

Received 2016/08/09

Accepted 2017/01/31

Persian translation of this paper entitled:

بررسی تعزیه و هنر اجرا (پرفورمنس آرت) با تأکید بر تعامل با مخاطب  
is also published in this issue of journal.

## **An Investigation into Taziyeh and Performance Art with an Emphasis on the Audience Interaction**

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### **Abstract**

Taziyeh as a ritual performance is an ancient art. Its present form originated during Safavid period and became popular in Qajar era. Taziyeh has often tried to interact with the common audience in order to convey meanings and thus be more effective. This art form is known to be the basis of the principles of contemporary Dramatic and Performing Arts. As a part of New Art, in the late 60s, Performance Art applied philosophy, visual arts, postmodern theories and theatrical elements to convert a static art into a dynamic one, and thus developed the concept of communication and interaction with the audience during the course of time.

Therefore the main problem of the research is as following: Is it possible to compare Taziye and Performance Art within the body of Performing Arts and hence ascribe similar functions to both, related to the amount of audience interaction (the amount of communications, the similarities and their overlapping)? Depending on the hypothesis of this article, the two arts are related according to the definition of New Art within the context of the audience participation; it means both are audience-centered. The main purpose of this study is to identify a new approach in the field of Traditional Arts, and the secondary purpose is to accept Taziyeh as a traditional art being parallel to the new art of Performance, on the basis of audience participation features. In spite of the insignificant amount of its followers in Iran, this viewpoint is as old as postmodern history and may expand the perspective of the artists. Therefore, a descriptive analytic method is applied and the information is gathered through library documents. Studying the most common and outstanding characteristics of these two arts, we have concluded that since there exists overlapping and similarities between the two arts in the field of audience interaction and participation, Taziyeh could be considered as Performance Art, and certain other traditional arts as the foundations of New Arts.

### **Keywords**

Ritual art, Taziyeh, Performance art, Audience, Interaction.

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## Introduction

New Arts such as Performance Art emerged and developed in postmodern period. The purpose of this art, created and popularized during the second half of 20<sup>th</sup> century, was to take art out of the museums to be in more interaction with general public. Primarily it was a mere effort to transform static Visual Arts to dynamic, vivid and live pieces of art, however music, light, costume and theatrical elements were found to be as important in conveying ideas later on. According to the outstanding postmodern philosopher, Jean-François Lyotard<sup>1</sup>, unlike the Modern Art, Postmodern Art tries to create a comprehensible art for all people and a postmodern artist tries to draw the attention of the audience to this kind of art. Furthermore, the theory of “Death of the Author” by Roland Barthes<sup>2</sup>, who believed the communication and cognition of the work of art is undertaken by the audience, as well as Antonin Artaud<sup>3</sup>'s audience-centered approach in the Dramatic Arts, show the increasing importance of the audience. Due to this importance and also the audience's attempt to interact with the art work, Amraei (2011: 76) believes that the communication in Postmodern Art includes emotional function and its persuasive act tends towards the emotions and sentiments of the audience. Alike other New Arts, and on the basis of postmodern philosophy, Performance Art possesses such a wide range of meaning and content that can hardly be framed and limited into certain styles. But according to the viewpoints of the more updated theorists such as Edward A. Shanken<sup>4</sup> (2005: 415-416) these arts have widespread cultural and social consequences as are mostly created according to the interaction and contribution of the audience. All these efforts have been proposed together with a common purpose—the interaction and collaboration of the audience—and have introduced fresh modes and terms—audience-centered, interactive, and participatory—in the field of New Arts, and might be unacceptable and impractical in the countries which are yet evaluating artworks according to their old-fashioned traditional

theories.

On the other hand, studying the art of Taziyeh, the above explained attempts and tendencies towards the audience can be observed—especially in original and native performances. Moreover, in the studies of western scholars such as Jerzy Grotowski<sup>5</sup>, Peter Brook<sup>6</sup>, Richard Schechner<sup>7</sup>, ritual performances in general and Iranian Ta'ziyeh in particular, which are historically valuable, are known as the sources of inspiration for the avant-garde performances (Forootan, 2007: 156).

Studying the updated principles of Performance Art on one hand, and considering Taziyeh as a ritual-religious and an indigenous performance in Iran that employs the same visual, communicational and aural elements on the other hand, together with the concept of being audience-centered, arises this question that despite the historical and chronological gap, and by neglecting the religious and non-religious purpose of these arts, is it possible to know Taziyeh and Performance Art of the same audience interaction function? And how is the communication with the audience in the structural and executive characteristics of these two arts? Thus the hypothesis of the research is: the structural features of Taziyeh have been applied during the formation and evolution of new Performance Art and consequently both are on the same track and carry identical parameters including mental, practical and impressive interaction with the audience.

The purpose of the study is to establish a fresh attitude based on postmodern approaches towards the traditional arts, and hence to investigate the effectiveness of Taziyeh in order to find out the common characteristics of Performance Art and Taziyeh; and also to study the manner of the audience interaction with the work of art. Accordingly a comparative method alongside modern points of view would help some untold but usable notions of this art reveal. Moreover, in both arts, the audience participation is not just a static mental interaction—which is common to all art forms—but a real practical one; it means the audience's active presence would

result in the formation of the a piece of performance. Comparing these two forms of art, undoubtedly reveals the basic severe differences in the origins, subject matters and beliefs, but here the emphasis is just on the audience interaction. The research aims not just to evaluate Taziyeh by western criteria or classify it as a western New Art, but to express its latent capacity and capability in interaction with the audience. So the study is going to prove the point that interaction with the audience which is claimed to be achieved by Postmodern New Arts has been as a matter of fact achieved by Taziyeh long before and during its historical evolution.

### Literature review

Taziyeh has been studied from different viewpoints by Iranian and non-Iranian researchers. Among the Iranian scholars Jaber Anasori, Ali Bolookbashi, Enayat Shahidi and etc. have had traditional attitudes towards Taziye, or have only studied some details as symbols, music, color, and literary terms. Some experts in Dramatics also have paid attention to the impact or the differences of Aristotelian or Postmodern Theater and Taziyeh.

An article by Azadeh Shahmiri (2007) “a Comparative Study on Common Parameters of Sama Dance and Performance Art” has the same structure as the present article. The author has compared some principles of Performance Art with mystic Sama ritual, and eventually has just suggested that the West has been inspired by the East in the basic principles of performance. Payam Forootan (2007), as well, in “Taziyeh and Contemporary Theater” confirms the new approaches of Western Theater being inspired by the principles of Taziyeh. He compares the structure of Taziyeh with the subdivisions of New Arts such as Installation, Minimalism and Conceptual Art, and concludes that Taziyeh is modern, conceptual and spiritual. Narges Hashempoor (2014) in “Aesthetics of Performance Art in Taziyeh and Female Audience” studies the Aesthetics, performing style and mental interaction of the audience of Taziyeh. Towards the end she concentrates on the female audience,

and concludes that the so called communication (in Taziye) is essential in forming their identity and is a stabilizer of their social role; however, no practical interaction is studied in the named article. It should be noted that, the term “performance” in Hashempour’s paper does not refer to Performance Art at all. Marzieh Zareh and Zahra Rahbarnia (2009) in “Interactions between the Performers and the Audiences of Nakhl-e Matam”<sup>8</sup> study the interaction and collaboration of audience and creators of Nakhl Gardani<sup>9</sup> ritual. The only common denominator with the present study is exploring a religious performing ceremony and the audience interaction. Another article close to the current study is by Naghmeh Samini (2007) “Narrative Systems in Taziyeh Texts” in which she studies the relationship between the artwork, audience and the author from the Narrative point of view and compares Taziyeh with Western Theater and concludes with the important role of the audience in Taziye. “Comparing Rural and Urban Audience Confrontation with Taziyeh”, an article by Ataollah koopal and Maryam Mehrabi (2013) also has examined the impact of this art on the audience in both urban and rural societies, demonstrated their different attitudes in confrontation with Taziyeh, and has referred to the mental interaction with audience in a section. The mentioned articles, certainly, have not studied nor compared the audience and his active interaction with the new art of Performance discussed in the current article.

### Research method

The methodology is descriptive-analytic including some historical reviews and examples for better interpretation. After a history of the formation of the two performing arts, their structure are compared from the Performing Arts’ point of view. This comparison is to find out the manner of communication and interaction (in Taziye and Performance Art) with the audience at the present times. Library data collection besides comparative method and historical and structural debates would conclude as an analytic chart containing the audience based features and

parameters in Taziyeh and Performance Art. The samples are studied qualitatively including the details in both art forms.

### Taziyeh<sup>10</sup>

Taziyeh, an Iranian Shia spiritual performance about Karbala and its events, has a deep root in the history of this country<sup>11</sup>. Taziyeh (Bolookbashi, 2007: 47) has been created outside the governmental systems, beyond the religious control, and without any planning or prearrangement for creation. It is based on public unwritten narratives. Therefore it's considered as a way of thought and emotions of the public culture. Moreover, it has had an important role to keep the events of Karbala alive.

This ritual art has had different styles of performances before the establishment of Shia government in Iran. During Buid period, in Muharram, IbnAsir believes, some people walked around the city with faces colored in black and disheveled hair while singing sorrowful elegies. Chelkowski (2005: 10) however believes this sorrow and mourning was not the same as today's Taziyeh but was an origin for it. During Buid period Taziyeh was a recreation of Karbala scenes with no narration and was performed along with the marsh of the mourners in the streets. During Safavid period when the court declared Shiism as the official religion, Taziyeh was patronized by the court and gradually molded and refashioned based on the cultural demands of the audience. In Qajar period, the fixed and mobile rituals of Muharram were combined together and the drama of life appeared. Then the acts and martyrdom of Karbala martyrs became theatrical through narrating the book "Rozat-al-Shohada" and developed to the present form.

From the beginning but, this ritual art has had structural differences with classic theater and could not be classified in this category according to Aristotelian principles of theater. Taziyeh is an image, the description of the concept of Karbala and the text has been the last element adjoined it. The author of the texts of Taziyeh is unknown and if someone is named, it's the compiler or the editor. It

seems these texts have been created and completed amongst the people, during the course of time. The performer is just a narrator who narrates the texts which he has not even memorized and simulates those people in Karbala. Chelkowski (2005: 13) maintains that reading the roles from the text may be an attempt to put a space between the performer and the role to prevent being exactly the person



Fig. 1. Performer of Shemr and Amir-al Momenin besides each other watching the Taziyeh. Source: Mirshokraei, 2009: 75.

whose character is portrayed; something the same as the mask in Western Theater. The performers of Taziyeh are chosen by people to take the role of specific characters. The themes are various therefore sometimes the term "shabih-khani"<sup>12</sup> is applied instead of Taziyeh. As Amini (2007: 22) believes Shabih-khani is a religious performance and not necessarily mourning, but Taziyeh involves performances which particularly grieve for Imam Hussein and his tribe, and as previously mentioned dates back to pre-Islamic period.

It is notable that in every region, specially cities and towns with different cultures and ethnic groups, Taziyeh has been localized and influenced by native elements. Therefore there is not a unique pattern for Taziyeh throughout the country, and the performance, while having the same material—the result of cultural exchanges—is acted differently in each district. This

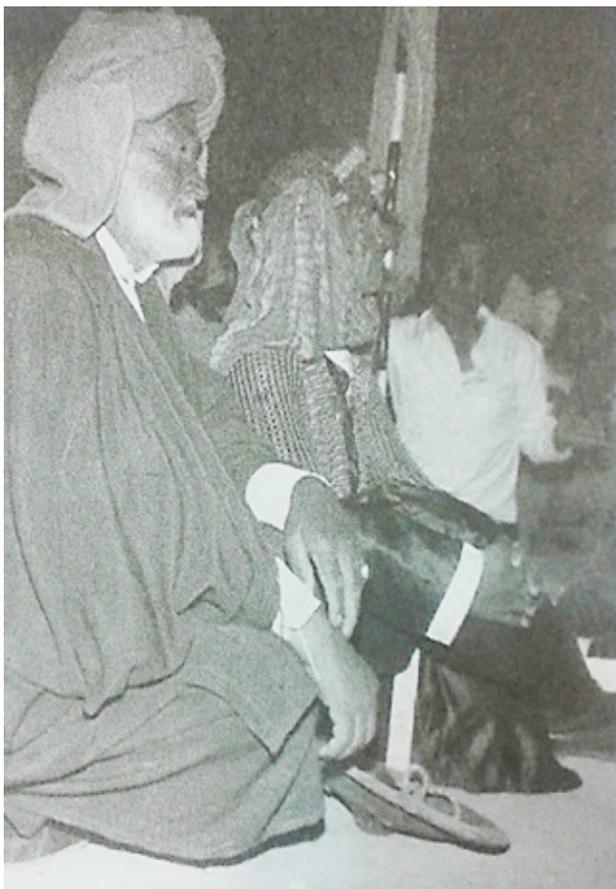


Fig. 2. The audiences among the army in Taziyeh.  
Source: Mirshokraei, 2009: 80.

is opposing to those standard preplanned Taziyehs, performed in large cities in special places with certain costume and décor, similar to Western Theater. Those performances have been separated from the original and traditional Taziyeh which had direct contact and interaction with the audience and tried to remove the gaps. Mirshokraei (2009: 64) indicates that the positive quality of the intact Taziyeh in towns and rural areas, with high levels of interaction with the

audience, is their higher flexibility. Since there is no temporal and spatial limitation, it can be performed at any time, place, with any number of audience and in any length; it completely depends on the performers and the audience. As in north of Iran (Gilan) there is no special place for performing Taziyeh. Each Taziyeh is divided into several parts and performed in different Tekieh<sup>13</sup>, so the audiences have to move together with the performers to another Tekieh, every so often, to see the rest of the performance.

In small towns the text of Taziyeh is not fixed and may change according to the situation, location and the audience. It can be shorter or longer or even some parts may be omitted situationally. Improvisations are also common. The performers sometimes narrate some verses outside the main text, according to the situation and the audiences' reactions. Furthermore despite knowing the exact date of Karbala's incidents, the costume design of the performers is not historical, but is close to the public costumes of the era the performance is taking place in. And this is (Chelkowski, 2005: 21) neither surprising to the audience, nor ridiculous. While in western theater style such thing is considered to be a kind of lampoon. Besides, the accessory is used with no plan and just symbolically. All these elements show the strength and flexibility of this ritual art which strengthens the idea of communication with audience, his participation and the way the performance is performed.

### Audience in Taziyeh

The performers in Iranian traditional performances (Naserbakht, 2009: 178) never impose themselves on the audiences but have a close communication with them during the performance. This communication is seen also in Iranian Naghali<sup>14</sup> in which, the audience interferes in the story although he knows the end, and thus changes it. Forootan (2007: 159) also refers to the interaction of audience and the performers and mentions that it was observed in Taziye years ago by Peter Brook, while attending a Taziyeh in a village in Khorasan. Brooks called it a complete interaction in

a performance which refers to something a thousand years old and still seems to have happened just today. Among the ritual and religious arts, Taziyeh is an example of having the most interaction with the spectators as its audience. Chelkowski (1973) suggests that Taziyeh has all the abilities of a traditional and modern art both, since it is performed easily among the people and with them; the audience is a performer himself and the performer an audience. This combination of the performer and audience in Taziyeh happens in several aspects; the performance, usually takes place in open locations with many people who are face to face with the performers. This causes a kind of self-analysis in the audience and performers and so creates an inner conformity between them and the content of Taziyeh. In Fig. 1. the performers of Shemr<sup>15</sup> and Imam Ali in Taziyeh of Abbas Ibn Ali<sup>16</sup> have taken seats beside the audience after their act and are watching the rest of the Taziyeh. Moreover (Samini, 2007: 93) the way the audience sit or stand shapes the set and their mourning, tears and reactions are considered as a part of Taziyeh. In (Chelkowski, 2005: 14) we understand in some regions, where Tekies are used as a symbol of Karbala, the main platform has some bypasses from which the performers enter the scene among the audience and sometimes do the performance together with them. As shown in Fig. 2. some of the audience have joined the army. The audience have entered the scene and after performing a part of Taziyeh, together with the main performers, and helping the virtual characters of Karbala on the set, continue watching the rest of the performance as the audience.

Sometimes the participation and interaction of the audience reaches a level in which they decide to change the process of the performance and prevent the fated final event. The audience as the witnesses of the event are a part of Taziyeh and the event that has happened in the past. Shahriari (2006: 159) believes the audience can judge the event and show reactions through the role they have taken part in. This reaction may be in the

form of a physical engagement or even throwing stones towards the wicked characters and role. There are some examples of such interferences: In Lorestan a spectator killed the performer of Hareth, the murderer of Moslem kids (Shahidi, 2001: 365) or in Firoozabad of Fars, a Qashqaii<sup>17</sup> man thrust out of his seat and hit the head of Shemr with a thick stick, threw him on the ground and cried “my Lord Hussein was alone a thousand years ago but not now, why should he be alone in the hands of the wicked when he has so many devotees?” (Bahmanbeigi, 1945: 72). Accordingly the audience are engaged both in and out of Taziyeh and communicate with it; a communication which is not passive, static and afar as in classic theater and primary performances; a communication which tries to improve or change the inevitable content to prevent the predetermined end. Considering the awareness of the audience of the story’s outline and creating an impact, like a sudden happening that challenges and causes reactions, leads us to non-stereotype elements. According to the described communication with the audience it can be concluded that Taziyeh (classified under the title “similarities and differences”) is compatible with Performance Art and is different from theater. As in Beeman (2005: 44), Taziyeh is unfixed, editable and flexible in confrontation with the audience. Its text is continually edited and modified for more interaction; some texts may be added or subtracted. Thus the relationship between the audience and the performers is quite different with classic theater.

### Performance Art

Performance Art is a branch of New Arts which is the result of Postmodernism and the changes due to it. Art experts have not come to a precise definition for Performance Art yet, and there have been new definitions for it in every period. Therefore, every artist has his own definition and understanding of this art according to situations. Some sources have labelled this art as a result of 1960s movements against commercialism of art. The artists used body

to perform and create an art that couldn't be traded by the dealers. Some others know it as an attempt for visual arts to be more among ordinary people.

This part of New Art, certainly, started from Visual Arts and soon found way to theater, gained theatrical elements and then some ritual performance were added to it by the artists. According to Rahimi (2007) one of the most important reasons of the popularity of Performance Art is being directly linked to common social rites among different cultures, and its efficiency depends on the prevalence and efficiency of those rituals and rites. In spite of the fact that, this art was created during the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century, it was formally proposed in 60s and 70s, abandoned the primitive and abstract performance styles in 80s and gradually became popular among general public. The postmodern theorist of this art is "Antonin Artaud" who rejected the classical principles of Classic Theater even in having text (Mokhtabad, 2008: 85) and established a new style in which the audience has an active presence in the artwork and that is well obvious in Performance. In Cambridge dictionary as Wilmeth (1993: 370) defines, Performance Art is a composition of visual, audio and performing, public culture and ordinary life that is presented by artist's body as a mental and artistic tool with no time limitations. Although any art with a performing action involving the audiences is called Performance Art nowadays, it is certain the general purpose of its creation is to destroy obstacles of Modern era between Art and society for more public understanding. Its characteristics are as follow: the performance could be accidental or planned, with or without audience participation, live or recorded and then played in media, with or without performer, it could be mental, conceptual, practical, physical, silent or with speech and performed in private or public places. As in (Stiles & Sellz, 1996: 680) the important issue is the presence of four elements: time, location, performer's live body or recorded by media, and the communication between the audience and performers.

Various classifications have been stated for

Performance Art's functions, resulting from its comparison with Western Theater and ritual performances, during the course of time. Damood (2005: 123) has defined two viewpoints in Performance Art: the first group knows it as an art with no message and social content; the second group believes a shocking and affecting message is a must. Some know it as a beneficial art and some as an entertainment. If we accept the idea of the first group, then the Performance Art will be close to ritual performances like Taziyeh with high efficiency; and in case of the second group, it will be close to entertainment and Classic (Aristotelian) Theater. There is also another classification based on the method of the performing. If the performance is done in front of the eyes of the audience, who are just spectators till the end of the action, as in the Classic Theater, it is called a static performance; and if done with interference and participation of the spectators, it is called an interactive and dynamic performance. The purpose of the present study is the beneficial, interactive and dynamic group, and the other one would not be discussed.

A mutual feature of Taziyeh and Performance Art would be a nonprofessional performer and undramatic texts as in Theater. Goldberg (2009: 17) maintains that the space and time are not limited, big theatrical gestures which could be repeated with or without practice drives it, and the subject matter may include tribal ritual and religious performances. Or in Damood (2005: 44) it is mentioned that the performers do not believe they are actors and just perform a role close to their natural self. They present another self through their body, costume and movements and know it as a representation of their own self. This idea can be coincident with the metaphorical layer of Taziyeh in which the performers of the wicked and the saints in Karbala are revealing the negative and positive aspects of the mankind. Damood (2005: 85) shows while the Performance Art has to be surprising and with no continuity, the performer's behavior is an indirect reflection of the audiences' demands. This issue includes two characteristics of

the work: one refers to the existence of a certain text, and the other refers to the method of performing—that can be similar to Taziyeh. In Taziyeh, a text which includes a clear generality with a certain plot is prepared before the performance, but it does not go on exactly word by word. The details of the text could be altered according to the reaction and the emotional reflections of the audience. Even the duration of the performance could get longer, or some elements may be added to create new acts or change them.

Damood (2005: 104) also maintains that, a common feature of Performance Art and Taziyeh is avoiding watch or stopwatches, as they cause consciousness, and will drive the work out of artistic conditions, also temporal controls may prevent the audience's presence and interaction. The location, too, could not be one sided, like a theater stage set, because it limits the movements of the actors and defects the understanding of the audience. These details altogether with the application of external and internal factors play with the audience and make them find themselves a part of the performance, accompany with it and react through it.

### **Audience in Performance Art**

Audience has been a noteworthy element in Postmodern Art especially in Performance Art. As a new device, Performance Art, has opened a new way for a real communication between the artist and the public, and has set up a space for the audience as the main part of this mutual communication. In this new context, every audience expresses his own beliefs, expectations and mental backgrounds in the communication, influences the work and is influenced by it. As Rahbarnia&Kheiri (2013: 92-95) suggest the audience encounters a space in which he is not just a static spectator but is an active audience. Even the artist does not control the procedure of art and merely participates in creating the art work along with his audience. In the postmodern performances, the gap between performer and audience is broken. The performers are not separated from the audiences

who are a part of the performance procedure till the end. Schechner (1994: 83) believes that Performance Art is the oldest yet the newest style the westerns have taken from nonwestern heritage and apply it in all aspects. Nowadays, in performances, the audience has an important and effective role and is not just a spectator like before, but participates and interacts in the development of the artwork. In this way, all the audiences are not going to get the same unique interpretation of the work, but every one experiences a different perception of the work with his own mental background. Rahimi (2009: 33) believes the audiences complete the performance with their reactions or interactions and finish it. What happens in Performance Art is that the audience should surprisingly find out that they are as effective as the performer. Public rituals especially the Eastern ones are exercised in Performance Art and any audience would feel himself in participation and interaction with it even if he is a passerby. The interaction and communication of audience with the work, itself, forms other kinds of communications which prevent the artist to present a closed structure. Thus, there is no gap between the audience and the performer, the audiences take part emotionally and practically in the performance. This interaction happens in two mental and practical ways.

The mental interaction with audience takes place suddenly in the performance in which the performers try to challenge the audience's minds, direct their minds and control them. The performers convey a concept or movement to the audience's minds, the audiences start the communication, change to performers inside themselves and start participating. The other communication which is more considered in postmodern performances is the practical interaction of audience and the work. Performance Art, especially the dynamic style of it, unlike the Classic Theater, is not a one way communication of performer and the audience, but a two way process of participation in an ongoing event. Within the interactions of the audience, the performance stimulates the audience to show reactions and practical interactions with the

work. They are directly asked to take part in some parts along with the performers; exactly the same as what happens in Taziyeh, where the audience set an emotional and mental interaction with the performance other than practical collaborations. This common aspect strengthens the ritual aspects of the works. Richard Schechner (2007: 262) believes when the audiences change to performers, the performance will change to its ritual aspect. So, both Taziyeh and Performance Art can be known as having more beneficial qualities than their entertaining aspects as seen in ordinary dramas.

For more practical and mental challenging of the audience, Performance Art is more coincident with the real life and thus the gap between theatrical performances of a subject and the life realities is overlooked. Sattari (1999: 59) mentions that the stage of acting is wide and open so the performers will not be supported by the scene, and the performing

location changes to a shared space for the performers and audience, so that the audience can enter the performance and show reactions. Performance Art behaves the same as Taziyeh in case of space and time of the performance; does not limit itself and applies them (space and time) as a means for closer communication with the audience.

As the goal of this article is achieving a new approach towards the similarities of Performance Art and Taziyeh considering the interaction of audience, the authors have chosen the most obvious and general characteristics in relation to the audience in New Arts for a better understanding of the relation and overlapping of these two arts.

### Similarities

#### • Audience and performer as a part of the performance

The relationship of these two groups in a Performance

Table 1. The similarities and differences of Taziyeh & Performance art. Source: authors.

		Taziyeh	Performance art
<b>Similarities</b>	The audiences and performers as a part of performance	Performers of both Taziyeh and Performance art are just narrators of the subject and the audiences complete the performance or are in interaction with it	
	Repeatability	Both performances are repeatable. They are performed repeatedly in any time and location and are new every time	
	Importance of generality and the concept	Attempt to the cognition of concepts and conveying them through the accessories and taking help from the audience	
	The relation of work and audience	Applying perceptible symbols for the audiences to invite them to a challenge	
	Elimination of the gap between performance and reality	Trying to make the work being accepted as a part of real life to the audience and making them enter the performance	
<b>Differences</b>	Time and place for audience	Interfusion of time, location, past and present	Specified location and linear time without a planned duration
	Performance framework	Conventional with little changes	Moment dependent and unpredictable
	Text based	The overall theme with some details but flexible according to audiences' reaction	The overall theme without details and formation according to the interaction of the audiences
	Inner impact on audience	Causing catharsis and sometimes entertainment	Depends on the audiences, may or may not happen according to the theme of the performance
	Presence of the creator	Not specified	Specified
	The narration of the story	Time and place movements	specified time and place during the performance
	Influence on audiences' moralities within interaction	Happens in both static and dynamic interactions	No emphasis on training and edification of audiences through static and dynamic interaction

or Taziyeh is incredibly important. The performers of both Taziyeh and Performance are narrators too, and the audience are present as a part of the work interacting with them. The audiences even complete the work with their presence, participation, interaction and interference in some parts.

#### • **Repeatability**

Since the dynamic beneficial type of performance is studied here, it can be mentioned that Taziyeh and Performance are both repeatable. A performance can be repeated as many times as Ta'ziyeh. Although the location and interaction of the audience may change, the totality remains the same.

#### • **Importance of generality and concept**

Conveying the concept and cognition of the event of Karbala is of the main importance in Taziyeh, as the performing style, accessories and the performers' expressions are influenced by the culture, location and the duration of the event to help a better communication with the audience. It is the same in Performance Art, however the audience is responsible for the perception himself because the performance subject is not predefined.

#### • **Communication and interaction between artwork and the audience**

In Taziyeh, the audience pass the surface and perceive the signs and content which cause the communication and interaction of performers and audiences. Also, in Performance art, the audiences communicate with the signs presented by the performers and are invited to a challenge to interact and enter the performance. The questions asked during the interaction with the work, help the audiences contemplate about the subject and content of the work.

#### • **Elimination of the gap between the performance and reality**

Both performances are accepted by the audiences. So there will be a sense of intimacy and interaction of the performance and its performers with the audiences.

### **Differences**

#### • **How is the work narrated**

In Taziyeh, there is no linear narrative like in

Western Theater. Several stories are presented here simultaneously with time and location adjustments. Performance Art follows a unique subject and there is no change in time and location while performing, however a work can be performed in several places in a performing period.

#### • **Presence of a creator**

In Taziyeh, the author is not identified but in Performance Art the author is mostly specified.

#### • **Inner impact**

In Taziyeh, a catharsis happens inside the audience but in Performance Art the audience are responsible for the perception of the work and the catharsis may or may not happen.

#### • **Being text oriented**

In Performance Art, there is a general subject without details. In Taziyeh, there is a detailed text but the narrators change it according to the situation, audience and space, while considering the generality of the subject.

#### • **Framework of the Performance**

In Taziyeh everything is predefined and is performed conventionally. These conventions create the main framework and elements of Taziyeh, while Performance Art has no conventions and the performance depends on the moment. In Taziyeh both the audience and performers are aware of what is going to happen, but in Performance Art no one, even the performer, does not know what will happen next.

#### • **Time and location**

In Taziyeh the time and location are interfused. As Chelkowski, (1991: 220) expresses well, the audience are in the location of Taziyeh and Karbala at the same time, in past and present. But in Performance Art, the story is specified and although there is no control of time, the audience are present in a specified time and space. Impact of moralities during the interaction

In Taziyeh, the static and dynamic interaction of the audience is accompanied with moralities. In Performance Art the emphasis is not on the ethics of the audience and can be of no moral education.

## Discussion

Comparing the results of the present article with the literary reviews, shows that the previous authors have studied and analyzed the elements of Taziyeh or have compared it with the principles of Western Theater or New Arts. Whenever the interaction is discussed, they have just regarded the important role of the audience or have emphasized the mental aspect of the interaction. In those studies, Performance Art is compared with western performing principles, but the audience and their active interaction is overlooked. The current study has compared the characteristics of Taziyeh and Performance Art

comparatively focusing on the audience interaction and introduces Taziyeh as Performance Art and a branch of New Art.

Studying and analyzing the similarities and differences of the two arts and their overlapping characteristics considering the audience interaction, indicates that Ta'ziyeh, like some other arts, can be known as the basis of New Arts, having the same origins in relation to the audience. As there has been no new approach towards Taziyeh, as a traditional art and at the same time parallel with the new art of Performance in previous studies, the present study can be considered innovative.

## Conclusion

The New Arts appeared and developed in postmodern period. The developments that took place in Postmodern Arts, especially in Performance and in the field of audience interaction, included creation of the artworks for normal and public audiences, unlike Modern Art. Studying the expressive quality of Taziyeh and Performance Art and their interaction with the audience, we acknowledge that Taziyeh has some similarities with Performance Art in the main characteristics and has the same function in the New Arts area. Some characteristics such as the relationship in the triangle of audience, performer and artwork, repeatability and novelty of each performance, importance of the concept, eliminating the gap between reality and the performance, all emphasize that both arts behave the same and try to communicate, interact and participate with the audience during the performance, as they can enter the performance and accompany the performers. Considering the discussed similarities, in spite of its traditional and religious origins, Taziyeh could be known a Performance Art as a division of New Art. Consequently other traditional arts, parallel to New Arts, could be analyzed and studied with a new approach and different attitude to be well-preserved within a new discourse.

## Endnote

1. Jean Francois Lyotard (1924-1998): postmodern French philosopher, sociologist, and literary theorist
2. Roland Barthes (1915-1980): French literary theorist, philosopher, linguist, critic, and semiotician
3. Antonin Artaud (1896-1948): French dramatist, poet, essayist, actor, and theatre director, widely recognized as one of the major figures of twentieth-century theatre and the European avant-garde
4. Edward A. Shanken (1964- ): American art historian
5. Jerzy Grotowski (1933-1999): an innovative Polish theatre director and theorist whose approaches to acting, training and theatrical production have significantly influenced theatre today
6. Peter Brook (1925- ): English theatre and film director
7. Richard Schechner(1934- ): University Professor and Professor of Performance Studies
8. Nakhl-e Matam: a structure like palm as the symbol of Imam Hossein's coffin
9. Lifting and rotating the Nakhl
10. The Taziyeh studied here is the original Taziyeh still performed in towns and villages through the country. It does not include today's Taziyeh that is performed on the basis of western theater or with professional performers, scene and costume design in theaters and in front of people. There are different attitudes about the pre-Islamic origins of Taziyeh and mourning. In past, those who cried and mourned over the dead were believed to be punished in the other world. In Ardavirafnameh, Taziyeh was regarded as being against this law and is known as a ritual related to after Islam period. But, as this ritual theatrical art is ancient like other Iranian arts, dramatists, archaeologists and Iranian scholars believe it to have roots in rituals as Yadegar-e Zariran, MoghKoshi and Syavashan that were held in ancient Iran in spite of the commands of Ardavirafnameh. According to Abbas

Hosseini (2015) in "Iconology of Three Symbols in Taziyeh" published in journal of KimiaieHonar, there are symbols in Taziyeh that are from Sasanid and Byzantium art conveyed to Islamic period and show the pre-Islamic influences on Taziyeh. For more information about the origins of Taziyeh can refer to "Aiin-e Ekhtiar" by KoroushNiknam (2009), "Syavashan" by ShahrokhMeskoob (1971), translations of "SoognamehYadegar-e Zariran" by MehrdadBahar and JalehAmoozegar, "Review of research on Iranian Taziyeh" by Ali Sheikhmehdi and MostafaMokhtabad (2010) published in the journal of ZabanvaAdabiat-e Farsi, No. 17 and also YadollahAbbasi interviews on Taziyeh. Some information about the formation of Taziyeh in Arabic Shiite Paradigm can be found in Taziyeh in Iraq and some Islamic Countries by Abbas KhadoomJamili and translation of MajidSarsangi, published in Farhangestan-e Honar. In present article, the authors have considered the theories that agree on pre-Islamic origins of Taziyeh.

12. A branch of Taziyeh without sorrow and mourning

13. A religious building / 14. storytelling

15. ShemrIbnZeljoshan, the murderer of Imam Hossein / 16. Imam Hossein's brother / The name of one of Iranian tribes mostly having Turk origins

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