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Original Research Article

Reading the Multiple Discourses of the Eighth Biennial of Iranian National Painting Based on Manuel Castells' Theory of Culture*

Marjan Edraki¹, Parisa Shad Ghazvini^{2**}

1. Ph.D. Candidate in Art Research, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.

2. Associate Professor, Department of Painting, Faculty of Art, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran.

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Abstract

Problem statement: Today, the rapid growth of technology and communication technologies has inevitably transformed human life and shaped concepts, viewpoints, and lifestyles. According to Manuel Castells' theory of culture, in today's world, technological developments and the emergence of new media are essential factors in social and cultural changes and the creation of multiple discourses in societies. But the problem of the present study is different aspects of the new culture from Castells perspective on the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting (2011), that aspects such as multiple discourses, independence from regional geography and self-selection and self-production of cultural content are important issues for the artist and are reflected in their work.

Research objectives: This study investigates the works of the eighth biennial based on modern communication processes and the formation of spontaneous mass communication using Castells' theory in explaining culture in the era of communication. Because ongoing discourses are important factors in shaping the culture of a society and creating works of art of any period, this article seeks to examine the multiple discourses of the eighth biennial of painting, based on Castells' theory of culture.

Research method: The research method is descriptive-analytical, analyzes have been done qualitatively and the statistical population of the research includes 186 works of the eighth biennial of National Painting of Iran (2011).

Conclusion: Based on Castells' theory that the technology revolution and the spread of information have transformed all levels of society, this paper proves that free and quick access to the wide range of cultural data and contents caused most of the participating artists in the biennial to choose the content of their works individually and experience self-selection and self-production of cultural content in this era.

Keywords: *Contemporary Iranian Painting, Eighth biennial of Iranian national painting, Content Multiplicity, Self-Motivation, Manuel Castells.*

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** Corresponding author: shad@alzahra.ac.ir

Introduction and problem statement

Painting is a manifestation of culture and art in human history. This art, which has a long history from the first human cave life to the present day, has been and is a platform for producing cultural content and explaining human living conditions. Therefore, it can be said that the content of the work of art is closely related to the social content of the production of the work and its reading is important in art knowledge.

In the contemporary world, with the advent of technology, different and complex cultural variables have extensively been introduced into human living conditions. Manuel Castells¹ is one of the sociologists who have been able to conceptualize the developments of modern society with respect to the spread of information technology, including mobile, Internet and mass communication networks. According to him, "In today's world, due to the development of technology and communication technology, information is widely available to a wide range of social actors who are also involved in its production. Therefore, in this new context, micro and macro cultures with all the diversity have expanded and instead of the process of homogeneous world culture, cultural diversity and cultural transformation has emerged" (Castells, 2001, 382). The reflection of these changes can be seen in all aspects of human life, including art, which is a testament to the structure of these changes.

Iran is also experiencing social and cultural changes in the new world of the development and emergence of communication and information technologies. Since the mid-2000s (with the expansion of Internet and satellite networks), the pace of entry into the world of technology and international developments has increased and reached its peak in the 2010-2020 and is rapidly penetrating various social strata. At the same time, the art community has grown since the late 2000s, as the Internet and free international relations for artists have expanded, and the cultural space has

undergone new changes resulting from the global technology revolution. Therefore, painting and its related events as the most active and popular field of visual arts in these years can be a good platform to understand the outcome of these changes. The Eighth Painting Biennial (2011) as one of the comprehensive visual art events of Iran can be a sample of the artistic achievements of a period of cultural and social developments, this biennial, which was the last biennial of painting in the country, brought together a large number of young artists, veterans and university professors, and for some reason were boycotted by some artists and the Painters' Association. But contrary to the claims of its boycotters, who saw it as a place for presenting the government's dominant discourse, it tried to create a free space for current painting movements and works of the young artists to be seen. On the other hand, since the eighth biennial coincides with the time of the contemporary technological revolution and the beginning of the peak of social and cultural changes, it can be a good platform for studying the manifestations of communication culture from the perspective of Manuel Castells. Since the eighth biennial coincides with the time of the contemporary technological revolution and the beginning of the peak of social and cultural growth in the 2010-2020, it is assumed that the communication technology cultural effects show themselves in the formation of multiple discourses and ideas beyond the ideological concepts of predominant cultural-political dialogue. Accordingly, the present article seeks to answer the question "How is the new culture of the IT world from the perspective of Manuel Castells reflected in biennial works?"

To understand the concept of culture from Castells' point of view, the authors deal with his theoretical foundation and how it is manifested in the new world, and then go through the content of the works by means of content analysis to investigate his theory. The present article is based on the assumption that cultural diversity along with

individual self-selection (according to Castells theory) in contemporary society has affected all aspects of life, including art, and the artists have created their work beyond ideological concepts and predominant cultural discourses.

Literature review

In order to understand the contemporary research works, in the research background, the studies on the content in contemporary Iranian painting were reviewed based on which it was determined that the number of comprehensive and analytical researches in this field is very small and limited. The papers on the paintings of Iran in the last three decades have been looked at from different angles, and by reviewing them, it can be said that the problem of the authors of these works is not in line with the goals of the present article. Sojoudi and Tabatabaie Yazdi (2014), in the article "Visual gender ideology in the works of male and female painters in the last six decades in Iran", discuss the adjustment of gender perspective on women in the works of painters. In the article "Representation of women in contemporary female paintings", Shariati Mazinani and Modares Sadeghi (2011) recognize the views of contemporary Iranian women painters on women's gender and how women are represented in their works. In another article entitled "Discourse conflict between realism and idealism in Iranian contemporary painting", Moridi (2016) considers five ups and downs from the Pahlavi era to the present and He studies realism during the constitutional period, up to the Islamic Revolution, and deals with critical realism in the 2000s, which differs from the aim of the present study. He also deals with effect of social relations in the production of works of art in all branches in the book "Cultural Discourses and Artistic Currents of Iran" Moridi (2018), and from a sociological point of view and by analyzing government policies and the dominant cultural discourse, he expresses a social narrative of contemporary art. In this book, referring within

a few lines to the eighth biennial (*ibid.*, 270), the emphasis is on not reproducing government policies in the works, which is not in line with the problem of the present study. Nilqaz (2011) in the article "An analysis of the social conditions leading to materiality of contemporary realist painting in Iran during 1997 and 2009" examines the conditions of the emergence of contemporary realist painting in Iran (1997-2010), which differs significantly from this study in terms of theoretical foundations and methods. Yazdi (2017) in his doctoral dissertation at Isfahan University of Arts entitled "Critical Organizational Discourse Analysis of Iranian Contemporary Painting after the Islamic Revolution Based on National and International Festivals and Biennials" has dealt with organizational approaches focused on the production of paintings in the desired fields and has not considered the communication culture in the world of information technology; Mohebi (2015) in the article "Inquiry in Iranian painting biennial" has presented a historical report by reviewing national painting biennials and mentioning policy makers, organizers and winners and has not considered the analysis of works with a theoretical approach. Thus, a study that is in line with the present study and addresses the issue of reflecting the culture of information technology and multiple discourses in contemporary Iranian painting (the eighth biennial of painting) could not be found. What distinguishes the present study from previous studies is its focus on the cultural structure that has emerged in the wake of the technological revolution that has affected the entire world and all national and regional cultures.

The concept of culture in Castells theory

Although theories of sociology and social sciences in the field of art may be limited and not fully applicable, they determine a specific path for the researcher. Therefore, for a comprehensive answer to the question of this research, the sociological theory of Manuel Castells has been used. Castells

conceptualizes the evolution of modern society as a result of the spread of information technology. Some researchers, such as Michel Mazar, consider him “the greatest universal and exclusive theorist of the information age” (Mazar, 2002, 5). In fact, what makes Castells’ views important and compares him to thinkers such as Kent, Max Weber, and Habermas is his new conceptualization of a “network society” in a world going through a technological and information revolution.

In his theory, he considers information networks as an explanatory and guiding factor in the activities of social activists from the late twentieth century onwards and believes that “the emergence of a new electronic communication system is changing our culture and changing it forever” (Castells, 2001, 384). The spread of the Internet and its affiliated networks enables widespread public access to information networks and greatly reduces government or commercial restrictions (Eslami, 2014, 96). Before the 21st century, culture² could be defined in terms of the social actions of a particular society, but since then, this concept has changed with the breaking down of communication boundaries and the formation of a global community.

According to Castells theory, contemporary culture is a diverse set of cultures that connect the history and geography of any part of the world and is originated from various sources such as collective memory, interpersonal interaction, organized social activity, economic and political interests, sociological motivations and innovation or in other words the whole realm of human experience (White, 2016, 5). These multiple discourses from

different cultural contexts have expanded and distorted the notion of geographical affiliation (Castells, 2007, 479).

The most important factor that gives rise to multicultural discourse in a network society is “spontaneous mass communication.” It can be considered “mass communication” because it can potentially reach a global audience, such as posting a video on YouTube. It is also a “spontaneous connection”; because in terms of message production, it is self-produced, also it is considered self-governing by its potential recipients and it is considered self-selective in retrieving certain contents or messages that are available on the World Wide Web (Castells, 2018, 85). This is a new realm in which culture expands interactively and is distributed and interacted globally. Based on this, network individualism is formed, so people by self-selection in the choice of content are the determinants of change in the symbolic environment of ideas and produce the messages in a self-generated manner.

Castells provides a cultural paradigm (Fig. 1) through which one can justify the multiple and diverse social content and origins of contemporary life. However, in order to interpret these concepts in the context of contemporary Iranian painting, in this study, the content of the art works was analyzed. Since Castells emphasizes that contents are self-produced, by determining the main (the highest and most influential meaning that is taken from the work) and the secondary (hidden semantic layers that are narrated) contents in the work of art, an attempt has been made to identify the dominant or multiple discourses in the works. In this regard,

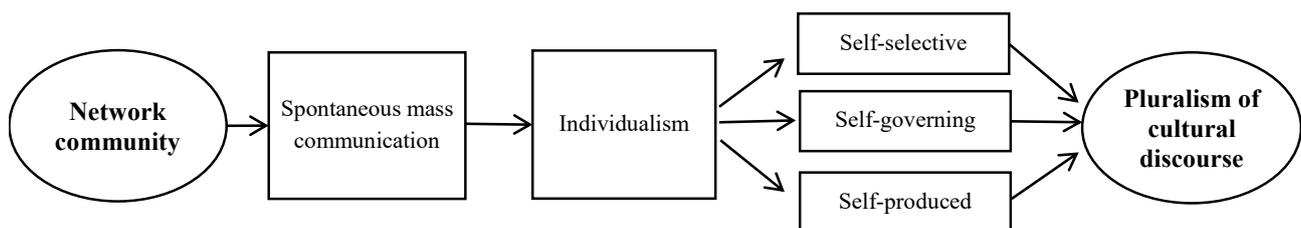


Fig. 1. Conceptual model of research. Source: Authors.

the elements that make up the content have also been considered.

Another determining factor introduced by Castells that has been mentioned above is the disruption of the concept of geographical affiliation in the multicultural space of a network society. Therefore, in examining the art works, the geographical affiliation of content to regional issues of Iran or them being cross-bordered was studied. Castells also, when discussing individualism in a networked society, sees the production of individual content on the Internet as a forum for critique from a variety of social, political, and cultural perspectives that comes from all members of society with access to mass communication. Accordingly, the language of expression or the language of the art work³ is one of the aspects of analysis in this research. Therefore, these factors which are extracted from Castells' theory have been summarized in [table 1](#), in an orderly fashion to facilitate the analysis and reading of the eighth biennial art works. The findings are presented in the Results and Discussion section.

Research methods

This research is a theoretical research. Based on the purpose, it is fundamental and method of providing information is descriptive-analytical. The collection of information and research data is done by library search and in this process books, publications and websites are referred to. Descriptive and analytical methods were used in writing this article. The statistical population was chosen from the comprehensive events of Iranian visual arts that are national and held with a nationwide call to the whole country. Focusing on painting biennials, the works of the eighth biennial of national painting of Iran (2011) were selected as our statistical population. Since the present study seeks to read the works in the light of Castells' theory of culture and determine whether they represent multiple discourses in the world of information technology, therefore between the works of the thematic section of this biennial entitled "A New Look at the

Herat School" and the free section, considering the purpose of the research and in order to understand the subject more deeply, the works of the free section with 186 works have been selected.

The eighth biennial of Iranian national painting

The eighth and in fact the last biennial of Iranian painting was held in 2011 at the Saba Cultural and Artistic Institute. In this biennial, 6226 works from 1589 artists were submitted to the biennial secretariat, where they were reviewed in two stages by the selection committee (Homayoun Salimi, Kazem Chelipa, Abdolhamid Pazouki, Mostafa Goodarzi, Mehrdad Khataei) and the jury (Yaghoub Amamehpich, Ali Akbar Sadeghi, Shahla Habibi, Vahed Khakdan, Mustafa Goodarzi, Ishtvan Arusch, from Hungary, and Yuri Dolan, from Slovakia) ([Mohebi, 2015, 7](#)). Finally, the selected works were exhibited in three groups: the invited artists section including 50 works from 50 veteran artists; free works section including 186 works selected by the jury and the thematic section entitled "A New Look at the School of Herat" including 131 works selected by the jury ([Zendeh Rouh Kermani, 2012, 5](#)). The presence of three generations of artists together was one of the most important features of this art event.

Ahmad Vakili was the secretary and Javad Sadeghi was the executive secretary of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting. This biennial was the first decentralized biennial in which, besides Tehran, the cities of Neishabour and Mashhad also participated. Since the latest artistic achievements of each country are exhibited in biennials, the Iranian Painting Biennial can also represent national identity and play an influential role in the cultural and artistic development of the country. The eighth biennial welcomed the young, creative, daring, and searching talents who had faced the growth of information technology during these years.⁴ But it was boycotted by some modern, non-political painters and the Painters' Association;

“Most of its policymakers were the painters of the revolution, who re-emerged during Ahmadinejad’s presidency and were able to use economic, social, and cultural capital” (Afsarian, 2010, 194). But in this biennial, we are faced with a diverse collection of abstract and figurative works that represent a wide range of themes. Young artists from all over Iran participated in this biennial, among which some of the selected artists are Fatemeh Jahangiri (from Fars) with work “Sarab” (Zendeh Rouh Kermani, 2012, 78), Goldasteh Ghobadi (from Mazandaran) with the work “I am in my inner world” (ibid., 121), Mona Naraghi (from Tehran) with the work “The Walls” (ibid., 75), Ebrahim Naraghi (from Fars) with the work “My Room, No. 41” (ibid., 91), Neda Azami (from Tehran) with the work “I am what you see” (ibid., 168), Hamid Asadzadeh (from East Azerbaijan) with the work “The Bird” (ibid., 168), Fatemeh Iranzad (from Bushehr) with the work “Sacrifice” (ibid., 169), Nasim Irani (from Golestan) with the work “Garden that is no more” (ibid., 175), Leila Babakan (from Gilan) with the work “Nature” (ibid., 176), Maryam Beig-Moradi (from Kerman) with the work “There were four people” (ibid., 118), Sabrineh Topchi (from Tehran) with the work “Kahrizak Elderly” (ibid., 130). The interesting thing about these works is that a significant number of them (both figurative and abstract) are untitled.

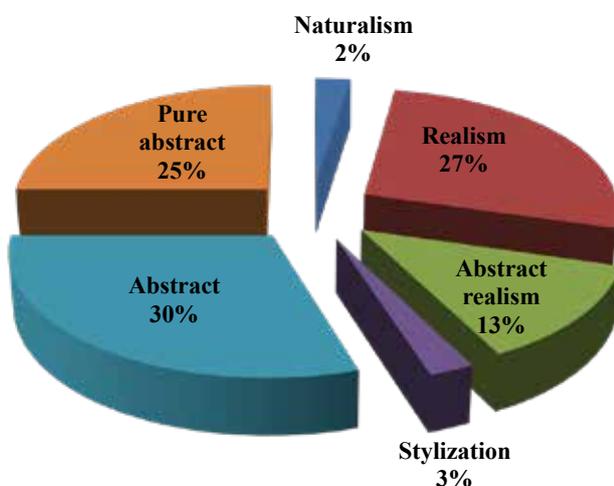


Fig. 2. Frequency of artistic methods in the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting based on the results of research analysis. Source: Authors.

Since it is important to look at form and content in the study of works of art, in order to examine the works of the eighth biennial, in the present study, all 186 works were examined in terms of artistic method⁵ and divided into six groups.⁶ These six groups are: Naturalism⁷, Realism⁸, Abstract realism, Stylization⁹, Abstract¹⁰ and Pure abstract¹¹ which are shown in figure 2 based on the quantity of works.

Since the problem of this research is the reading of the art works according to the angles of the new culture and how it is manifested in the concepts Introduction of works based on artistic method and form is limited to figure 2, and as described earlier works have been examined based on table 1. But as can be seen in figure 2, pure abstract works account for 25% of the total works, and of course, the analysis of contemporary cultural concepts in the age of technology and communication does not include these works, and content of other 139 works are analyzed and classified in 6 categories in 139 tables similar to table 1. Since this article has a limited volume, some examples are given in the Results and Discussion section to shorten the discussion of 139 works. The general information presented these 139 tables are described in full below and the results are shown in figures 3, 4, 11 and 12.

Results and discussion

Entering the 2010 (middle of the tenth government of Islamic Republic of Iran), the peak years of technology and information technology in Iran began and the Internet speed of personal users suddenly increased by 1140% compared to 2005 (Statistical Center of Iran, 2011). Along with the country’s development, the growth of communication technologies, which began in the mid-2000s, peaked in the 2010 going through daily changes. “The universality of digital language and network logic of the new communication system provide a ground for horizontal and universal communication (and liberation from the top-down vertical hierarchy of those in power)” (Castells,

2018, 383). In the new media conditions, the works of the eighth biennial were formed.

By reading these works from the perspective of Castells culture theory, one can examine the extent to which the discourse of multiple world cultures is reproduced, regardless of geographical boundaries. In the first step of the research process, the initial content analysis of the works was performed, and the results obtained from the analysis of 139 works

of this biennial are shown in figure 3. Based on the results, the diversity of topics produced can be confirmed and the traces of centralized discourse and specific currents cannot be observed. In fact, this is due to the increasing trend of heterogeneous world culture, which, according to Castells, its pervasiveness causes the spread of cultural content in network societies, of which Iran is no exception. On the other hand, it shows the growth

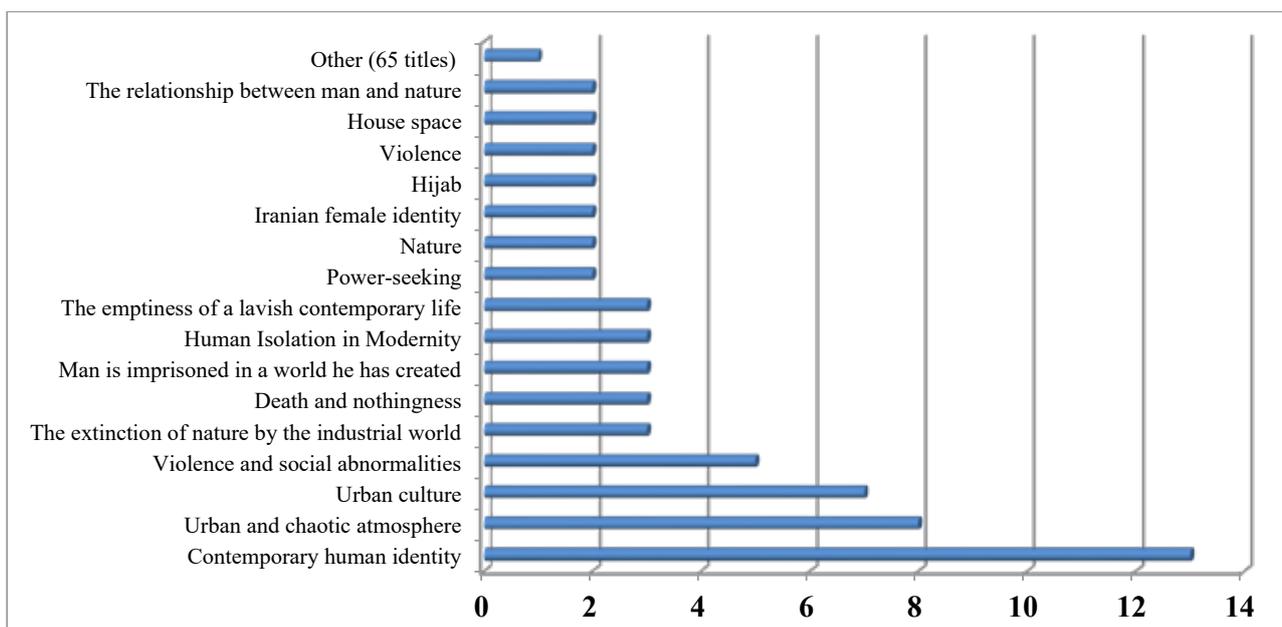


Fig. 3. A study of the multiplicity of main contents in the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting based on the results of research analyzes. Source: Authors.

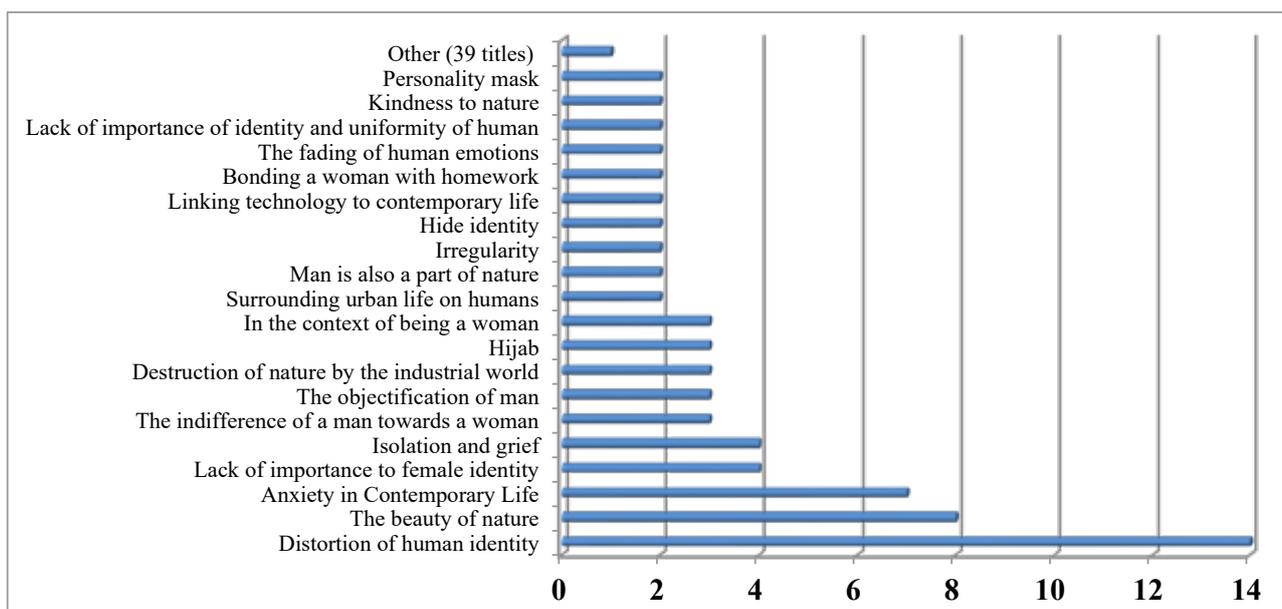


Fig. 4. Multiplicity of secondary contents in the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting based on the results of research analyzes. Source: Authors.

of spontaneous mass communication through the technological revolution, which with free access to diverse content allows artists (especially young artists) to become self-selective in their choice of ideas, regardless of time and place. Based on [figure 3](#) in 139 works analyzed, 81 heterogeneous contents are seen in the works, which in most cases fall within the scope of contemporary urban class concerns, But show different and contradictory manifestations of the personal motives of the authors of the works.

In the works of the eighth biennial, we are not confronted with limited and categorizable contents, but with numerous contents that represent the multiplicity of current discourses or sub-discourses available to the artist. Discourses not limited to the main signs of Iranian and Islamic discourse. According to the results of research in [figure 3](#), contemporary human identity is the most important issue that artists have addressed in the eighth biennial (13 works; for example [Figs. 5 & 6](#) whose analysis is shown in [table 1](#)). From Castells point of view, this is a reflection of the communication culture. Prior to the formation of the Network Society, culture referred to a set of customs, norms, values, beliefs, and in general the lifestyle of a

particular society that distinguished it from other societies, Identity was also formed in this cultural and social valuation; But with the changes in the world of technology and communication, these valuations have been disrupted. Faced with a wealth of cultural and identity information, one has the opportunity to think beyond the political and cultural geography of who he or another one is, without any limitations. The reflection of this angle of view can be seen in Karimi's work ([Fig. 6](#)).

Also, in the analysis of the main content, the chaos of space and urban life (8 works; for example [Fig. 9](#)), the aspects of urban culture (7 works) ([Fig. 7](#) is an example of works categorized in this content, this work depicts people outside the house in the 60s or 70s of Iran who seem to have left home for fun, in this space and history that Technology has not yet covered all aspects of human life as it does today, but it is still in the spotlight. As emphasized in the title of the work, a moment of "daily life in urban life" has been recorded, an atmosphere in which families in their spare time stare at technology without any emotional or verbal connection with each other, An issue that has affected different aspects of people's lives more strongly today), violence and social anomalies



Fig. 5. Cobra Khaki, "A girl with a mask", 120×100 cm, oil color. Source: Zende Rouh Kermani, 2012, 135.



Fig. 6. Amir Karimi, "Smiles", 140×150 cm, acrylic and ink. Source: Zende Rouh Kermani, 2012, 124.

(5 works) and other themes are depicted in a more limited number in these works. As [figure 3](#) shows, the content of the works is scattered in various categories and themes, so that none of the concepts account for more than 10% of the total content. On the other hand, topics that have more (albeit limited) frequency, such as contemporary human identity, which has the highest graph index in primary content analysis, have been divided into different categories in deeper studies (secondary content analysis); In this case, we can refer to concepts such as concealment of identity ([Fig. 7](#)), distortion of contemporary human identity, non-identity and lack of importance of female identity. Representation of daily life with ordinary people ([Fig. 8](#); which depicts moments of the daily life of an ordinary woman without any exaggeration) which is reflected in these works and each of them expresses their individual issues, confronts us with the fact that the artist is not concerned with macro concepts and dominant cultural and political discourse and does not follow a specific trend. Just as “contemporary societies in the world of information technology have incorporated multiple concepts from global culture to local selves” ([Castells, 2018, 205](#)), artists with diverse origins have used diverse content in the creation of their works.

In addition to the main content discussed above, this multiplicity can also be seen in the secondary content (83 contents in 139 analyzed works, as summarized in [Fig. 4](#)). In this regard, we can mention identity distortion (14 works), confusion and anxiety in contemporary life (7 works), beauty of nature (8 works), isolation and sorrow (4 works), lack of importance to female identity (4 works) and human objectification (3 works) and so on. The multiplicity of content in the works indicates an infinite network of cultural examples that, according to Castells, “can not only coexist with each other but also be able to interact with each other” (*ibid.*, 52). For example, in [figure 9](#), we can see the turmoil and disarray of human relationship with the environment. In this work, on the one hand, the image of man is placed next to other objects in such a way that it is difficult to distinguish between the object and the body, and On the other hand, by removing the individual’s face, the insignificance of identity in this chaotic space and the suspension of human beings in their living environment are portrayed. Interestingly, in addition to analyzing the main and secondary content, examining the main composing elements of the content reveals that the artist’s concern is first with human (73 items), and then with everyday life and the surrounding elements (or

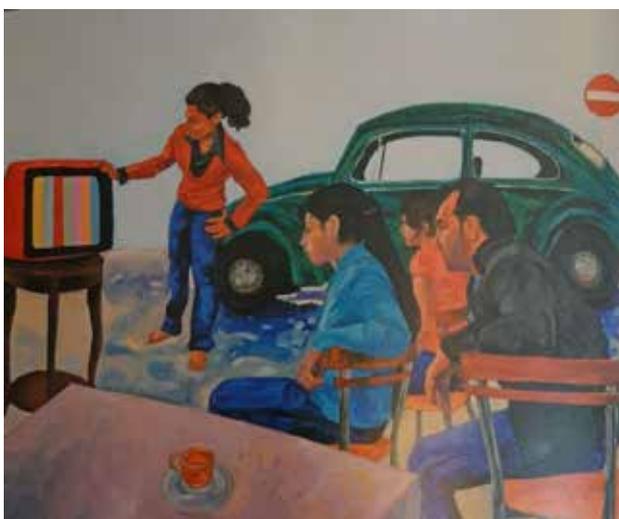


Fig. 7. Mona Bagheri, “Daily life in urban life”, 150×120 cm, oil color on canvas. Source: Zende Roush Kermani, 2012, 117.



Fig. 8. Zeinab Mojed, “No. 12 from the clothing collection”, 110×130 cm, acrylic and pencil on canvas. Source: Zende Roush Kermani, 2012, 136.

inanimate nature) that surround him. The elements used in most of the art works are mainly ordinary objects from home and work environment, such as the objects of a study table or an ordinary kitchen, but in most cases, these elements are meaningful in connection with human beings. The result of

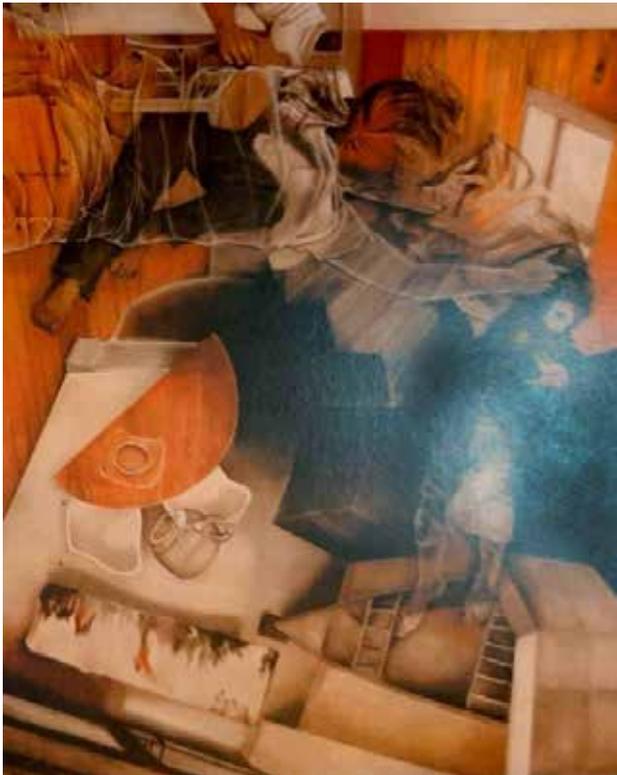


Fig. 9. Elnaz Maghami, "Fall", 148×87 cm, composition of materials on canvas. Source: Zنده Roush Kermani, 2012, 111.



Fig. 10. Seyedeh Fatemeh Fatemi, "Untitled", 120×100 cm, acrylic. Source: Zنده Roush Kermani, 2012, 121.

their frequency and multiplicity in the art works is shown in figure 11.

One of the important points that was determined by analyzing 139 works of this biennial is that the contents produced in 92 works are free from any geographical affiliation (for example, Fig. 9 & 10) and Only 34 works can be related to the cultural geography of Iran (for example, Fig. 5 & 8). This result is one of the most important indicators that show the extent of contemporary cultural contents in the world of information technology. The artist is not limited to his geography in production of the content of the work. According to the model of spontaneous mass communication that Castells introduces (Fig. 1), the artist in a network society with free access to the communication network has access to unlimited digital content and is free from any restrictions in spreading his message. This distorts the meaning of geography and causes the work of art to be self-productive in its message and the artist to be self-selective in choosing the content. Therefore, in the context of the culture of a network society, the artist has portrayed anything that concerns him in a universal way.

The language of the artist in creating the works of this biennial is also one of the concerns of the present study, which was investigated based on the analysis of the studied art works. According to figure 12, critical realism (27 works), critical expression (9 works) and symbolism (18 works) are the most common language of expression in the works, but feminist, idealistic and other languages are also seen in the works. Since most of the works are portrayed in a critical language, and given that criticism arises from the author's individuality and separation from the mainstream (to escape from the norms), it can be expected that due to the multiplicity of thought lines of artists, multiple contents and discourses appear in these works, which according to Castells' theory, has its roots in cultural developments that have occurred due to the technological revolution in the world.

Conclusion

The living condition of the artist in any historical period is undoubtedly one of the most important issues reflected in his work of art. Life in the age of the Internet and digital technologies, along with the multiplicity of information contents, has created new conditions for human beings, including the artist. In the age of the Internet, people cannot be isolated from the virtual world. Instead, they expand their socialization by using the large number of available communication networks. In the meantime, they selectively pursue their cultural world according to their priorities, and this is reflected in the works of artists according to their personal values. According to Castells' theory, the new electronic hypertext contains multiple concepts from global culture to local selves and is constantly

updated, so the time of limited options has come to an end and one is faced with an unlimited hypertext. Thus, the new conditions, based on the creation of spontaneous mass relations, present a set of multiple contents to the artist-painter which allows him to access open source programs in the selection of his ideas and to be self-selective and self-productive in the production of content.

Investigating the eighth biennial works considering this concept, we can see the product of the changes in the world of information technology, once this collective reference is available to the artist as a cultural resource; the content is no longer limited to previous missions or dominant discourses and the demands of a particular class. Based on conducted analyzes, it was concluded that the content range of the works is the multiple concerns of the

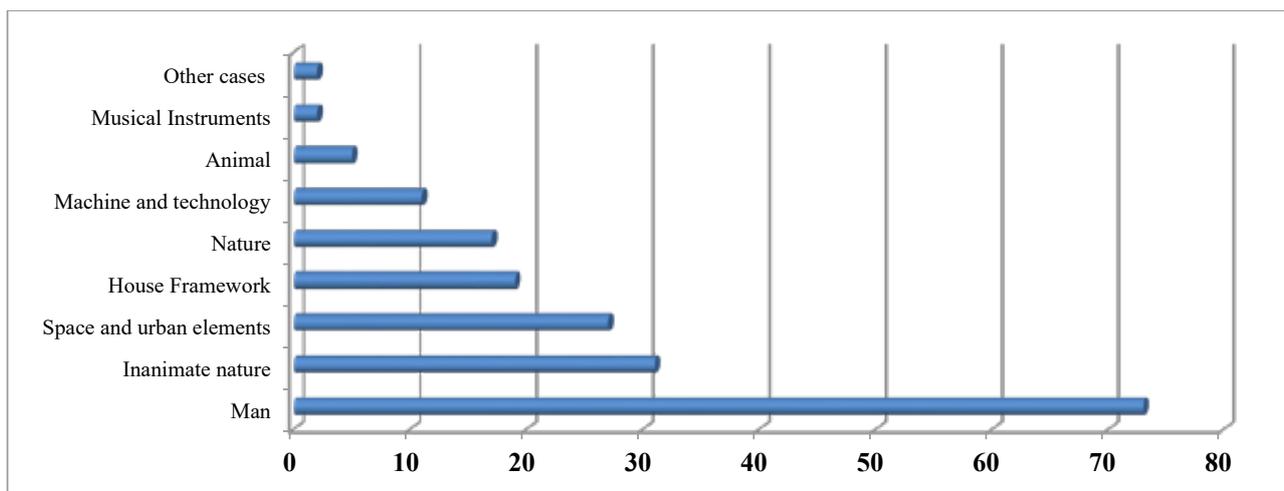


Fig. 11. The main composing elements of the content in the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting based on the results of research analyzes. Source: Authors.

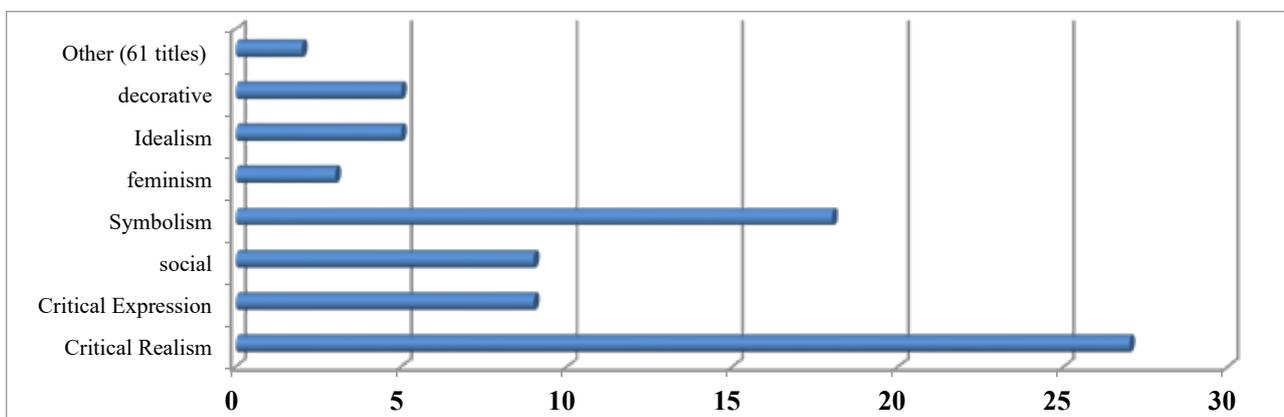


Fig. 12. The language of the work in the works of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting based on the results of research analyzes. Source: Authors.

Table 1. Analysis of Figs. 5 to 10 (sample of analytical tables that were applied to all 139 studied works during the research). Source: Authors.

Fig. NO	Artistic method	Main content	Secondary content	Geographical affiliation of the content	Composing elements of the content	The language of the work
5	Realism	Contemporary human identity	Hide identity	Yes	Man	- Critical realism - Feminism
6	Realism	Contemporary human identity	Multiplicity and plurality in identity	No	Man	Social
7	Realism	- Urban culture - Contemporary life	- The importance of technology - Lack of attention to each other	No	- Man - Machine and technology - Inanimate nature	Critical realism
8	Realism	- Daily Life - Urban space	Woman and housekeeping responsibility	Yes	- Man - Space and urban elements	Critical realism
9	Abstract realism	Chaos in urban life	- Lack of importance of individual identity, - The influx of life elements into the man's life	No	- Man - Inanimate nature	Critical expression
10	Realism	Human identity	- Ugliness and beauty - Technology and history analogy	No	- Man - Inanimate nature	Critical expression

contemporary urban class, which have displayed different and contradictory manifestations of the personal motives of the authors of the works. The taste of artists (especially young artists¹²) has changed from uniformity and following a certain stream to non-uniformity and multiplicity of streams. Therefore, the Internet and virtual networks as an emerging public domain are one of the reasons for this phenomenon. New media have expanded tastes and attitudes and exposed the culture of societies to diverse contents. Today, living in a specific geography (continent, country, metropolis, village, etc.) has lost its meaning, in a way that all people around the world have access to a wide range of concepts by connecting to virtual networks.

On the other hand, holding this biennial coincides with the tenth (fundamentalist) government, which considered its main mission to be the preservation of Islam, commitment and practice of Islamic ideals and values, and followed the main path of Islamic resistance against the growth of new media, But contrary to these situation and the expectations of

the boycotters of this biennial, there is no dominant and directed discourse in the main content of the works. In contrast, we see the emergence of critical discourses on contemporary human life in the works which according to Castells' theory is a result of the growth of individualism. People in the world of communication technology have a fast way to receive information and spread ideas through spontaneous mass communication.

According to the conducted analyzes of the works of the free section of the eighth biennial of Iranian national painting, it is concluded that there is a great variety in the ideation of the works. In fact, as Castells argues, a new culture can include anything and turn them it into a quantitative textual culture; Therefore, it can be argued that the eighth biennial coincides in time with the contemporary technological revolution and goes beyond the current ideological concepts and exhibited self-selected and self-produced art works. Therefore the artist as a representative of the technological man of the information technology age has acted individually and self-selectively.

Endnote

1. He is a Spanish sociologist and author of the important trilogy of the information age. Castells studies the fields of urban sociology, organizational studies, cyberspace studies, social movements, sociology of culture, and political economy together to provide an interdisciplinary analysis of the complex world of media today (Hamidzadeh, 2015, 2).
2. In anthropological thinking, culture refers to a set of customs, norms, values, beliefs and beliefs, and in general the lifestyle of a particular society that distinguishes it from other societies. According to this view, all nations have a special culture that distinguishes them from others (Reeves, 2008, 15).
3. Status meanings that occur in a particular situation (Paul Gee, 2011).
4. In the last years of the 80's, the role of communication and information technology is very important and key; With the development of the country, the internet bandwidth capacity also increased so that our country's internet bandwidth capacity increased from 12 STM1 links in 1984 to 137 STM1 links in 2010, which shows a 11-fold growth, equivalent to 1140 percent in this field. Also, the volume of international Internet bandwidth transferred to customers in 1990 was 90 times more than the total of the last ten years (Iran Information Technology Organization, 2012) that a large number of these Internet users, including young people and educated people (Statistical Center of Iran, 2011).
5. A term that refers to a certain aesthetic approach. The concept of artistic method is more comprehensive than personal style, and includes a more general worldview and mode of expression. Different artists with different styles may have used the same artistic method (Pakbaz, 1999, 257).
6. This classification is done only to accelerate the research process and achieve the purpose of this article to analyze the content of the works. The authors believe that the artistic method of the works can be generalized in more detail, but since the artistic method pays more attention to the form and appearance of the work and is not within the scope of this article, it can be examined in another study.
7. Naturalism (Naturalistic representation) describes as accurate as possible representation of things seen and seen (ibid., 348).
8. Realism as an artistic method can be generalized to many specific styles or styles. Realism can be recognized in works in which the artist goes beyond the level of objective appearances, expresses facts about the various relationships and dynamics of human beings with each other and their environment, and in general. He is involved with the question of what is human and what can be done (ibid., 276).
9. Stylization: Representation of basic and cognitive features of natural things according to a conventional method, which usually uses methods of simplification, regular repetition, symmetry, proportionality change and formal exaggeration (for example, in Iranian painting) (ibid., 193).
10. Abstraction in art means choosing from nature and has different methods. The characteristic of many methods of abstraction to varying degrees is that the tradition of representing tangible and tangible reality is abandoned or considered insignificant, and the invention of a new reality for visual perception is considered an essential function of art (ibid., 49).
11. The representative of the work of art is free from any similarities and without a clear subject, which does not follow the selection of natural forms (ibid., 653).
12. The results of this study are true among young painters participating in the eighth biennial free section, and well-known artists have not been studied due to not participating in the free section.

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