

*The contemporary Critical Thought and the Theater
Audience*

الفكر النقدي المعاصر والتلقي المسرحي

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Abstract:

Among the most important issues that the research raises and attempts to resolve are:

-Is the audience the same in literature and theater, or are there specific details that differ depending on the literary and artistic genre?

-Is the recipient of the theater, whatever their level, capable of creating an interactive critical opinion that serves as a parallel representation of the piece received?

We adopted a systematic combination of theory and practice for some of the presentations, arriving at the results recorded at the end of the research.

Keywords :The recipient; the reader; the spectator; the future, Waiting horizon.

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ملخص:

من أهم القضايا التي يثيرها البحث ويحاول الإجابة عليها انطلاقاً من النظرية النقدية الأكثر تناولاً في هذا الشأن، وهي نظرية التلقي التي بشّر بها كثير من النقاد الغربيين للنصوص الأدبية والفنية، وتمّ تطبيقها على النصوص المسرحية:

- هل الجمهور في الأدب والمسرح واحد أم أن هناك تفاصيل محددة تختلف باختلاف النوعين الأدبي والفني؟

- هل المتلقي المسرحي مهما كان مستواه قادر على خلق رأي نقدي تفاعلي يكون بمثابة تمثيل موازي للقطعة المتلقية؟ وهل النموذج المتناول في هذا البحث يمكن الارتكاز عليه لإثبات العلاقة المشتركة بين مختلف الآداب والفنون؟

لقد اعتمدنا مزيجاً منهجياً بين النظري والتطبيقي بغية الوقوف على الحقائق المسجلة في هذا الشأن، على أمل أن تكون هذا الدراسة تأكيداً لما توصل إليه عدد من الباحثين أمثال باتريس بافيس وغير.

كلمات مفتاحية: المتلقي، القارئ، المتفرج، المستقبل، أفق الانتظار.

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1. INTRODUCTION

I believe that a common feature of all the arts is the need for the audience to be present as both an active and interactive element, so that it can play its role as an influential driving force

in life and an indispensable cultural component, and theater is one of them. arts that make the audience a master, with all the meaning and justification the word carries, and on which emphasis is placed. This given is part of the process of polarization practice, with all its influences and representations: decor, actors, lighting, music, costumes, makeup... and each of these previous elements has its own techniques and tools that ultimately serve the message of the theater. Therefore, the relationship between the product -that is, the theatrical work - and the recipient is inevitably fateful, its success is the success of the presentation process in its artistic and philosophical dimensions. Indeed, I believe in the eroticism of this relationship and its intimacy, a relationship based on taste, interaction and identification -on the multiplicity of tastes and the multiplicity of its origins and its intellectual references - and this relationship does not differ much from the relationship of the text with the reader, where "its author must speculate about a reader .the "relationship between writer and reader is a unique form of intimacy" writes NY Times writer Margaret Renkl". She goes on to explain how "Every reader brings to the reading a self that is marked by time and place, a self that can never be replicated, not even on a second reading." When a reader is aware of that relationship, understanding deepens. (Cambardella, 2023)

In theatre, the audience "regulates the performance. An audience without a history is not an audience. It has become something of a commonplace in theatre studies to state that the spectator is at the centre of the theatrical event and hence of theatre itself. (Christopher, 2008).

The unity of spectator and actor-according -Hans-Georg Gadamer- has today acquired a new meaning.

The collective spirit that sustains us all goes beyond Each of us as individuals represents the true power of theater and takes us back to ancient religious sources. of the religious ritual festival. In contemporary theater, there are. many things that presage this evolution. (Bernasconi, 1986, p157).

It should rather be emphasized that the recipient is a central element of this training, if not the theater itself, which justifies this new approach in The Global Theater. aims to invest in the audience and make it more interactive and effective. In the show, there are plays in which the actors descend towards the audience and play their distinct roles in perfect harmony giving a real opportunity to the recipient and determining the role assigned to him according to the theme of the play and its philosophy based on such interactions.

Based on the central problem, many problems arise from this:

-Is the audience the same in literature and theater, or are there specific details that differ depending on the literary and artistic genre?

-Is the recipient of the theater, whatever their level, capable of creating an interactive critical opinion that serves as a parallel representation of the piece received? Or are there other factors that affect the process, given that theater is a presentational art subject to many influences other than literary texts for example?

Our research paper relies on a previous related literature that we'd like to review in few lines. The concept of the audience

as an active participant in the theatrical experience is a theme that has been explored by numerous scholars throughout history. Aristotle, for instance, recognized the importance of the audience in shaping the impact of a performance. More contemporary theorists, such as Hans-Georg Gadamer, have further developed this idea, emphasizing the fusion of horizons between the audience and the performer. Gadamer's concept of the "fusion of horizons" highlights the dynamic interplay between the audience's pre-understanding and the theatrical performance. The audience brings their own experiences, knowledge, and beliefs to the theater, and these are shaped and transformed by the performance. In turn, the performance is enriched by the audience's active engagement and interpretation.

To address the research questions posed, a descriptive and analytical approach will be employed. This approach involves a detailed examination of existing literature, theoretical frameworks, and empirical data to gain a comprehensive understanding of the audience's role in theater. We adopted the descriptive and analytical approach to achieve the objectives of this approach, which investigates the reasons for the beneficiary's reluctance to engage in theater and even other arts and literature.

2. Theatrical presentation and reception... models:

The success of any theatrical performance, regardless of the strength of its text and its effects, ultimately depends on its ability to achieve unity with the addressee, to stimulate him and attract his emotions, which open in the state of its response to the apparent and implicit questions of the show, because the theater effectively begins when there is an actor and spectators who

follow the actor's performance or participate in it with him. Only the absence of one of these two elements negates the theatrical phenomenon. It is thus possible to talk about the positive impact of theater and its cultural and civilizational role in the formation of a refined collective consciousness.

In this regard, the Algerian theater has taken an important step in paying attention to the audience and trying to attract it as an important card on which the success of the show depends, despite the state of reluctance and decline that it experienced in a contemporary era. Algeria, where it experienced a setback in various areas during the so-called black decade, with statements here and there indicating that the theater is experiencing a crisis in terms of

reception/production/texts/mismanagement.(Seminar,2020)

However, despite the dark picture that some try to paint, there is a new cultural movement, especially at the theatrical level, which has begun to take into account the importance of the recipient and to attract them by diversifying the representations, taking into account the interests of intellectuals and the public, and investing in electronic media and social media to bring theater production closer to audiences and attempt to bridge the gap. What happened as a result of socio-political and cultural data had a negative impact and set Algeria back 50 years, and this is what the Algerian theater paid because it is the most influential and effective art to achieve development in all its aspects...

We therefore see this change by addressing the Algerian public, trying to satisfy their artistic tastes on the one hand and encouraging them to contribute to the rebirth of the act of

performance. How far has the Algerian public's interest in theater reached?

The remarkable progress recorded by Algerian theater, for example the crowning of the play “G, P, S” by “Mohamed Charshal”, with the prize for best Arab theatrical performance at the end of the twelfth session of the Arab Theater Festival organized by the Arab Theater Authority in Amman able to create a new audience. With different tools and multiple cognitive horizons, a recipient attracted by the exciting presentation, and motivated by the act of participation and interaction.

This approach undertakes to highlight the current situation of the Algerian public and the hopes placed in them in order to return to the stage with new, more realistic means and approaches which will be able to accompany the global transformations which have overshadowed the different arts. especially since we live in the age of electrical circuits and digital cultural production, because it tries to look for representations of theatrical performances that manage to polarize and provide the necessary addition, such as the play "G.P.S", which follows this trend.

3. the recipient/spectator... concepts and references:

It must first be emphasized that studies devoted to the reception of theatrical representation and the extent of its impact on the recipient were not, in the Arab world, as vast as the space created by theater as a as spectacle and as an industry of collective and cultural production. cultural consciousness, all compared to literary texts and compositions, in particular the

novel of our current era. Various approaches have sought to create a critical scene which takes into account the horizontal and vertical reception of these texts in an involuntary absence of artistic realization, on which studies remain somewhat modest, even if the Reading theory contributed to a certain extent to finding an objective approach to theater based on the reception of literary texts. It became possible to project one's productions on stage as a mainly represented text, thus creating a horizon of public taste which makes the recipient an active and participating element and perhaps an additional actor without whom the scene would not be complete.

Perhaps we will not get past this gap until we examine the efforts of some international scholars who have dealt with the issue of theatrical reception - although they are few in number - such as Anne Ubersfeld *Spectator school*, and *(The Spectator and the Drama)* by the Canadian Josette Feral, published in 1982, and *(Semiotics of Theatrical Performance)* by the Italian Umberto Eco published in 1976, and *(Transmission and reception in the theater)* published in 1983 by the Englishman Patrice Pavis and others.

Definition of recipient and its types:

We attempt to study the concept of recipient and its types from the point of view of the theory of reading, to project it onto the spectator as a recipient in the field of theater, the subject of this study.

The recipient of something is A recipient is the person on the receiving end of something. Or the recipient is the one who receives the object looked for by the subject. (Gerald, 2003, p47)

In terms of significance, he is the person who receives and reacts positively or negatively to the transmission he receives, or he is the person who deals with the speech in order to decode it through intellectual and aesthetic communication with it, trying to exploit the data of the speech and its capabilities to reproduce it again... and perhaps he (i.e. the recipient) (In my opinion at least) it pertains to texts, whether audio or written, and the theatrical text is one of them. However, we believe that the arts are indivisible, and this division is required by the necessity of academic work and nothing more. The viewer is necessarily a recipient and the audience is a recipient as well, but the contexts differ.

The diversity that characterizes arts and literature has produced types of recipients who are determined by the nature of interaction with the speech addressed to them, and the extent of their ability to adapt and attract, and from there the following divisions of recipients emerged:

- Implicit recipient:

He is the addressee announced by Wolfgang- Iser, and he embodies all the prior possibilities which need to be present in the discourse to exert its effective influence on the addressee as the basic structure of the body of the discourse - whatever its form. artistic - which calls for its presence without it necessarily being precise, and therefore a role is established in advance. The recipient according to his intimacy, and this is revealed when the word seems to go towards the ignorance of the supposed recipient, therefore the implicit notion of the recipient the recipient suggests an organization of the information which requires a method which obliges the recipient to understand the

speech. (Wolfgang, 1978, p30) However, the presence of the implicit recipient is hypothetical, because it represents the information hidden in the word in its imaginative component, giving the act of reception the perception of a direct confrontation with the word, so that the act of reception is established by the intellectual. and the aesthetic receptions of discourse.

This type of recipient is a mental model which makes it possible to explain how the fictional text produces an effect and takes on meaning, thus going beyond the superior reader according to Michael Riffaterre, the informed reader according to Walter Fisher and the intended reader. according to Virginia Woolf. The implied addressee, as a concept, has inherent roots in the text. It is a structure that can never be matched by a real reader, and this is true even when texts seem to deliberately ignore their possible recipient, and Thus, the concept of implicit reader designates a network of structures which call for a response which requires understanding the text As the Italian Selden Raman says.

-Cooperating recipient:

According to Umberto Eco, this model is based on efficiency and participation. The addressee is a participant, an interpreter, an explorer and immanent in the discourse. There is no speech without him. The recipient, in this perspective, achieves the effectiveness of the represented reception. by responding to speech stimuli, both apparent and implicit.

- virtual recipient:

In his definition of the hypothetical recipient, Riffaterre starts from the idea of the encyclopedism of this recipient and his capacity to interact with the different levels of discourse. Its foundations are therefore essentially cognitive. He is not an ordinary recipient. The addressee includes all addressees and can know the rhetorical facts that support the realization of the concentrated foundations through the combinations of successive reactions, because the effectiveness of perception that arises with the use of discourse in an effort to reveal its structure, investigate on its hidden meanings and resolve its sequential contradictions.

Riffaterre seeks to create a complete blend of the diversity of recipients through the virtual or global recipient, as it represents a complete system for recipients in a particular focus within the perceived discourse in order to eliminate the difference in subjective perception of each recipient and bring them together in a communicative discursive system that arises from the discourse itself due to its style and the initial foundations emerging from the discourse, which are revealed by the contradictions revealed by the hypothetical recipient.

Riffaterre considers himself a reader informed of the existence of stylistic events in the text, and he had this concept in purely linguistic, descriptive and synchronic thinking. Descriptive linguistics is completely adopted, so its reader is only an informant. , and he may himself be the stylistic analyst or this group of informants. This is a group of employed informants. To identify the stylistic series contained in the structures of the text, it is the sum of the readings, that is to say the responses, and not their average. (Riffaterre, 1972, p46).

Our study of the models of recipients makes us distinguish, in turn, the types of spectators, given that the study focuses essentially on theatrical reception, which means that we are confronted with:

- recipient informed:

This type of recipient - according to Stanley Fish - needs to monitor their reactions to what they receive and the effectiveness of the reception.

He also sees meaning not as an inherent subject of the text, but rather as an effect on the recipient, and meaning in the informed recipient's approach includes the temporal characteristic of the event, and according to this concept of meaning as an event, reading procedures enter into the approach of the informed reader. Riffaterre considers himself a reader informed of the existence of stylistic events in the text, and he had this concept in purely linguistic, descriptive and synchronic thinking. Descriptive linguistics is completely adopted, so its reader is only an informant. , and he may himself be the stylistic analyst or this group of informants. This is a group of employed informants. To identify the stylistic series contained in the structures of the text, it is the sum of the readings, that is to say the responses, and not their average (Riffaterre, 1972, p46).

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- Implicit viewer:

It is an extension of the implied God-fearing person according to Wolfgang Iser mentioned previously, that spectator who possesses a background of knowledge which allows him to receive the theatrical text and theatrical scenes with great efficiency and complete interaction, just as the implicit reader who embodies “all the preliminary preparations necessary for the literary work to exert its influence, which are preparations. » A priori is not drawn from an external and experimental reality, but rather from the text itself, and therefore from the implicit reader as implicit reader. The concept has its roots in the structure of the text, a structure that can never be matched by a real reader.

The implied spectator, in turn, represents an important stage in theatrical reception, with the perceptions and hypotheses he conveys, and the successive scenes he sees which create a certain knowledge for him or set him a goal in themselves. producing the meanings of the text with the author. He follows the work from the first letter to the end, that is to say before it sees the light of day, this implicit reader is similar to the recipient of Jean-Paul Sartre's work. existential criticism, which divides the receiving audience into a realistic audience and a potential audience - and this is what concerns us - this is the ideal audience in the future, therefore the writer takes into account the audience receiving the work, in this way He writes according to the criteria of this potential audience.

-Intended viewer:

He is the spectator concerned by the text or to whom the text is addressed from its initial appearance, that is to say the

collective self who experienced the historical conditions of the creator, then the self who constitutes a direct continuation of the text , and a new incarnation of his action within the framework of a kind of integration between them, and the theater spectator is here a central element who receives the discourse. The representation is different from the others.

The Theater is essentially a text written to be represented, and the benefit of this theory is an implementation of the principle of integration of arts and literature, even if their references differ, their origin is the same, and their specificities do not differ than to meet.

4. The aesthetics of theatrical reception in contemporary critical thought:

Despite the multiplicity of points of view on this point and the differences between those interested in literary and artistic discourse on the subject of the recipient, there is almost an agreement on the act of receiving, which is not - according to Iser 's words - sharp geometric standards that process the text with algebraic calculations and reject this form due to the presence of a certain deviation from its specified angles, or accept it. Others because of its consistency with the analogy, or there are relative considerations which vary from time to time, notably because the question of taste cannot be unified. Everyone has their own tastes and productions, as well as their own intellectual content and experience, which influence in one way or another the formulation of an aesthetic critical position/judgment in which text, presentation and representations interact.

One of the most important achievements brought by reception theory is to treat the theatrical work according to two fundamental levels: the first concerns the play in its written/read form, while the second level concerns the living play in its spectator form, and this is what Roman Ingarden tried to focus on, because the mechanisms of text processing differ. (Pouradier, 2023) From the presentation, then from the reception process, there is an interactive work that exists between the Writer, who transmits his experience through the language and tools he chooses, so that he finds his way to the reader with all his representations, where he receives them and explores their character and their aesthetic, thus forming a hierarchical structure whose apex is the text in its language and its data, and its base is the recipient and the writer. It is a relationship that may not seem as clear and clear as to make sense in this organizational form, but it is a mental relationship that imposes itself on the recipient, the critic, the reader, or the listener.

5. Brechtian theatrical reception according to Patrice Pavis:

The Frenchman Patrice Pavis adopts a Brechtian approach by defining his conception of the aesthetics of theatrical reception based on the recipient/spectator himself, because he is a factor in activating and producing the show, especially if he is capable of become familiar with the artistic dimensions of the show. the spectacle, where the effect of the artistic spectacle is highlighted, exerting the power of tension and reaching the element of excitement. And beauty is what enables the contribution, interaction and harmony of this recipient/partner. It depends on the understanding of the transformations of the dramatic text, from a written text to a text translated into a

dramaturgical framework, then spoken by the public, because the path of its transformations must be constructed through successive investigations, this which is It seems that there are stages that theatrical production goes through, from writing to incarnation on stage.

Pavis reorganized the relationship of sending and receiving according to a relational approach in which the presence of one is only obtained by the presence of the other, and this relationship will only be aesthetically effective if the process of sending is completed, emphasizing at the same time the inevitability of dramatological analysis in theatrical theory, because the theater is not a means and a source of transmitted information, just as it appears in the telegraphic message, and this is not is not a verbal means of a utilitarian nature, but rather it remains a dead discourse without an interpretive address of the reader/recipient relationship. (Patrice, 1983) Perhaps the play “The Game of Love and Chance” by the French writer “Marivaux” was adopted by Pavis as an applied model for its aesthetic approach. It ensures methodological and terminological control of the notion of reception, which focuses first on the text, then on the presentation, thus giving a broader space to approach the theatrical work from two different angles.

Waiting horizon:

One of the procedural concepts that Pavis focused on, which connects the literary work with the moment of its reception as an indivisible whole, which means that one studies the horizon of expectations in a certain period in order to distinguish the interpretative differences between the understanding of the text or the presentation at the time and the

understanding of the text or the presentation now, and despite the importance of the theoretical propositions made by Hans Robert Jauss, notably the concept of horizon of expectation, it does not refer to the diversity of the public in a specific period of time, because it can be said that in each period there are horizons of expectations depending on the social and cultural diversity of the public.

The horizon of expectation cannot be studied from the intellectual field of the public or from what we call prior knowledge about the literary genre that it receives: we can speak here of the fundamentally theatrical culture of the public, which necessarily has a certain critical dimension. position, notably by connecting the seen work with other works, in addition to the element of language, which is a crucial factor in determining the artistic direction of the text/piece.

The "analysis of the reader's literary experience will escape the psychologism with which it is threatened if, to describe the reception of the work and the effect produced by it, it reconstitutes the horizon of expectation of its first audience, that is to say the objectively formulable system of references which, for each work at the moment in history in which it appears, results from three main factors: the prior experience that the public has of the genre to which it belongs, the form and theme of previous works of which it presupposes knowledge, and the opposition between poetic language and practical language, imaginary world and everyday reality" (Jauss, 1990, p259).

It should therefore be noted that the horizon of expectation is often focused on written texts, but we addressed this point regarding the horizon of expectation to note that certain

theatrical performances have broken the horizon of expectation and reserved a place among masses by deviating from the conventional norm, such as the plays of “Mohamed Charshal”, on which it is based, which contain silent language, without written text, where the audience is placed directly in front of the stage, without introductions, and where only the text is what the actors embody in the theater.

6. CONCLUSION

Returning to the merits of this approach to contemporary literary critical thought and its relationship to literary reception, we highlight the intersection of the literary and the artistic, particularly when it comes to theater. The viewer, recipient or reader maintains a relationship based on artistic values. appreciation at different levels of thinking, which makes us rely on three fundamental elements in this process:

- The previous experience of the theater audience constitutes a focal point for the extent of the recipient's interaction or not, especially since the arts of presentation place the recipient in the first place as a momentary criterion for the success of the theatrical work compared to other literary genres.
- The Language in theater varies at its levels and is not complete evidence of the success of this or that play. There are silent plays that influence the recipient, regardless of his culture, nationality, or interests, and this is what the Algerian play “G.P.S” achieved as a model that can be referred.

- The Contemporary critical thought addresses the issue of reception based on the idea that literature and various arts intersect with each other as pure human creativity. In this case, questions are discussed without imposing restrictions that hinder research into the issues raised previously. The recipient, spectator, receiver or reader are names that have a similar meaning at the end.

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