

Research Article

Principles for Designing Theatre with an Emphasis on Interactive Space Language Factors Aspects

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ABSTRACT.

Theater encourages intentional public gathering and Street performances. Buildings turn to backdrop and performers not only perform next to the walls but also play on the walls, while they forget their safety and gravity, giving the human image to the concrete wall. In this regard, current study refers to designing of the theatre hall with an emphasis on interactive space language factors aspects. The research method is analytical- descriptive approach and its type is Applied- developing. Theoretical foundations have been collected in library base study. Thematic scope is: environment, city, space, interaction, and theater. The results show that a theater that wants also have interactive features on your there are two general areas that each of them have their own characteristics; indoor and outdoor. The interior is the strongest part of including form of the hall the greatest impact and relationship between actors and audience. The form and layout theater seats covers space in front of building quality and out building the peripheral functions set location collection, etc.

Keywords: Space, Theatre, Interactive Space, interactive language Space,

1. INTRODUCTION

Entrance into the twentieth century has changed free exchange of thoughts among equal individuals into not much democratic combinational manners such as promotional initiatives and public relations. According to thinkers, media, which serve people in their homes, are the chief cause of cities' tailspin as the vital context of civil life, since physical spaces are replaced by digital ones. Under such conditions, our consciousness toward the manner how to make physical contacts with our surrounding environment and routine life is limited only through technological devices (13). In fact, snowballing increase of individuals' ability to acquire information makes them unable to make collaborative contacts (3). Telephones, TVs, computers, etc., are introduced as modern

instruments for interaction. Indirect contacts facilitated by telecommunication tools are now replacements for direct meetings in general spaces, and presently people are able to see each other's inactive images from far away instead of having active participation and engagement. There are several facilities as replacements of what has gone (6). Under such soundless, vacant, and indolent spaces, an architect is to present his/her artistry to render an interaction. In fact, such spaces are to be transformed by those who are able to revitalize them before they are manifested, as suggested by Ming Cho Lee (1930), as a field where important affairs like values, ethics, perfection, and humanitarianism are challenged. A theatre encourages unwanted general associations and

street performances. Buildings are changed into backgrounds and performers play besides and over the street walls, while they ignore their gravity and security and give breath to a concrete wall at the corner. This is one of the methods whereby history makes the present tense. This may leave great influences on history of human beings and establish new ideals. There would be a contact among spaces, audience, and players that would constitute a valuable experience for those who constantly seek to find new ways for revitalization of spaces and application of all geometrical facilities. Several beautified, up-to-date theatre buildings have been constructed that are of little efficiency, however. Repercussion of such mistakes is a waste of a huge amount of energy and money. An attention to a theatre's ingredients, though, makes possible a theatre hall which is not only a good place for performances, but also an opportunity for citizens to develop their social interactions. Main objective of this study is construction of a center for theatre performance in Shiraz City intended to expand communication among different social groups within the borders of a cultural space. The main question of this research, thus, is that: "Can architecture be effective in elevation of relationship levels among citizens in construction of and planning for buildings?"

Theoretical Basics of the Research

Theatre, as a genre among other art branches, possesses a unique characteristic: immediate creation of an oeuvre while audiences are present. Therefore, this is safe to say that theatre is the only art whose all aspects and dimensions require presence of audience. This distinguishes theater with other types of art where at artist creates his/her object of art in order only to provide response with his/her personal needs. Justifiably, that is why all schools of art, ranging from realism¹

¹ In realistic literature and visual arts, presentation of things is as they really are in their daily life: without any change and additional dressing. Realism is also used to illustrate both certitudes and those in which indecencies are affirmed. Also, realism refers to a cultural movement in the mid-19th century that had its roots from France and was the leading artistic school well until the end of the century. Realism flourished when the art of photography was introduced to depict things as they are.

and naturalism² to more recent theories on modern theatre, have concurred on audience and impacts on them as the most important principle in art. Even Grotowski³ (1933-1999), who scientifically erased almost all theatre ingredients by his *theatre of the absurd*, have moved toward essence and fundamentals of this art. Introducing audience as an integral part of theatrical process, Grotowski believed that: "At least one audience is required to change theatre into a performance" (16). In Iran, however, since theatre in its western interpretation has been a newly-established phenomenon, Iranian theatrical groups were formed only 150 years ago, and western patterns have been followed by domestic theorists, this art has managed to gain a strong position among lay people at all societal layers as a cultural institution with permanent, informed audience.

At the time being, despite numerous educational and academic institutions and participation of several groups in this regard, a dearth of scientific path-breaking solutions still constitutes one of the most important problems on the nature of audience's presence and the interactions there among. This is, although, still ignored that this is audience who should make contacts with the performance, receive some points, and emit feedback for each element they apprehend. This is conceivable in case the methods employed are able to have the most possible impacts on audience, since "In a communication, producer should generate at least one sign or indication for his/her receiver, who is then expected to comprehend the signs—the fact which is probable when both parties are aware of the mutually adopted signs and principles" (17).

Today, this has changed to a pressing need that theater's potential in expression of different issues

² Naturalism is a term in art and artistic criticism which describes types of art as reflected in nature. In theatre and drama, naturalism refers to the movement which began in the 19th century.

³ Jerzy Marian (11 August 1933 to 14 January 1999) was a Polish innovative theatre director and theorist whose approaches to acting, training, and theatrical production have significantly influenced theatre today. He debuted as a director in 1959 in Kraków with Eugène Ionesco's play *Chairs* and shortly afterwards founded a small Laboratory Theatre in 1959 in the town of Opole in Poland.

and their conveyance to audience be identified. The manner the audience understand and record these objective or subjective messages should be riddled out. The audiences who “come to get entertained and learn some points” (15) should be attached. What are the solutions, procedures, and instruments to materialize these objectives?

Interaction and Interactive Places

According to such psychoanalysts as Alfred Adler⁴, human beings are creative, selective, social, responsible, and subject-to-becoming creatures whose natures are formed in the context of their community and whose evolution is laying in their realization. Human beings are of interactive nature, according to Gestalt psychologists, who consider humanity as an organism and a general being that has serious need for living in interactive environments (18).

Parsons⁵ considers interaction as paving the path for positive sensations and emotional dependence upon others (Parsons, 1998). But, what is interaction? Academy of Persian Language and Literature has suggested the *mutual relationship between two or several persons and groups* as the synonym of *interaction* (9). As the most fundamental common element in human social life, *action* encompasses a series of behaviors emanated by human beings to achieve certain objectives. *Social act* refers to an action oriented to other persons. A socially interactive bilateral action, moreover, denotes an act which occurs as a repercussion of another one's action. In this case, there would be a social relationship between two persons. This is important to note that presence of other persons is mandatory in establishment of a social interaction. For instance, when two persons are busy doing entirely distinct activities beside one another, the two have not made any social relationships. An aggregation of socially

interactive bilateral actions results in formation of a concept known as *social group* (4).

Identification of Environment

The environment in which human beings live has living or social characteristics. Some of an environment's aspects are there to control human behaviors (7). Peoples' relationships with one another are determining factors in getting insight into, and changing, an environment's structures. Social relations depend on social motives and their responses that give shape to motivations for further responses. Behavioral ring of social interaction secures both instrumental objectives and symbolic destinations. Social system includes a body of people who make direct or indirect orderly contacts with each other in an especial manner. People make contact through their handmade crafts, including buildings (ibid: 90). Environment is not solely a collective attempt, rather a consciously designed endeavor intended to improve collaboration levels. Environment is a large-scale book, a fantastic drama, an enriched representation on location, performance, human community, superstars, concerts, and lively things (8). The word *environment* is of so excessive usage that identification of its meaning has grown difficult. Environment is a definer of geographers, lands, climates, psychologists, people and their personal characters, sociologists, social organizations, processes, architects, buildings, open spaces, and landscapes, each of which being associated with categories that are expected from environment (14). On the one hand, environment incorporates the space which embraces human beings and other creatures, and, on the other hand, is a limited space for humanity. Consequently, the environment intended by different people would be distinct from one another. An environment might be deemed as limited to an assortment of natural elements, artificial elements, or a mixture of the two (11). Human beings are bound to learn the concept of the objects around themselves. They have to know position of all things, and how to behave toward each. Even in our supposition, objects are always associated with a certain environment (5). Some analyses have made no difference among physical, social, psychological, and behavioral environments. A physical

⁴ Alfred Adler (1870-1937) is regarded as the first leading social psychologist in psychoanalysis.

⁵ Talcott Parsons (1902-79) developed a general opinion entitled *Action Theory* to investigate the community. His theory is based on analytical methodological liberty and realist epistemology. *Action Theory* seeks to make balance between two chief methodological traditions: utilitarian empiricism and interpretational perfectionism.

environment includes all geographical locations and social environments including institutions composed of peoples and groups, peoples' mental images, and behavioral environments to which people react. The main point in similar categorizations is distinctions among the real world and phenomenological world that either consciously or unconsciously impact on peoples' reactions. Koffka⁶ distinguished between geographical environment and behavioral environment. Geographical environment refers to objective environment and realities around human beings. Behavioral environment, however, is a cognitive image of the objective environment that shapes the grounds of a behavior. Kirk divided environment into two phenomenal and personal branches, to which C. Douglas Porteous added the conceptual environment. The purpose of such classifications is to identify the framework impacting on human life through which a potential environment for effective behaviors is taken into consideration (7). From the interactive point of view, environment and human beings are in a mutual and bilateral relationship (19).

Certain criteria such as privacy, personal atmospheres, territory-patrolling behaviors, comfort perceptions, and quality have an influence on environment. Need for privacy and personal territory is general in all human beings, and is associated with fulfillment of other requirements like security, self-actualization⁷, and self-respect⁸. This appears to be essential, therefore, to have a glance at some issues in connection with the topic under discussion.

Serious encounter with physical elements at a location is another aspect of active participation in the environment. Despite the fact that respecting the needs implied by unable persons is important, public places should promote fervent and energetic applications made by users: the requirement whose

absence is critically felt in present-day designs. Yet another aspect of physical engagement is manifested in handicrafts such as sculpture making. Calder's Flamingo in Chicago's Federal Plaza is an instance of public art which inspires such activities.



Pic. 1: Calder's Flamingo in Chicago's Federal Plaza

Festivals and celebrations are other features that are mostly demanded by European and American people in public places. Here, we are talking about distinct characteristic of life: enjoyment of engagement in multilateral activities including watching people, socialization, recreation, consumption, purchasing goods, etc. Public places may be places for gatherings, occurrences, and special performances.

Interactive Space

Interaction is an active process which helps identify elusive meanings of language. The world with which we confront has hidden and latent aspects. Interaction enables human beings to move beyond themselves and make a strong bridge out of others in order to arrive at the concealed meanings of the universe. Interactive activity contributes to completion of the meaning of what we observe and hear, since completion of the meaning causes a new interactive activity to get shaped. Interactive activity is a process that not only expresses lingual dependence of participators on verbal operations made with one another, but also says of impacts of conditions, frameworks, and the atmosphere dominant on discourse production in both lingual and non-lingual exchanges (1).

⁶ Kurt Koffka (1886-1941) is one of the founders of Gestalt psychology.

⁷ Self-actualization is materialization of one's maximum potential capabilities by himself/herself (approved by the Academy of Persian Language and Literature).

⁸ Self-respect is composed of two parts: (a) belief in one's abilities in thinking, understanding, learning, selecting, and making decisions; (b) respecting one's own personality (source: free glossary),

As far as social separation and importance of social groups are concerned, Simmel⁹ considers one of the developments ensuing from social separation as an increase in the number of groups with which people may get connected. Increase in frequency of scenes, grounds, and interactions made by individuals paves the way for conveyance of one's positive emotions to others and, finally, universalistic orientations in social interactions (2). Emerson considers frequency of interactions among actors as factors paving the path for social emotions such as mutual social support, mutual reliance, sense of belonging, and sense of social commitment (12).

Therefore, according to findings, formation of a balance in inter- and intra-group relationships as well as expansion of intergroup interactions and participation of groups in different associations make arrangements for generalization of emotions, optimism, feelings of commitment, and, thus, increase in universalistic orientations. In addition, elevation of physical and mental dynamicity and getting acquainted with people in various environments would have an influence on extent of reliance and universalistic priorities (12).

Methodology

Methodology of this study is descriptive-analytic and of functional-developmental type. Theoretical fundamentals of this study were collected using library-based research method. Subject purview, also, includes issues like environment, city, space, interaction, and theatre.

Findings of the Research

Attempts were, so far, made to provide an overview of design fundamentals of an interactive theatre. To do so, theoretical and descriptive concepts related to strategies intending to facilitate interaction were investigated. Result was a body of interactive theatres as a model to construct urban interactive locations.

⁹ Georg Simmel (1858-1917): German sociologist and Neo-Kantian philosopher who is known as one of the precursors of the sociology. He founded the *formal sociology* as a scientific approach to sociology. Simmel believes that social sciences should be examined devoid of content. In fact, he attaches importance to forms of social affairs.

An examination of theoretical concepts of interaction and social roots of theatre assists one to discover that theatre is essentially an interactive phenomenon that includes different layers: first, the interaction between actors and audience of theatre; second, the interaction among audience due to presence in a shared place and experiencing a common condition; third, the interaction between actors and audience, on the one hand, and place of theatre, on the other. This is, consequently, important to learn how to make the best use out of a theater's location—the point which constitutes the main issue of this research.

Strategies

Important factors to consider upon selection of a theater's location

Before anything, a theater's location in city should have special characteristics, the features which play significant parts in successfulness or failure of achieving the objectives intended for construction of a theatre hall.

Economy

Usually, commercial centers are decided to be constructed outside the city center. Theatre watching is a nocturnal activity, and such centers are located beside other facilities such as shops, bars, and restaurants more often than not. They are, therefore, beneficial for both theatre halls and night-time activities which are aggregated in a location. A theatre, according to its definition, should be able to attract a huge number of people, who, in their turn, bring about profitability for other commercial activities.

Accessibility

Another important point to be considered in site-selection of theaters is peoples' accessibility to them by public transportations, personal vehicles, and suitable parking lots. Although a sufficient number of parking lots and walking to theatre hall are important factors, spectators should be encouraged not to use their personal vehicles.

Delivery

A basic requirement of a good theatre hall is the ability to ability to deliver, load, and discharge the equipment required for shows.

Readability

Readability means theatre halls' ability to be well legible and their powerful position to well

communicate to people about upcoming plans and programs. A building's view from street is an important factor in attracting people into the performance hall. In contrast to old theatre halls which had small gates, new buildings are increasingly designed to have transparent entrance materials in order for easy observation especially at nights of internal activities by an external bystander. This permits more interaction among spectators and buildings and awareness of what is going on within. The most important point—while the most non-assessable one—is that a designer should be able to promote general awareness of art and educate his/her audience.

Surroundings

One of the most important points in selection of a place for theatre halls is that they ought to be constructed far from noise sources. A failure to consider this point would result in imposition of exorbitant costs to control annoying noises. To do so, a theater's position should be selected to be constructed far from areas like railways and airports where a lot of noise is produced.

Spectators

When a theatre hall is positioned, spectators' paths to enter into the place would be a high priority. Large theatres halls, for instance, have spectators who attend the place from surrounding towns. Therefore, both local and regional spectators have to be taken into due account in positioning a theatre hall.

Factors provoking an increase in interaction level of a theater

A theatre wishing to possess interactive properties in it would have two general areas with unique features: inside and outside the building.

In inside standpoint, the most influential part of a theater hall is selection of a form which comes with the most impact on the manner and amount the interaction between actors and spectator happens. Such cases include the following:

- Form of a performance hall;
- Layout of seats; and,
- Quality of the space in front of a building, i.e., the space between lobby and entrance of main halls that has either positive or negative effects on interactivity of a place.

Features of an Interactive Location

Generally speaking, the characteristics which transform a constructed place into an interactive one, i.e., a location with the opportunity to establish an interaction, are as follows hereunder:

- An interactive place is necessarily a space whose chief basis are people, and peoples' presence is the main cause of its vitality;
- Green spaces, food and beverage places, exhibition places, and different surrounding functions are able to increase the chance of social interactions among citizens;
- Such places have the potential to gather different groups and provoke a collective event;
- An interactive place has a significant role in creation of a sense of belonging to a space;
- An interactive place is necessarily a democratic space in which people are without difficulty able to talk about different things;
- An interactive place is located near passage routes, to which getting access is easy;
- An interactive place is able to promote general culture of the society, social interaction levels, identity of citizens, social coherence, and peoples' exuberance through the opportunities it presents for different collective activities and events including sitting beside one another, talking to each other, eating with one another, etc.
- An interactive place provides required security for different layers of people due to the possibilities for public surveillance.

CONCLUSIONS

Undoubtedly, each constructed collection has its own unique features: requirements, position, dominant culture, economy, etc., for whose fulfillment projects are defined and operated. Each collection introduces some points which may be a key for next-generation designers' problems. Here, this is intended to submit some of these distinctive features:

- Different functions beside one another;
- Application of green areas and water to improve quality of environments and adding to attractiveness of places in order to congregate different groups of people;

- Application of the space among buildings to establish a local and interactive space for different collective incidents;
- Application of surfaces made entirely of glass intended to allow for interactions between inside and outside the building;
- Provision of multifunctional spaces;
- Accessibility of users to different elevation levels in order to establish more visual interactions with the surrounding environments;
- Accessibility of the collection for different groups of people;
- Getting easy access to public transportation;
- Positioning of parking lots in sub-collections;
- Visibility of performances played in unroofed places from streets and sidewalks;
- Injection of recreational and cultural functions into urban contexts;
- Positioning in urban contexts where citizens pass;
- Application of parks where outdoor plays can be performed;
- Application of exhibition space in the collection;
- Application of spatial fielding in collection (open-space fields and close-space fields);
- Visibility of performances played in unroofed places from streets and sidewalks;
- Possibility of performing different programs in open-space fields and getting people participated in various ceremonies;
- Integration with surrounding environments;
- Existence of different surrounding functions;
- Presence of different entrances for users; and,
- Application of glass views in order to make contacts between interior and exterior spaces.

Resources

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