Assessing the Discourse System and the Visual Utterance System in the Artworks of Committed Iranian Paintings in the 60s and 70s

Hoda Zabolinezhad[1], Parisa Shad Qazvini[2]

Abstract

An attempt is made to answer the questions: How to base the Utterance system in the visual texts of Iranian painting, based on commitment discourse theory in the literature of the 60s and 70s? and What is the main difference between the Utterance and Discourse systems in visual arts? The generating institutions of this type of Utterance system necessitate the referential function for visual texts as the main component in the formation of such texts. According to these institutions, production of artwork as classical and ornamented texts convey only one meaning, unlike the phenomenal texts with multiple meanings, next to illustrating how some outstanding and common semantic signs lead to the formation of this type of Utterance system in the Iranian art.

Keywords: *Discourse Theory, Utterance System, Committed Art, Iranian Painting of the 60th And 70th, Visual Text, Classical and Ornamented Texts.*

Introduction

Utterance system and classical and ornamented text are the terms mostly applied in the book Semantics-Visual of Theory and Analyze of Art Discourse (2012), by Hamid Reza Shairi (1966), (1345 Hegria) contemporary Iranian semiotician, in the semantic field of linguistic and artistic (visual) signs. According to his theory, when observing a visual text, if its referential function is of concern, then the text is of a weak discourse action, consequently, it fits in the Utterance System, not the Discursive. To him, the term classical and ornamented narrative texts based on the one that conforms to the features of classical aesthetics which rest in its privacy and has a determined meaning at the general and collective level, in contrast to the phenomenal text.

The Discourse Theory refers to a series of general structures of terms, concepts, and meanings applied in a certain era, which can be perceived through reading the relevant discourse to absorb the valuable impressions. This Theory was held in France by Ernesto Laclau (1935-2014) and Chantal Mouffe (1943) in the 1980s, in theorizing political and social sciences a concept was accepted by other countries. This theory is derived from the leading theories of de Saussure (1857-1913) in Linguistics, Foucault (1926-1984) in Philosophy with Post-structuralist Theory, Gramsci (1891-1937) in Sociology with the Theory of Hegemony. The Discourse Theory engulfs the linguistic, social, political, economic, cultural, etc. structures formed based on a type of articulation or placement of the constituent dimensions of each, with complete and fully stabilized meanings.

In the Pahlavi II period (1943-1979), many Identity Discourses and the related intellectuals expressed their demands, where the conflict and antagonism of some with the regime is evident. The concept of social commitment dominates the art of the Iranian painting genre in the 60s and 70s. The emphasis on the necessity of concepts like indigenism in Iranian modern art, especially since the 60s, is expressed by bureaucratic intellectuals, which is not in conflict with the regime, but as will be explained, their discussions do not fit in the Discourse system of commitment in art, but subject to the Discourse of articulated Nationalism and Self-Identity in art.

The Iranian painting in the subject decades is chosen as classical and ornamented narrative texts and as a non-verbal expressive language with a referential function capable of conveying ideas and transmitting

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[1] Assistant Professor, Painting Department, Architecture, Urbanization and Arts Faculty of Urmia University, Iran, Email: h.zabolinezhad@urmia.ac.ir.

[2] Painting department, Faculty of art, Alzahra University, Email: shad@alzahra.ac.ir

thoughts, to synchronize the mass with the political discourse to be revealed by the intellectual Islamism and leftists artists in specific. The intellectual artists, then, recognized and accepted the medium of painting as a new and innovative expression language.

In this context, the assessment of the Discourse system and the visual Utterance system mean the analysis of the semiotics of the visual text, which includes the analysis of the socio-economic conditions where the meaning becomes apparent, and the analysis of the mental faculties that generate meaning subject to the two Discourse and Utterance systems in Iranian painting, concerning the term committed become evident.

How some semantic outstanding signs, the common signifiers, lead to the formation of a Discourse and Utterance systems of commitment type in the Iranian painting around the axis of a nodal point will be explained in this article.

How to base the Utterance system in the visual texts of Iranian painting, based on commitment discourse theory in the literature of the 60s and 70s? and What is the main difference between the Utterance and Discourse systems in visual arts? will be answered in this article.

Research Methodology

The library and internet sources are applied to collect the information and the documents consisting of narrative visual texts with a more or less referential function. The paintings belong to the type of social commitment concept, among which, six: the Railway workers' strike in 1931 in the north of Iran by Shahab Mousavizadeh (1945), Two Workers called Dehqan by Houshang PezeshkNia (1917-1972), Neferin-e-Zameen (Curse of the earth) by Hannibal Alkhas (1930-2010), Kargar (Worker) by Nusratullah Moslimian (1951), and Caricature of the Shah (King) by Ardeshir Mohasses (1938-2008) are the subjects of qualitative analysis adopted here.

Library Research

The book Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics (Radical Thinkers) (1985), by Laclau and Mouffe, published by Verso Publishing in London, is the work of the two founders of Discourse Theory. They resorted to the Marxist theories, especially Gramsci's Theory of Hegemony and Louis Althusser's (1918-1990) more recent Structuralism Theory, and Derrida's (1930-2004) and Foucault's Post-structuralism Theory. This book exposes a new analysis of contemporary European capitalist societies, through the Discourse Theory, where the new Marxist strategy centered around the nodal point of Democracy and Liberalism against contemporary European capitalism is explained. The detailed assessments on the Discourse Theory Concept, and the articulations, dimensions and nodal point are of concerne in this article.

In the article "Discourse Theory" (1998) by Seyed Ali Asghar Soltani (1950), a researcher in Politics sciences, published in the Scientific Research Journal of Political Science , No. 2, Tehran, Iran. The author seeks to assess the formation aspects of Discourse Theory, and its relationship with Post-structuralism, Hermeneutics, Linguistics, Hegemony, etc., theories in the Politic World.

In this article, the findings regarding about mentioned article will be applied and discussed.

In the book Visual Semantics of Theories and Applications (2013) by Hamidreza Shairi, published in Sokhan publishing house, Tehren, Iran. He assesses and analyzes the meaning-making processes, relationships, and actions among the levels of linguistic and visual signs that refer to the phenomena of confrontation, interaction or mutuality, and combination, substitution, coexistence, changeableness, suspension, etc. of the signs fusion in detail. Based on this perspective, the authors of this article need to explain the separation of two Discourse systems and Utterance one based on the feature of referential function and explain the difference between narrative or non-narrative phenomenal texts, and narrative ornamented classics.

The book Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran, a Study of exploration in the Sociology of Contemporary Iranian Painting (2017), by Dr. Mohammad Reza Moridi (1979) is applied as a resource in this study, because it is based on a discursive approach to the history of contemporary painting art in Iran. The author assesses the protest painting or the so-called committed painting in the 60s and 70s, by resorting on Discourse Theory of Laclau and Mouffe as the theoretical basis of the analysis.

In the Analytical History Book of New Poetry (from Constitutionalism to Coup) (1991), (1370 Hegria), a detailed multi-volume book, by Shams Langroudi (1950), one of the renowned poets and literary critics of Iran, the author has carefully searched and assessed the domestic literary and cultural-artistic magazines and newspapers next to the opinions of literary critics, since (1899), (1278 Hegria). His focus is on the period between the 40s to the end of the 70s. Most of these poets, writers, critics, translators, etc., were affiliated with the Tudeh (communist) party. Their critical texts were usually in opposition to Iranian modern art, due to not following the official Social Realism School accepted in the USSR, where the painters expressed the revolutionary ideas of the Proletariat. Among the Iranian critics, Ehsan Tabari (1916-1989), Jalal Al Ahmad (1923-1969) and Khosro Gol Sorkhi (1943-1973) are outstanding. In this context, the book is a reliable source for researchers to reveal the prevailing atmosphere of art criticism in Iran in the 60s and 70s.

Book of Literature and Art of Iran Today Jalal Al-e-Ahmad 1945-1969 (1994), by Shams Al-e-Ahmad (1929-2010), is a collection containing all of Jalal's critical writings on Persian literature and art. This book is one of the comprehensive sources that researchers study to understand the atmosphere governing art criticism in the 40s to the 70s; consequently, this collection is an important source for the critics of the literary works in the given era.

The above-mentioned references, with a discursive approach and focusing on the influence of extra-textual political and social developments as the nodal point, are assessed and analyzed the concepts of Iranian painting art, in its narrative and non-narrative sense to some extent. What is missing in these variable sources is the referential function of the committed paintings of the 60s and 70s as visual narrative texts based on the difference between the Discourse and Utterance systems.

The Main Concepts in the Discourse and Utterance Systems

Utterance System

The more pronounced the referential function of a visual work, the more objectivity and stability of its speech, consequently, the narrator or the artist reveals their not being involved in the action, and this makes tracing discourse or the discourse processing weak. In the same sense, the audience is dealing with a single and fixed meaning and, thus, facing an Utterance System, not a Discourse system. The founder of the theory of the Utterance System, Shairi explains:

"... reference has caused everything to be presented as it should be and not as it could be. What prevails is the discourse aspect, which means distancing from the referential function with the dominant presence of the speaker in the course of discourse"

In this article, the visual texts (artworks) taken from the discourse of committed art in the 60s and 70s are assessed according to the pronounced aspect that this referential function is classified as Utterance System, not a discourse system.

The Classic and Ornamented Texts

Based on the definitions mentioned above, the visual text where the principles of classical aesthetics like proportions, framing, color harmony, linear and spatial perspective, spacing, etc. are explained in their traditional sense is called a Classic text. An Ornamented text is a narrative text with clarity of expression based on results. The Ornamented text is an Utterance, not a discourse that "referred to as a system that is already formed and known."

Based on this definition, Classical and Ornamented texts are in contrast to the definition of phenomenal text, a text that applies visual elements by the means of de-formation and de-familiarization and creates semantic tension in its reception, and demands the participation of the audience or the observer in discovering the meaning, next to causing a plurality of viewing angles in the reading of the text.

Discourse and Metadiscourse

Assessing every phenomenon in human social structure, whether in its artistic, cultural, political, social, etc., the sense is justified through the Discourse theory and provides the ability to understand and recognize the subject phenomenon and the consequences therein. Discourse theory is referred to as

We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice, we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments.

The Iranian researchers Tajik and Roozkhosh, introduced the term "Superior core." Within any identity discourse, intellectuals can produce and reproduce the discourse, and in each new discourse, the results, according to its special articulation, revolve around the nodal point or "Superior core". Following this, the floating signifiers are derived, which can be changed and recognized. Any action that connects the scattered elements in a manner that their identity and meaning become modified and adjusted in the rhythm of this action is called articulation. According to Laclau and Mouffe:

Now, in an articulated discursive totality, where every element occupies a differential position – in our terminology, where every element has been reduced to a moment of that totality- all identity is relational and all relations have a necessary character. Consequently, in every discourse, based on the structure of the semantic system considered by the creators and meaning-producing factors, a signifier is highlighted as the main and nodal point, and related ones, are articulated as the surrounding signifiers.

The semantic constructions of specific forms of action become possible through assessments run by Discourse. Sought to understand how the discourses that shape the activities of social actors are produced, function, and change.

The possible signifiers are marginalized where each discourse seeks to highlight its nodal point compared to other discourses and makes it appear as if it contains more original meaning. In every discourse, the specific articulation concerning the nodal point, which, leads to friction, controversy, and debate over definitions in different fields is of the essence.

In this process there exists the possibility to encounter a trans-discourse and inter-discourse systems where one discourse can have negative, positive, practical, or even ideological influence on another discourse and define new conditions for transmitting meaning to the audience. Discursive currents that lead to constant and endless, but not inconclusive, arguments and debates over definitions regarding social, political, cultural, artistic, etc., contexts are evident. In this article, the two terms trans-discourse and inter-discourse systems are complementary. To B. Namvar Motlagh (1962), the founder of the term intertextuality in the Persian Language, and M. Kangarani in the article "From Inter-textual Analysis to Inter-discourse Analysis" the term inter-discourse means:

The set of dominate expressions to which, the utterance refers explicitly, knowingly or unknowingly, where the meaning is formed. Inter-discourse means a set of discourses that are connected either based on the axis of time or based on the same time axis. To these two contemporary Iranian semanticists, the existence of a single and fixed discourse system independent of other discourse systems is not possible. According to M. Jørgensen (1959) and L. Phillips (1963):

No discourse is a closed entity: it is, rather, constantly being transformed through contact with other discourses… Through analysis of intertextuality, one can investigate both the reproduction of discourses

whereby no new elements are introduced and discursive change through new combinations of discourse. Considering a Discourse system on its own, before or during its implementation focusing on a verbal or non-verbal text (narrative or non-narrative, phenomenal or classical and ornamented) is an inexcusable mistake.

Visual Discourse System

The contribution and semantic features of visual elements are emphasized provided that the visual artworks as non-lingual texts (narrative or non-narrative) are viewed in their discursive sense. Visual texts, like lingual texts, are subject to discourse. According to Shairi:

   … and if this discourse applies visual elements like the line, color, light, frame, space, place, perspective, etc., it is a visual discourse … The dimensions of sign-meaning manifested in artistic discourse and determine the meaning-making process is assessed concerning the discourse actions. The production and expression of meaning by the artist and the audience reception in visual texts depend on the dynamic interactive correlations of coexistence, substitution, contemporaneity, time and negative or positive signs, etc. These signs can not exist separately, thus, their transdiscursive and inter-discursive nature.

Based on the analytical tools of the Laclau and Mouffe Discourse Theory, the mentioned items are tabulated in Table A, Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran, a Study of exploration in the Sociology of Contemporary Iranian Painting (2017) by Mohammad Reza Moridi.

Table A. Main Concepts and Analytical Tools of Laclau and Mouffe Theory

Definition of discourse	Basic Concepts	Definition
Discourses are a set of codes, objects, and people that are fixed around a nodal point, and gain their identity vs. a set of elements; the meaning and concept of humans from Reality are discursive.	Element	Points to the multiple meanings of which are not established yet
	Articulation	Any action that connects separate elements
	Nodal Point	The point around which, the other elements are articulated and find a meaningful system
	Floating Points (signifier)	Points that are not fixed in a sentence yet
	Discursive Field	Other meanings of points rejected from the discourse
	Chain of Similarities	Original points that lose distinctiveness and competing meanings by emphasizing similarities
	Chain of Differences	Main points that emphasize difference and distinction, with other and competing discourses

Formation of Committed Discourse in Iranian Literature and Painting

Since the mid-60s two main spectrums prevailed in Iran's intellectual scene: 1) the religious intellectualism with a new definition of political Islam based on the centrality of Shiite thoughts by Dr. Ali Shariati (1933-1977), doctrine, where a new definition of the term "intellectual" was proposed in the political, social and cultural institutions of Iran, and 2) the non-religious intellectualism that West, and Marxist oriented groups and the opposition were in favor of.

The political fronts in conflict with the second Pahlavi regime opposed the two issues above by stating that: 1) autocratic modernism is far from the formation of necessary democratic institutions, which led to the pretense of being dominated by the secular political-social system and pushing aside the discourse of Islamic Shia religion in the country, and 2) The apparent independence of the regime, but in practice, it was placed under the flag of American and Western Imperialism.

The intellectuals of Tudeh party initiated a political culture for the first time in the Persian language, impregnated with the concepts of Social Class Identity, Class Conflict, and Class Dynamics to give birth to the political and social Iranian culture, according to which the new intellectual discourse, writing, criticism, and theory would evolve. They brought the Tudeh -affiliated party to the arena during Pahlavi II. Based on the Communists' perspective; Art must be committed to the objective of the ruling communist party in the acceptable form USSR, and of course, this viewpoint can be found in all totalitarian regimes. The affiliates of the Soviet Communist Party in Iran had many followers, as in the editorial of the second issue of Shivh magazine (1953); the latest and most important artistic publication by Iran's Tudeh party, titled "New search and Innovation", stated in Langroudi's book Analytical history of new poetry (from Constitutionalism to Coup (1991):

We cannot and should not be inattentive to cultural and artistic issues. We have heard a lot about "Art for Art" and " Pure Art", we have acknowledged their inauthenticity ... . Some pledge allegiance to our artistic slogans, but in practice, they follow the same path as they have acknowledged its inauthenticity. We declare that we will not stop our struggle … and we follow the New, something that is not scattered and has content. If our artists are to become innovative, they must understand the new concepts in their deep and correct sense. The best example is the Soviet Union guideline, where, innovation is based on consideration and respect for the progressive traditions of the past and the basis of the wisdom and diluting any nationalistic view. We consider the practice of domestic and foreign literary heritages highly essential. Literature and Western art, in its formalist sense, has dazzled the opinions of the same in Soviet Union. Most of our innovators are inclined towards formalism. In new literary and artistic works, broken and unpleasant forms, disjointed and distant themes, and many idealistic abstractions are evident. The masses are protesting the publication of these works and they are rightful, because such works almost devalued people. This is something we absolutely cannot tolerate. "Westernization" must not be allowed to become a trend.

In that period, writers and left-wing literary theorists remained loyal to this type of so-called commitment discourse. To the left-wing propagandist, modern and contemporary formalist art was considered a branch of Western art, consequently, they rejected it as manifestations of Western Imperialism and severely criticized the artists in that genre, which served Imperialism, thus, making a fool of the masses. If a work of painting was not included in the art school of Social Realism, then it would not be good art, but obnoxious, and would be identified based on the Alexandrovich Zhdanov (1938-2006) doctrine: "Social Realism means, first of all, knowing life, so that it can be honestly shown in works of art, not in a dry academic form, not only as "objective reality", but as a reality in its revolutionary gap. "

In an interview by Ali Masoumi, in Baya magazine (2008), the leftist artist, S. Mousavizadeh states:

In the 1940s, the hot discussion between the so-called avant-garde painters of Iran (better to say Tehran) on the topic of how Iranian art can become global prevailed. The theme of the discussion was the globalization of Iranian art, a really ridiculous them. An artwork can be exhibited at international level if it is at par with its counterparts. The four intellectuals of Tehran had no idea that, these arts exhibition halls are established and run through the big investments of capitalists, and attending such exhibitions his nothing but destroying the national-traditional culture of the given society. Forty years ago, enlightened thinkers and artists of similar countries talked about globalization and considered that artists were inspired by their land as petrified, primitive, and amateur. This was nothing but what Capitalism had hidden in its movement from the beginning, something shocking

According to the statements above, it is evident that to some extent the artists related to the schools of modern art discourse, the foothold of the discourse of commitment in Art from the left-wing perspective of the writers and theorists such as Jalal Al-Ahmed, Ehsan Tabari, Hossein Tamdan, Khosro Gol Surkhi, Bozorg Alavi (1904-1996), Ahmed Shamlou (1925-2000), etc., are condemned.

Terms like committed art and the issue of self-governance in the art of painting were popularized by left-wing political forces in the Country since the 60s and gradually penetrated other political opposition forces. The intellectuals' opposition to the Pahlavi II regime was about censorship and which deprived artists of

their right to freedom of expression and opinion exchange. The regime, which closed the doors to any social and political activity, had left the field of literature and related media free for some time to keep the aware youth, and the cultural and political intellectuals busy and away from Politics. Unaware of the fact, the fields that the regime had looked upon as fun and entertainment, provided the grounds for the opposition to convert its two-sided and implicit criticism into a social crushing power, regarding literature and word, in specific, in the two subjects decades, which became the tool of political opposition and gradually changed main task and objective for fighting against the regime and Imperialism, which began to prosper. In this context, the opposition sought to synchronize the Iranian art of painting with the commitment discourse to self-governance against the system under the domination of Imperialism.

Generating Institutions of Utterance and discursive Systems of Commitment in the Art of Painting in the 60s and 70s

Classical and Ornamented Narrative Visual Texts with Referential Function

As observed in Figure 1, Mousavizadeh, exposes the visual features and functional concepts of this type of commitment discourse in the painting art of the 70s, a painting that exhibits a real narration. The figurative forms for narrating a historical event with the theme of strike and resistance of the Iranian working class, most likely against the oppression and extravagance of the employer, who is in close ties with the state authorities (i.e., National Railway Deputy) revealed the sense of idealism. A crowd of workers with clenched fists, dressed in traditional Kurdish clothing, with indignant faces, placed in a space that is highlighted by a tree trunk grown diagonally in front of the picture, indicating the uneasy atmosphere of the story, depicts the composition of a scene from an epic movie. The painter presents the narrative space of the story in the environment outside the urban area, forest, or rural area. The club, the man in the center of the picture has his chin on, is a symbol of resistance, and the open light sky behind him is a symbol of a brighter tomorrow. The look of all the subjects is directed towards the central figure, who is considered the leader of the group, and the light above his head somewhat resembles the free impression of Da Vinci's (1452-1519): Last Supper painting (1495-1498).

Figure 1. Shahab Mousavizadeh, Strike of Railway Workers In 1931 in the North of Iran, Painting, Oil Color on Canvas, 1975.

Ref. Mohamadreza Moridi, Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran, a Study of exploration in the Sociology of Contemporary Iranian Painting (Tehran: Aban and Art University, 2017), 138.

A kind of confrontation between modern ideas and the issue of self-governance or returning to self labels the commitment to society and serving the people.

By watching the sad and depressed face of the peasant you will see the reflection of the tragedy in his daily life since the beginning of the 60s, Figures 2, 3. Although the painter shows a farmer working in the field, the suffering and misery are observed from his bony and rigid body, the same holds for the cows that are being crushed under the pressure of the plow. According to Pezeshk Nia, a painter, regarding his style and topic choice:

Even if I use new forms and colors in my work, as is the condition of any artwork, and if I exaggerate it to the extent of my perfection to express my thoughts, the question rises that: Will this suffice? According to the formalists, yes, it would. In response to this Yes, I must say No, because, what leaves originality and stability in a work of art is the realistic and ideal human thoughts, which is accompanied by a great artistic technique applied in displaying those thoughts, to be considered a complete artwork. No matter how excellent the color, form, and line are, it is nothing but a means to express thoughts, like words to express content. (PezeshkNia, 2022).

As observed, the thought of the superiority of words over images is well exposed above. This topic will be discussed in Sec. 2.

Morteza Goudarzi, historian and analyst of the art of the Islamic Revolution, as to the features of the committed paintings of the 70s says:

When we see the works of the 70s, we realize that most of them were mass oriented, not elite. Most of the works are figurative and ordinary people do not need to search and contemplate to understand them. Paintings are another narrative of what people saw and observed in their daily lives. Painting is an art form that seeks to communicate with the public as much as possible. There exist many expressionistic aspects in the works of painters with symbols that can be understood by ordinary people. We see these features in the works of all the painters of the revolution years, such as Hannibal AlKhas, Siros Moghadam, Kazem Chalipa, Nusratullah Muslimian, etc.

Figure 2. Houshang Pezeshk Nia, Painting, Peasant (Or Untitled?), Ink and Watercolor on Cardboard, 1960.

Ref. Meidan,"The Reflection of Croud Oil Issue in the Mirror of Iranian Contemporary Visual Arts before the Islamic Revolution", 2020, Accessed 4 December 2022. https://meidaan.com/archive/71233
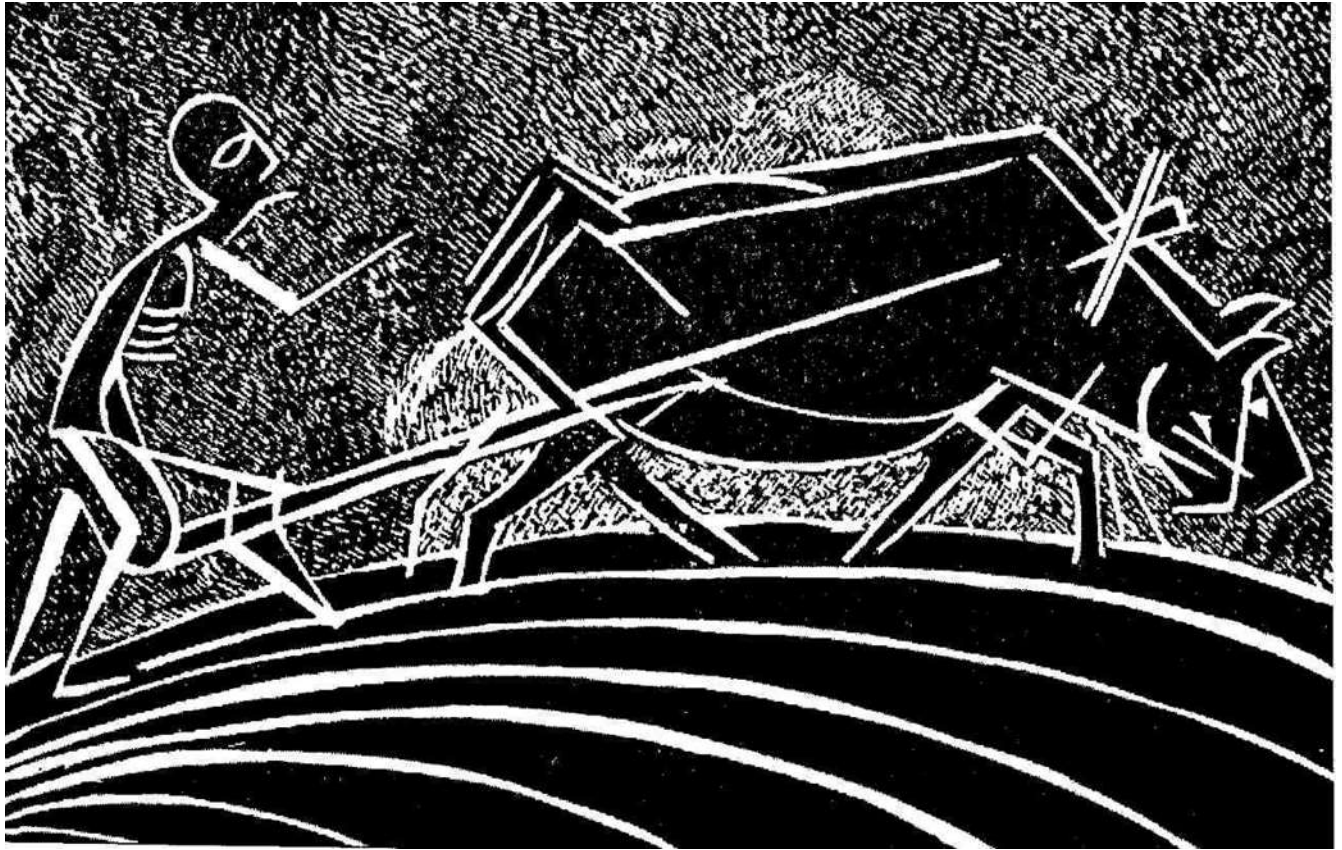

Fig. 3. Houshang Pezeshk Nia, Painting, Peasant, Oil Paint, Pastel and Ink on Cardboard, The 70s.

Ref. Honarmrooz, (2022) "Biography of Houshang Pezeshk Nia", 2022, Accessed 4 December 2022. https://www.honarmrooz.com/خش ـب یوگ راف یـ ندانـب-هنرمـ سمی-جـ تـ86/4677/ـ یوگ راف ـب نگـ ش هوـ-
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Preference of Words Over Images in the Commitment Discourse in Iranian Art of Painting

Next to the intensification of the global conflict between the East and the West blocs, and the formation of anti-colonialism in the Third World intellectualism, a kind of return to Self (self-governance) against the West, the American Imperialism in specific, which contributed to the (1953), (1332 Hegria) coup in Iran. The anti-regime self-governance discourse, which embodies the religious discourse and the Marxist intellectual notions, emerged in the political and social structures simultaneously; consequently, the artistic and cultural discourse of that period. Jalal Al-e-Ahmad is one of the most prominent representatives of the religious originalist discourse, who after leaving the leftist discourse, converted to the religious originalist discourse. In the article "To Mohasses and for Wall", published in October 1964, for the first time in the book of Thought and Art, expresses his opinions about the preference of words over images in the commitment Discourse in Iranian art of painting: by stating that let's not forget that Painting throughout History has never had a mission or a message. It has always been ornament or magic, or spell from the core of the pyramids to the caves of "Ajanta". Painting has always been the Word servant, either at the service of the sky, or an ornament on the door and wall of the elders, or large doors and walls. He continues that introduction of Cinema has stripped paining of its dignity which made painters feel dizzy. This phenomenon made the domestic painters rebellion, and disturbed their individuality and independence in

art. And to discover his independence, he enters the complex world of mental wonders. And he also won an account. Some intellectuals wrote so much with their pens for years in its exploration and interpretation that they recognized its value. All these are comprehensible and certain. But gentlemen! You see that you are still a breadwinner of words. The contemporary "modern" painter needs these pens to interpret and explain his work domestically or abroad, and know that a gem if it were one, will find its place in the market. But it is a pity that you are only looking for a market, and you know that I have heard from many of you that "people don't buy... and they don't understand... and there is no criticism, etc." One who has something to say or something to do, does not plead with these appeals, and with this kind of "Snobbism" does not intimidate the audience, something unique in the West in this context. and with these acts as like as the Westerners, he is not trying to stultify his audience. (Al-Ahmed, 1994: 1350-55)

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Al-e-Ahmad, the first critic of the "Machinism" phenomenon in Iran, regrets the collapse of his traditional society at the hands of the machine. In the book Occidentosis: A plage from the West, Al-e-Ahmad states:

As the machine entrenches itself in the towns and villages, be it in the form of a mechanized mill or textile plant, it puts the worker in local craft industries out of work. It closes the village mill. It renders the pinning wheel useless. Production of pile carpets, flat carpets, felt carpets are at an end. M. Boroujerdi (1962) in his book Iranian Intellectuals and the West The Tormented Triumph of Nativism, as to Al-e-Ahmad's disapproval of Machinism states:

But Al-e-Ahmad ignores the fact that the same imported machines reduce the workers' working hours and increase their productivity, reducing their life-long labors. Throughout the book of Westernization there is no mention of the positive functions of the machine and technology, and what is most disturbing about Al-e-Ahmad's criticism of the machine is his parrot imitation of Heidegger. It is based on Marxist economics and European Existentialism. But we can point to a strong religious trend in Al-e-Ahmad's speech. He considered Shia Islam to be an inseparable element of Iranian identity. In that period, most of the discourse of committed literature was based on rural life with all its dimensions, addressed by Al-e-Ahmad, G.h. Sā'edi (1936-1985), M. Dowlatabadi (1940), etc. To assess the effect of this discourse of commitment on the Iranian art of painting and their mutual correlation, the book Curse of the Earth (1967) by Al-e-Ahmad with illustrations by Hannibal AlKhas, the leader of this kind of commitment discourse and the issue of self-governance in visual arts in the 60s and 70s in the Faculty of Fine Arts of Tehran University should be of concern. Hannibal AlKhas's illustrations for this book are extremely simple and the colors are bright and somewhat crude, which, represent the artist's skill, certainly corresponding with the story narrative, Figure 4. In this era AlKhas, who is a companion of Al-e-Ahmad and is strongly influenced by his rural oriented literature, with the emphasis on the peasant and anthropological elements, wants to return to the pure traditions, without a critical view. His enthusiasm for returning to rural life forced him to blindly put the manifestations of rural life against urban modernization and the elements of urbanism.

Figure 4. Hannibal Alkhas, Curse of The Earth, Watercolor on Cardboard, 1967.

Ref. Meidan,"The Reflection of Croud Oil Issue in the Mirror of Iranian Contemporary Visual Arts before the Islamic Revolution", 2020. Accessed 4 December 2022. https://meidaan.com/archive/71233

Because the words were classified in the discourse of commitment in the 60s and 70s and had a nature of the struggle against the regime, it can be assumed that the supporters of what is classified as the Utterance system of committed art in that era consider the lack of referential function in the visual texts of the Iranian art of painting as the basis of state misuse, under the Pahlavi II regime when the visual art texts became non-committal in society, thus leading the Iranian audience toward Westernization and intellectual dependency on the West.

In this classical and ornamented text, Muslimian applies structuralist forms according to Russian structuralists, where the hard work of the labor and the prevailing class difference in the Iranian society of the period is evident. As observed in Figure 5, the upper part of the painting shows carefree people, being entertained in the luxury of the famous Miami Cabaret , while exerting pressure on the shoulders of workers being crushed by the burden of the ignorant upper social class. This painting expresses the vivid prerequisite of revolutionary ideas in the left-wing spectrum of its time. This visual text, with a stronger referential function compared to the two works of Pezeshk Nia, is a testimony of applying the structuralist and modern forms in this revolutionary painting which makes this painter's work in creating the connection with the audience, compared with some of the similar painting genre.
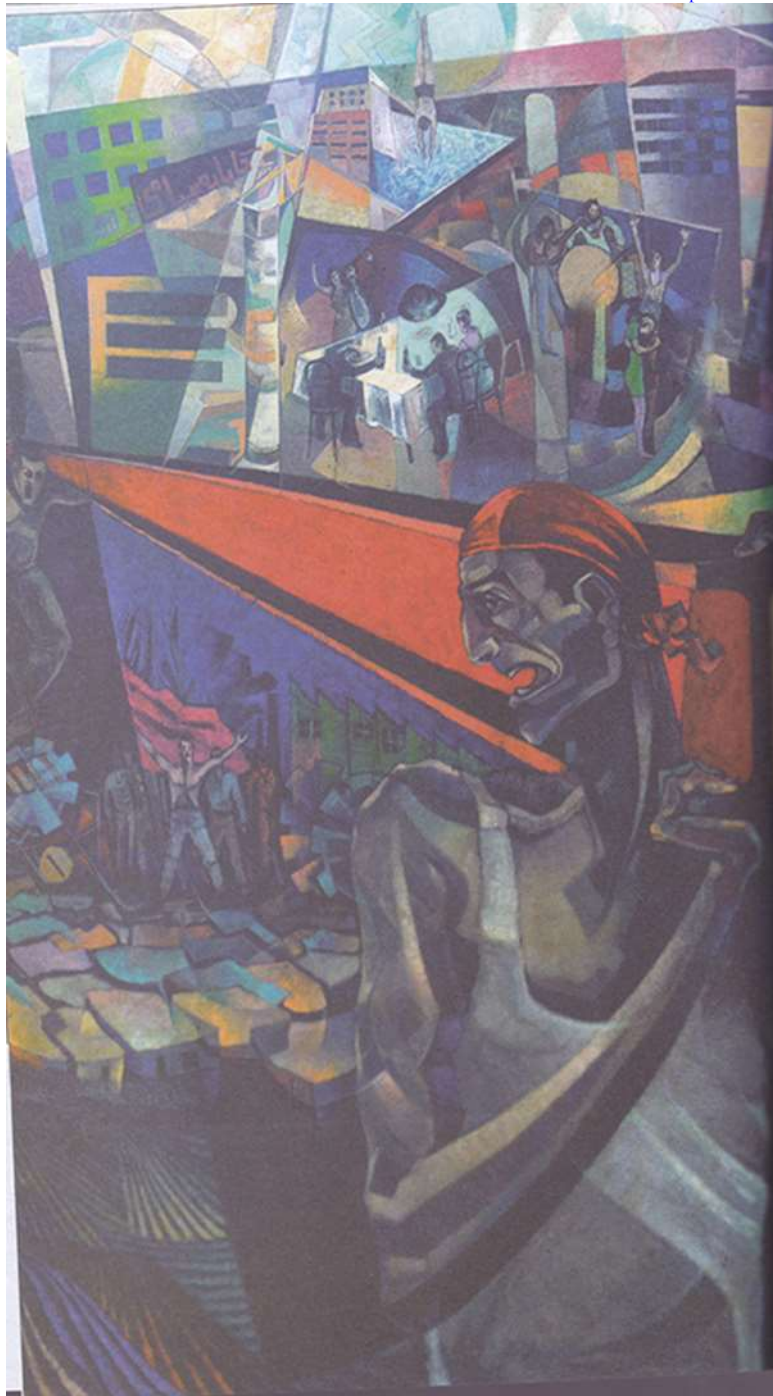
Figure 5. Nusratullah Muslimian, Worker (Kargar in Persian), oil on canvas ,1975.

Source: Mohamadreza Moridi, Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran, a Study of exploration in the Sociology of Contemporary Iranian Painting (Tehran: Aban and Art University, 2017), 141.

In the subject decades, the focus on the social commitment of Iranian art and content criticism of art increased more among intellectuals, especially in the 70s, when Caricature as a painting art form gained momentum. Caricature became very intense, and engulfed the expression of social and political issues, in parallel with, political criticism. According to Shairi:

In fact, a caricature is a new expression of a pre-existing concept that, due to the different and newness of the same signifier, the previous concept is also reconstructed and looks different. Therefore, caricature is a system that can be interpreted as a concept that is realized through the new signifier channel. The praiseful critics of Ardeshir Mohasses' caricatures confirm this claim. Making such examples outstanding regardless of whether the criticisms are rational or irrational, makes the experts deal with the question: To what extent in the literary and content-oriented view of the Iranian art of painting in that period, lack of recognition of the differences between painting and caricature in the commitment discourse in art prevailed? Javad Mojabi (1939), (1318 Hegria) in his book Masters of New Art states that Ardeshir Mohasses gave rise to an intellectual society and political perspective with his artworks which encouraged dissident writers and political fighters to express their opinions subject to his cartoons pretext and or context.

Besides the farces and humor of some cartoonists, a philosophical-political graphics attitude emerged, which we find in Steinberg to perfection. In this new attitude, caricature is not committed to making me and you laugh. Caricature strikes, awakens the world and the mind, and allows one to have a malty, dimensional view on things and events by conveying honest hidden message of considering the basic conditions of not to sleep and read too much.

In Shah's caricature, Figure 6, Mohasses deals with the main topic without any hesitation and exaggeration, by showing precisely the crown of Mohammad Reza Shah, being removed by a hand revealing his lack of independence, and being a scarecrow, symbolizing a mouse under the crown, unlike what he used to call himself: The King of the kings Aria (Ariya-mehr in Persian). This caricature is easy to understand by almost all society members. This feature of simple understanding and directness of specific works was what the intellectual atmosphere of the subject period expected from the commitment discourse in art and the committed artists. To Shad Qazvini (1961), (1340 Hegria) the conditions of perceiving the Iranian art of painting by the general audience is explained as:

Usually, people used to pay attention to and enjoy pictures that have a direct expression and deal with naturalism or realism; while neither in the first biennial nor in the next four biennials, communication was established between artists and the public. Iranian society could not understand and accept the tendencies of its young painting artists towards the modern trends; consequently, not only the people but also the opposing critics treated harshly the artistic trends and the objective of these exhibitions and the judge opinions.

Since the 60s, the supporters of the commitment discourse in art and opposition to the regime and anti-Westernism did not accept the rules of modern Western art; consequently, they did not believe in non-narrative and non-thematic visual texts with a non-referential function. In this context, presenting and dealing only with the visual aspect of Persian calligraphy and making it meaningless, while in the history of Persian literary tradition, it has been a great carrier of meanings and concepts, is far from western modernists' imagination. They were not willing to accept the globalization discourse in the visual arts instead they raised the issue of self-governance in the Iranian art of painting. Therefore, they came up against the discourse of visual texts of a phenomenal type in contemporary art, where the narrator (artist) defamiliarizes the audience and puts him in a strange situation, thus forcing him to discover new meanings based on his intuition, he makes them reveal new meanings different from the previously extracted meanings from the text. This fact advances to the extent that, the audience doubts his previous beliefs, and "instead of a single meaning, the artiste confronts him with a plurality of meanings" (Shairi, 2017, 116).

Ardeshir Mohassas, Shah, caricature, the 70s, autograph on paper, dimensions?

Ref.: Irancartoon (2020). The likeness of the king to a mouse in a sketch by Ardeshir Mohassas. Available at: https://www.irancartoon.com/ir/news/4e519784-f783-479f-8f6e-cd5372d7bc32 (accessed 4 December 2022)

Conclusion

The objective of this research is to answer the question: What were the role of the visual Utterance system and the discourse one in shaping the visual characteristics of the works of Iranian committed painting in the 60s and 70s as classical and ornamented narrative texts? which was answered in this article.

After the 60s and 70s, literature and speech became a tool of political opposition and gradually changed their main task intending to confront the Pahlavi II regime and Imperialism to grow and progress in the path of its elevation. Committed Persian literature sought to synchronize the Iranian art of painting as non-verbal visual texts with an ideological referential function, against the dominated system. In this context, due to the preference for verbal texts as the media for the masses, the perception of relying on the visual texts' dependency of painting on literature became more and more intense. Many artists, poets, translators, and authors became followers of "committed art and committed literature" systems and "art in the service of the people". The classical and ornamented visual texts with a referential function are ranked in the Utterance system, not in the Discourse system. These texts are narrative, figurative, and of course, easy to understand by the mass; the spokesmen of the lower class of the society who wrist-up the regime corruption and Imperialism, especially the United States of America, in looting the public wealth of Iran. Modern artists believed in visual texts of a phenomenal type with a non-referential function and the use of sign-meanings in an interactive manner in the form of coexistence and substitution in a non-negative or positive manner and sought to deform the classical and ornate forms to stimulate the audience's participation and action in revealing the meaning as much as possible, where a plural perception of visual texts emerged, leading to a plurality of the audience's perspective.

Those who believe in commitment in Iranian visual arts saw the form and meaning, or form and content separately, and believed in classical and ornamented visual texts in art, while in modern and contemporary art visual texts, form, and meaning are both the same and inseparable in assessments. Assessing each discourse separately is not possible, therefore, the proponents of the commitment theory in the Iranian art of painting reject any valuable formalist innovation due to this purely referential and content-oriented view, and ranked it in the Discursive Field11, Table A in the fight against Imperialism and the regime of the period.

The obligations considered by the intellectuals in the 60s and 70s led to the consideration of an ideological referential function for visual texts, which caused the change of the status of these texts from the phenomenal type to the classical and ornamented type and classification in the Utterance system instead of the discourse system. These texts narrate topics like awakening the masses, promoting the anti-tyranny

mentality, seeking justice, resorting to Islamism, returning to self and self-governance, respecting narration, localism, etc., all in confrontation with the Pahlavi II regime based on the commitment discourse in verbal criticism and verbal theorization in these two decades. The details of the findings are tabulated in Table B.

The Visual and School Characters of the Two Classic and Ornamented Texts with Referential Function in the Utterance System of Committed Iranian Art in the 60s & 70s

The productive forces of an Utterance system instead of a discourse system	The purpose of producing visual texts	Contradictions	Similarities	Artistic Schools	Forms	Thematic focus
Intellectuals opposed the Pahlavi II regime and the West	Referential narrative visual texts that are indigenous, figurative, and content-oriented and express anti-regime and Imperialism themes	Phenomenal texts of Formalist and Abstract art	The referential function of the texts, the perception of visual texts' indebtedness to literature, the declaration of self-governance of art, the commitment to ruralism, and the importance of the manifestation of peasant and worker life	Social Realism, or Expressionism, or both	Figurative realist or structuralist (absence of abstract forms)	Self-governance, idealist, symbolic (based on Shiite Islam, national, historical, and even ethnic symbols), and narrative

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