

Transformations of Religious Performativity: Crucifixion Episodes in Contemporary Theatre and Performance

The performativity of late medieval crucifixion theatre performances relies on religious efficacy evoked by creating a powerful icon, communal sharing and witnessing the process of creating this icon, and the phenomenological totality of these scenes that often include violent enactments. In modern experimental theatre and performance, despite secularism—or perhaps because of this cultural context—a reappearance of this kind of performativity can be identified in different forms.

In my paper I will examine a few twentieth-century performances that not only reenact crucifixion episodes, but also function reminiscently to late medieval ones. My examples include Lothar Schreyer's 1920 expressionist *Crucifixion* in which he imagined a post WWI ritualistic event for performers who are not actors and spectators who are participants; Hanoch Levin's (1981) *The Sorrows of Job* in which the figures of Job and Christ are merged into one; and Adrienne Kennedy's *Motherhood 2000* (1994), in which a futurist apocalyptic vision turns a reenactment of a Crucifixion episode into an enactment of violence.

This paper uses performance theory in order to question the place of religious culture within a secular theatrical context in search of ritualistic dimensions, in addition to applying René Girard's theory of *The Violence and the Sacred* to performance.

About the Author

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