and performance art are defined as the constituents of postmodernism. Based on a fundamental reason, Performance art cannot be simply described as a specific structure or work. Are media are available to the artist, from video to photos, sculpture, dramatic plays, painting, etc. An actor plays the role of a veteran in the Afghanistan and Iraq war in an empty room. Performance is originated from a particular field: theater, dance, or visual arts. The London Live Art Development Agency described live art as: a gene source of artists whose work is rooted in a range of disciplines. They intersect; they blur each other's boundaries, and have created new innovative forms in

this process. Performance is an inter-discipline and since, "they provide the most unlimited description of the various forms of performance art. The work can be presented individually or in groups. Lighting, music, or visual and auditory special effects created by the artist or in collaboration with others can form performance and overt and covert proper moments by symbols and signs (Rosely & Goldberg). All places from a gallery or museum to each alternative places such as the theater scene, a café, a warehouse, a garage, a round land can be the scene for performing narration or passion-reading (Bolukbashi, 1980: 17).

## 3. Body, place, audience, time

Performance, like a passion-play, comes to life with the presence of a body and an event happens. The body, time, place and audience are the four main components of performance and a passion-play. Body play is its core element. The actor, from the beginning of the theater art, created a kind of vitality for this art and artists turned to material and moving body to discover ideas such as unbelievability and instability. The perceived idea of performance is one-person theater, while passion-play is the result of actors' actions. The body of an artist is formed as a work; work on the body of an artist is only one of these forms. The audience may be involved in the performance as part of it. This feature is considered an integral part of passion-play because the boundary between the performance and the audience are merged (Anaseri, 1989: 98). This is the existential originality of the show that includes in the context of live art. "In the presence of live art, the artist and the body of an actor form ideas about the reality and scale for everyday pieces of art (Bolukbashi, Idid: 68).

## 4. Place

Place is an effective factor for all forms of art. These two art genres are not an exception. Place was different from the beginning of live performance shows, dealing with everyday life. Live performance in working place clarifies the change that art must create in the relationship between the audience and art. The passion-

play and performance in any place facilitates the communication with audience and makes it more effective.

Place is an action; long-term work causes stability that is manifested in various forms. In performance, art occurs every day. Although the event happened 1400 years ago, as if it were happening right now.

I have recently seen a performance coinciding with the starting and end of the gallery. An actions was repeated over a long period of time (Emma, 1990: 125). According to Emma, time moves along with the show, goes to the past or future and sometimes stops. This feature is less observed in other types of shows.

Physical activity; performance; passion-reading

A transient event with common features with a series of activities including shows, games, sports, circus, and acrobatics. What distinguished it from other types of performance is that performing arts are related to theater, dance, opera, and circus. Creating, not imitating. Imagine the actor breaks his/her leg or the car window really breaks; all such events are real body experiences. In 1970s, the performance art was against theater (Schechner, Ibid: 198). Performance claimed anything but theater.

### **5. Acting in theater, passion-play, and performance show.**

Acting in a passion-play is a contract between the performing group and the audience. Any action and figure implies a special meaning. These theatrical symbols are constantly translating the scenes between the two groups without any intermediaries. For example, putting hands on your forehead pretending you are looking away. The heroes sing their dialogues in different Dastgahs of the Persian traditional music and antagonists express their dialogues in prose.

Going around the scene once indicates a short distance while a long distance is shown by going around the scene for a few times. Punching the knee shows rage and spitting is a sign of hatred. Time in a passion-play stops, goes back or forward through the actor's performance; this is . To alienate. In performance show, actor plays; s/he never tries to present too much believability to the audience as Stanislavsky did. Since performance in this genre is intersubjective, the actor tries to present it at the moment and in real time. The main element of acting in performance is considered to be the body; either it belongs to the actor or the audience. And the absence of audience can be contributing for documentation. They try to make a relationship between physicality and psychological living.

### **Body in show**

It is a transient event with common features with a series of activities such as shows, sports, mirror and digital art. What distinguished performance from other performing arts is that performing arts are related to dance, opera, and circus, and a form of cultural anthropology is formed between theater and performance, resulting in creation (not imitating).

## **2. LIVE PERFORMANCE AND PASSION-PLAY IN FRONT OF THE AUDIENCE**

In these two genres, physical activity is shown to the public. It shows an unmediated work to the audience. It cannot be seen through the camera lens. Both are the art of body.

Transience and objectivity have been always the interesting aspects of art. To executive agents in 6th and 7th centuries, the immaterial nature of art was a kind of protest. Sometimes Transience and immateriality have always been important aspects of performance art. They made transient events that . In modern times, service industries and events have become commodities; this political issue against the art market is very complex. Performance works entirely rely on live interactions between people and audience. S/he basically avoids producing any object and exhibits his/her work without any written or visual text. In the performance art and passion-play, the performer's body, live music, dance, digital arts (in the form of modern passion-reading), lighting, audience, scene and other places such as garage, café, restaurant, street, mosque, or anywhere people can be gathered and perform the art, The same is reflected in passion-reading. From dance to rhythmic movements, place and time, simple scene, colors, symbols and signs, actors and most importantly the place of the performance and the event try to force all the five senses of the audience to act. These are the important features of passion-reading, which are not similar to any show.

## **3. PERFORMING IN PASION-READING**

In passion-reading, actors are in two types of heroes and antagonists. Good and evil are constantly fighting in the scene, as if this fight has continued from eternity, like the original Iranian myths, e.g. the black demon "Apoosh" and the goddess of rain "Mitra". Moreover, the Mourning of Siavash and the Memory of Zariran relate these myths to the battlefield of Imam Hussein and Shemr. The antagonists blocked the way for very few companions of the Imam and besieged children and women without water on the way to Kufa. Imam Hussein and his companions could tolerate for 10 days and finally, on the day of Ashura, 72 of the Imam's faithful companions were martyred. The Imam's family, including his wife and children, were brutally enslaved and desecrated. The heroes sing their dialogues as songs in the original Persian musical instruments (dastgahs) such as Chahargah, Panjgah, and Rahavi. Antagonists recite their dialogues fluently in a manner called as Oshtolom Khani. The clothes of antagonists are all in red, which indicates cruelty and bloodshed, but the clothes of the Imam's companions are in a variety of colors; they put on clothes in green color, wear black with robes and headbands of different colors. Hor Ibn Yazid Riyahi, the head of the antagonists' group, put a yellow father that was the sign of doubt and hesitation on his headpiece and hung his boots around his neck and regretfully rejoined the Imam's camp.

### Music

Music is an integral part of passion-reading; the music of fight, combat. When one of the Imam's child is lost, a terrifying music is played. When one of the Imam's companions is martyred, the theme and melody of the music is changed. In fighting scenes, music is used to excitement, as well as to change the scene. Music is played at any moment of the play and is of a great position in passion-reading and directed by Moeen Alboka (the director).

### Gestures

Performing in passion-reading is mostly constituted of gestures; any movement implies a special meaning.

For example, the performers goes around the scene once to show a close distance and twice to show a long distance. They go around the scene for several times if needed to show a longer distance. Looking away and far distances and gestures by hands to imply this are also used. Looking through two fingers indicates seeing future or past.

Pouring dust on the head is a sign of mourning and pouring straw on the head is a sign of martyrdom.

Women never perform in a passion-play and a male teenager usually recites the dialogues of Zeinab, Imam Hussein's sister, with a black, yellow, or green face cover and thin voice. Clapping hands is a sign of courage and boasting is used to say the positive traits of people, such as courage.

This tradition is always used in passion-reading.

Punching on the ground is a sign of rage.

### Objects

A bowl of water can represent Euphrates River. This array has been accepted by everyone as a contract with the audience and the executive group.

The waterskin is the symbol of Hazrat Abbass's waterskin.

The iron claw is the symbol of the two severed hands of Imam Hussein's brother.

Pigeons on the bodies of the martyrs indicate

The elves, ghosts, and supernatural forces are constantly moving on the scene.

Imam Hussein was also futurist and retrospective.

### Decoration

It is very simple in the passion-play. A red flag can represent the location of objects and a green or black flag can indicate the location of the heroes.

A tent with the same colors represents good and evil.

A basin represents the Euphrates River. The empty waterskin indicates lack of water. And straw and some doves show the unpretentiousness of the scene.

Whatever was explained above is true about performance; simple and beautiful, and direct communication with the audience. In the passion-play, audience is an integral part of the show.

The audience takes part in the show for being rewarded and provides the furniture and equipment of the stage. They make a vow, respond the lamenter, and beat their chest, and are directly involved in the show.

Passion-reading and the five sense of the audience

Today's, in modern passion-reading of the cinema industry, video projectors and different colored lights are used to create the scene and scene arrays have been tries to find their position in the progress of the goals and the show actions, and this is the same in the performance art.

Passion-reading is the only show in Iran or the world that directly engages all 5 sense of the audience without any special tricks or effects; the sense of sound by singing lamentations and songs; the sense of taste by eating the vows and juic; the sense of hearing by listening to dialogues, sounds and music; the sense of smell by smoking frankincense and espond (peganum harmala) during the performance to make the scene fragrant; the sense of touch by touching the clothes and coffins of the Imam and other heroes with the intention for reward. This action may be seen in one or two other executive genres, but it is common in passion-reading. This trick is seen in performance show. A... , like Imam Hussein, heard the call for help of Sultan Qeis in India at the height of the war, due to the power of worldview he had. Sultan is trapped in the hands of a predatory lion. At that moment, everything stops, especially the battle of Karbala. Imam Hussein comes down the platform and turns around it for once or twice pretending he passes kilometers and reaches Sultan in a few seconds. He kills the lion and Sultan wants to fight against the enemies in Karbala and help Imam Hussein. But, Imam does not accept and returns to the battlefield in Karbala by taking a step back. With no change in the event, the war resumes as if nothing happened. This event in performance is working in space and time, which is easily found in passion-reading.

### 4. CONCLUSION

Performance means body or the art of performing or . This art may be failed in terms of space and time. Other such as cinema, video, sports, and ballet industry have the same functions in it. Anywhere can be a place for performing; a garage, café, bar, crossroad provided there is any audience. Performance is among the people and tries to make a big change in the classic system of the hall and the performance. Acting is exaggerated and systematic. The body plays a special function and music is one of the core elements as well as dance and rhythmic movements and whatever can form the communication between the audience and performer are the core elements. Passion-reading is one of the original Iranian performance, which is showed in a simple design but complex in signs and symbols in Muharram and Safar every year to recall the martyrdom of Imam Hussein and his 72 faithful companions in the plain of Karbala.

Design, decoration, color, context, and the use of digital mediums in modern passion-reading have made a valuable type of performance, which has attracted the attention of scholars such as Krotowski, Schechner, Brook, and other experts in art.

Simplicity and unpretentiousness in performing and use of different kinds of live music brings it closer to what it is intended for. Another important feature of passion-reading in performing is engaging the five senses of the audience, which seems important during performing.

A technique that cannot be wholly achieved in any show without special effects.

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