



Temporal Distance of the Audience with the Work of Art from Gadamer's Viewpoint

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Abstract: *In Gadamer's view, the temporal distance results in audience's new understanding of the artwork which may be not be the intention of the author of the work at the time of its creation, as in every confrontation, a dialog is happened between the audience and the artwork and the semantic horizon of them is exposed to a change. The method of conducting descriptive-analytic research is library and field study; it is applied in terms of criterion, and cross-sectional in terms of temporal criterion. Data was collected using a questionnaire. The number of respondents was 50 people being selected randomly from among the artistic and non-artistic people; its dimensions express an experience that is an effect of its creator and the audience does not leave it unchanged. The understanding of the work of art is essentially the production of meaning. The audience transmits the work of art to its own time and combines its elements with the semantic elements of its time; it clarifies the fact that the work of art speaks with the consciousness of each audience of the work, which means that very audience speaks with the work of art, not with the author of the work.*

Keywords: *Temporal Distance, Audience, Hermeneutics, Artwork, Gadamer.*

INTRODUCTION

The works of art have been presented to audience through the period by the artists and each one in a special manner; through the confrontation between the work and the audience, different views have been expressed that can be mentioned as examples abundantly in art works and art. Meanwhile, Gadamer's view of the temporal distance between the work of art and its audience should be thought over. He sees it very useful and considers the mentality of each period of the audience as the basis of his understanding of the work that originates from the experiences of each audience individually or collectively. The key issue is that what can be perceived by audience over time, and whether the form of the artwork is the same for all the times or different for different times, or in any period or by any audience. The significance of this subject is that the work of art can live in different times and in facing the audience displays a part or the whole, that this feature or ability may not be attended by the author of the work during its presentation.

In the meantime, for more information and reviewing of the research literature, we have examined, several studies related to the title of the study that some cases can be cited as examples as the following. In a master's thesis titled "Art in Gadamer; a look at the first part of the truth and method" authored by Babak Zamin Khiyabani, supervised by Alireza Azadi, affiliated to the University of Tabriz (2015) was aimed at

studying the concept of art from the perspective of Hans-Georg Gadamer in his philosophical hermeneutics. Accordingly, everybody has a different understanding of an artwork. In his view, the art is not a thing separated from the truth and rooted in a subjective aesthetic sense, but it is an aspect of truth that is revealed to us and it is a revelation of the truth. Another example that can be mentioned is a master's thesis titled "Ontology of the Artwork from Gadamer's View", authored by Vahid Gholami Pourfard, supervised by Amir Nasri, addiliated to the Allameh Tabataba'i University (2012). In his point of view, Gadamer deals with the ontology of the work of art, with his critique of aesthetic consciousness, as an approach that neglects the truth of the work by subjectivizing the artistic experience. In his opinion, the work is not in the form of an object against the subject, but in the form of a game that attracts the audience. In other words, a master's thesis titled "A Review of Gadamer's perception of the Representation in Art, authored by Sepideh Eghtedari, supervised by Amir Maziar affiliated to Tehran University of Art (2015) indicates that the concept of the representation has a long-standing relation with the definition of art. But in the twentieth century, Hans-Georg Gadamer reiterated the theory that many theorists of art were doubtful in its comprehensiveness, or in general they considered it an inadequate theory of art. Based on the concept of truth, he shows how the existential state of the work of art is its embodiment, and how this artistic embodiment and representation realize a truth.

The cases that have been expressed have somewhat criticized Gadamer's views and expressed a conception of his various ideas. In this research, according to the background presented, we seek to answer questions such as 1- what is created from the temporal distance between the audience and artwork for Gadamer? How much the conceptions of the present-day audience of the poster of a graphic product are in line with the author? In order to reach this goal, Gadamer's view was first arranged in this regard and in order to answer the second question on a field, three posters from the prominent Iranian designers were presented to the audience and the opinions of the audience were gathered. The method of conducting descriptive-analytic research is library and in the field; it is applied in terms of criterion, and cross-sectional in terms of temporal criterion. Data were collected using a questionnaire. The number of respondents was 50 people, the samples was randomly selected from among the artistic and non-artistic people and the diagrams were used to report audience responses.

Gadamer's hermeneutics

Gadamer was born in 1901 in Breslau¹. In Marburg he studied philosophy and was a student of Nikolai Hartmann (1882-1950), and then a student of Martin Heidegger². Gadamer's Dissertation was entitled "Plato's Dialectic Ethics" written in 1928, and published in 1933. He published his most important work "Truth and Method" in 1960. His reputation from the 1960s was largely due to his role in the revival of hermeneutics.

Hermeneutics³, which was at the beginning the art of interpreting sacred texts, and later the interpretation of legal and aesthetic⁴ texts, was transformed by Gadamer into a completely new activity, and the philosophical hermeneutics was no longer a periodic and limited activity, but an acceptable practice on a universal level. Gadamer says, "where the meaning of the text cannot be understood immediately, the interpretation is essential, wherever a person is not willing to trust something that presents a phenomenon directly to us, the interpretation is necessary" (Lan, 2012). Like Heidegger, Gadamer is a critic of new resignation to the technological thinking, a thinking rooted in subjectivism, which is "the human consciousness and the reasonable certainties based on it as the ultimate reference for the knowledge of man" (Palmer, 2012). In Gadamer's view, when we separate the consciousness of "aesthetics from other areas of non-aesthetic

¹ Historical region in Central Europe, the largest part of which is located in Poland, and a small part of it is in the Czech Republic and Germany.

² Martin Heidegger (1889-1976) was one of the most famous philosophers of the twentieth century. He contemplated the existence in a new way. His philosophy influenced the views of many of the philosophers after him.

³ The study of the correct rules of text interpretation is called the Hermeneutics. The purpose of hermeneutics is to discover messages, signs and meanings of a text or a phenomenon. Hermeneutics studies the principles of the interpretation of texts, especially literary, religious, and legal texts.

⁴ Aesthetics is one of the disciplines of philosophy as a theory. It is defined as a reflection on aesthetic judgments, and the essence of the beauty and its relation to perception.

experience, we are subjected to the modern thinking, and this is the result of authenticating the subjectivity of the subject identified in thought", this is a result of the (Rikhtegaran, 1999). Gadamer's hermeneutics is based on the existence and on the human temporality and is based on the ontological-linguistic aspect, and this linguistic action takes place in question and answer. There is a dialectic⁵ between the audience's personal horizon and the work, and "the mere understanding of speaking and listening to it cannot result in salvation; instead, the analyst must be able to explain the systematic function of language" (Weinsheimer, 2014).

Temporal distance in Gadamer's view

When the consciousness is transformed from the past to the present, the audience will understand the benefits of time. Over time, the audience can understand what the work says. In this way, the distance that comes about, the tension between the present and the past is the main factor and even in some ways fruitful. The mind of the audience makes use of this ability giving meaning to what is already empty. "The temporality of understanding is related to the interpreter's position. When the Vorurteil of the pre-perception deal with something new that needs to be interpreted, the interpreter is thrown in the search for a phenomenon into the future ... Gadamer is thinking in this regard: the temporal distance is not something that should be overcome ... The important subject of knowing the temporal distance is the positive and productive conditional judgment" (Lan, 2011). In the view of Gadamer, the struggle between the present and the past has been the focus of interpretive discussions. "Such a study has shown that the works at different times motivate different interpretations, and they should do so ... Every time we understand, the history affects the horizon of everything what can be meaningful" (Grondin, 2011). Meaning should always be understood in such a way as to be used for the audience and to visualize the significance for him. But we know from the experience that it is only time that separates meaningful from meaningless. Why is the case? "According to Gadamer, it's time to remove things that are not inherent, and this allows the true meaning of the object to be revealed. The temporal distance does not only allow some prejudices that are inherent in the subject to be eliminated, but also make prejudices leading to real understanding to be proposed" (Palmer, 2011). In other words, "the works of the past when they are thus read have first a contemporaneous meaning, then they display signs of their old meanings in the course of conversation with today's semantic horizon ... Also, the evolution from the modern hermeneutic perspective is distinguished from the evolution of literary history that Russian formalists⁶ put forward. Contrary to their beliefs, the evolution does not mean the replacement of new and old elements; the old questions do not disappear entirely, so that new questions are replaced, but they are in a conversation, and both categories receive meaning in the horizon of contemporaneous semantic implications" (Ahmadi, 2001).

Research Findings

Regarding Gadamer's view of the temporal distance between the artwork and audience, it can be stated that the mind of the audience is the criterion of the production of meaning in confronting the work. In this way, the work of art is removed from its past context and becomes the meaning and form that the current audience refers to. The audience attributes a meaning to the work according to his experiences, attitudes, and outlook, which may not be matched with the intention of the author of the work at the time of authoring. To better identify this topic, 3 posters from the pioneers of graphic designers of Iran (1. A poster of painting exhibition, by: Reza Abedini⁷ 2004). 2. Poster of the 23rd Fajr Theater Festival, by: Sa'ed Meshki⁸. 3. Poster of the tenth international festival of Child and Adolescent film, 1979, by: Farshid Mesghali⁹) were selected and a

⁵ Dialectic derived from the Greek *διαλεκτική*. The dialectic is one of the tools of philosophy and a theory about the nature of logic. The background of dialectical thought refers to the ancient Greece, and specifically to Socrates' views.

⁶ Russian formalism is one of the literary criticisms in the field of literature viewed from the point of view of linguistics. This school was created in Russia during the First World War and peaked in 1920.

⁷ Born in 1962, Tehran, he is a graphic designer and contemporary Iranian art director.

⁸ Born in 1958, Gonabad, he is a graphic designer, art director and Iranian publisher.

⁹ Born in 1322, Isfahan, illustrator of children and teenagers' book.

questionnaire with open questions¹⁰ was provided to the statistical population of the research and they were asked to express their description of each of the works. The total number of respondents was 50 people, including 31 men, and 19 women from artistic and non-artistic people. The findings were collected according to each question in the form of diagram and infographics¹¹, and the unique words of the audience associated with each poster.



Figure 1: The poster of Painting Exhibition, Reza Abedi (2004), Source www.rezaabedini.com

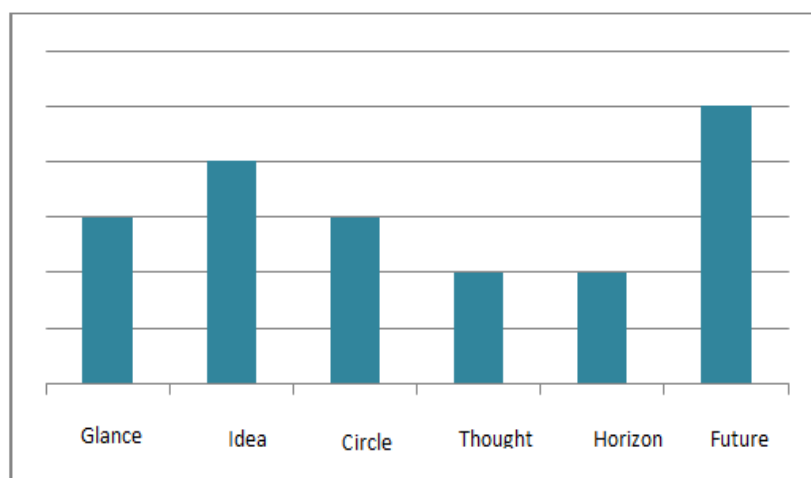


Diagram 1: The repetitive words of the poster audience Painting exhibition by Reza Abedini

The unique words of audience of the poster of Painting Exhibition by Reza Abedini:

Heat, fatigue, decision, defeatable, resistance, relaxation, faraway, fantasy, goodness, space, crowd, mind, audience, it is not clear, framework, bound, thought, sky, universe, creation, seeing, sunset, mirror, figure, source of light, sun, moon, earth planet, harmony, film, I did not understand, black color, beautiful sense, and association

¹⁰ They are questions in which the respondent can express the answer at his own discretion. These answers can range from few words to sentences. These types of questions are used to study beliefs in a particular context.

¹¹ Infographics is representation of data using several charts and figures in the form of an image.

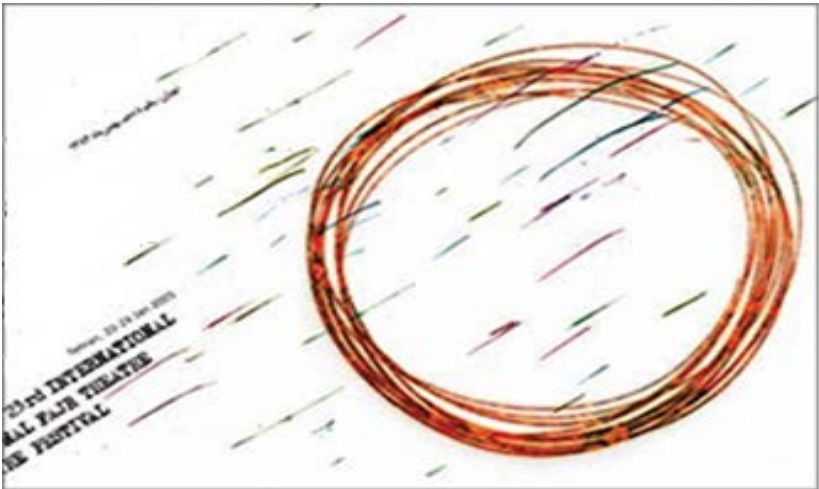


Figure 2: The poster of 23rd Fajr international theater festival, Sa'ed Meshaki, Source www.saedmeshki.com

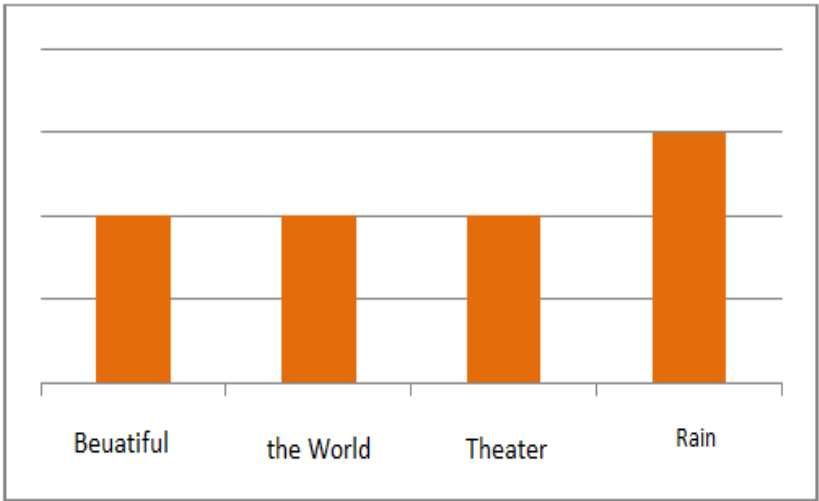


Diagram 2: The repeated words of audience of the poster of 23rd Fajr international theater festival

Unique words of Audience of the Poster of 23rd Fajr International Theater Festival:
society-intimate-oxygen-performance art, I have no idea, misty-ambiguous, Wednesday fest, ring-shaped lines, fire, non-parallel, thoughts-tastes-different, audience, it's not proportionate, disorder, attractive, refreshing, divine mercy, being, confluence, sun, rainbow, anxiety, mental disorder, it is irrelevant, colors, medium, children, Fajr, very interesting, limiting, being closed, and I did not understand



Figure 3: The poster of 10th international child and adolescent film festival (1975), Farshid Mesghali, Source www.farshidmesghali.com

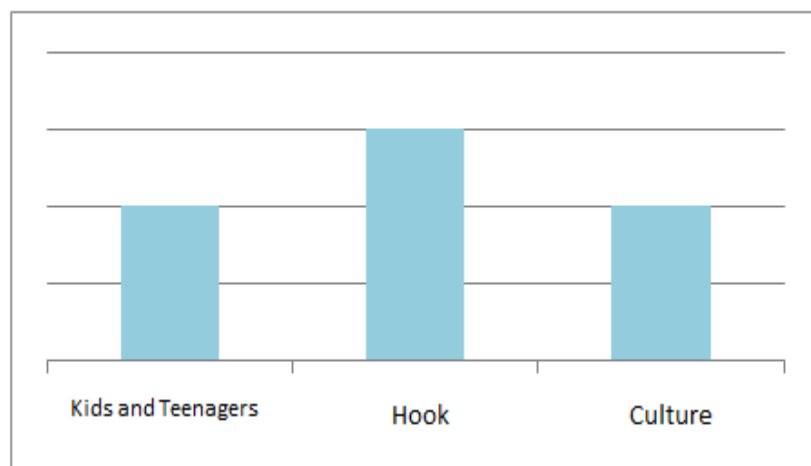


Diagram 3: The audience's repeated words oriented to poster of 10th international child and adolescent film festival (1975)

The unique words of the audience of the poster of 10th international festival of child and adolescent film: Patience, success, captivity, folk, recessive, It is not relevant, fishing, calm, hunting, violence, blacksmith's anvil, hanging, composition, simple, symmetrical, it does not convey, subjection, empowerment, thought, society, choosing a movie, strict, letter Z, interesting, viewer, bad sense, it should be Happier, greed, useless, it is not attractive, being trapped, dynamic, Hard, and rough

Discussion and Conclusion

In response to the first research question (what does the temporal distance of the audience and the work of art create according to Gadamer?), we can state that, in Gadamer's view, the understanding of the artwork is not a copying of its author's intention but is a creation of something new. Such a study suggests that the meaning of the work is used by the audience and visualizes an importance to him in relation to the work. Meanwhile, the work of the time is to remove things that are not inherent, and allow the artwork to be revealed again. As a result, the works that have been created in the past, when they are presented again, they

first find a contemporaneous meaning. Then, in the course of confrontation with the audience and conversation between them they take on a horizon of new meaning; in this conversation, both the semantic horizon of the work and the horizon of understanding of the audience are exposed to the change. So the conversation brings a unity in which the meaning is common, and the audience determines its meaning only based on his relative knowledge at a different temporal distance.

In response to the second research question (how does the current audience' perceptions of the poster of a graphic product coincide with the author of the work?), we can say that: in the confrontation of the audience with posters, the audience is more sensitive to the sense transmitted to him and the action that created the work in it. This means that the audience of the work refers to his inner world for the discovery of its meaning and reconsiders the relation that comes with the work when it is seen, and converses with it according to his knowledge and experience. These words of the audience sometimes coincide with the author's intention and the subject of the work; sometimes the audience attributes a meaning to the work that is resulted from the effect of the work. The words of the audience in the feedback generated by the work always have a footprint of each individual audience, meaning that each audience uses the words from their experiences to express and interpret the work of art.

Suggestions

In this section, given the experiences that the researcher has gained in the process of doing this research, the following points can be made that if someone else intends to do so, he/she can benefit from the researcher's experiences in collecting data or reporting them:

1. The words of the audience can be a critique on the behavioral patterns and the lives of each person and society in which he or she lives.
2. The words of the audience can also be examined from the perspective of the psychology of art.
3. The words of the audience can also be examined from the perspective of sociology of art.
4. The words extracted from the audience can be continued over many years and examined the feedback of the work of art in different periods, so that the perception of the audience of the work of art is evaluated in different periods.

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