

Abstract

While colonialism is concerned with power relations over humans, beliefs and life style, it has played an important role in the development of those human connections within the process of performing arts evolution. This study perceives the awareness of a performer as confined to the degree of his/her religiosity, class he/she perceives him/her self to belong to in a colonial context in addition to the prevailing gender regimes that lies effect on his/her use of sexuality.

I argue that while theatre and dance are main tools for an intellectual performer of the middle class, to represent the situation and needs of a society culturally, then the level of awareness among performers in Palestine is subject to diverse influences pertinent to the degree of religiosity and class and gender regimes which are decisively confined to influences of colonialism. In this research I will study if Palestinian performers define an awareness of the message conveyed by theatre or dance, and the ways female sexuality employed to serve it. I will study this definition of awareness as conditioned by religiosity, the class they perceive themselves to belong to, and the prevailing gender regimes, notwithstanding colonialism influence over the Palestinian culture.

The tentative answer to this question is that Palestinian performers have diverse (subjective or collective) definitions of awareness of the message conveyed by theatre or dance, yet their definition of the ways female sexuality being employed contributes to confronting gender inequalities as they show and perform in less religiosity mediums, and belonging to middle class that is gender aware.

This study follows the qualitative research method through observing productions on the field of performing arts in addition to analyzing a total of thirty interviews with Palestinian male and female performers. Analysis focused on their life style and experiences that serves the hypothesis and research concepts.

Studies on Palestinian performing arts, including dance and theatre, have shown that women are active participants in performance; however did not analyze factors that influence women's performance, like religiosity within a colonial context.

This research adds both a theoretical and a social-political significance. By answering the research question, new dimensions on the Palestinian middle class theorizing will be produced, making it possible for scholars to define the relation between middle class and the dynamics of its agents towards equality between women and men within the Palestinian society.

This research concludes that Palestinian performers of theatre and dance have subjective awareness of the message conveyed by performance which decisively crosscuts with a larger collective identity. This subjective awareness develops its tactics to manipulate power systems of religiosity yet not collectively reflecting a strategy that confronts gender equality through performance. Those tactics are found adaptive to all religiosity media, not in less religiosity ones only. Moreover, even though performers showed belonging to the middle class, yet tactics of manipulating power systems over intellect have not reflected enough to their awareness of gender interest within the performance community, so they remained a tactics of adapting, but organically interacting to achieve change.