

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF FELDMAN METHOD IN ART CRITICISM AND ART EDUCATION

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Abstract

This paper addresses art criticism, which undoubtedly plays a significant role in enriching the art's creative and aesthetic state. The paper aims to identify the steps of art criticism for the Feldman. Feldman developed a four steps method to be able to interpret, judge and evaluate artistic works. The researcher has carried out this study by focusing on artistic criticism basics to help guide students to improve and develop their level regarding artistic criticism. The method used in this study is descriptive and analytical. The study reached several conclusions, among which was that art criticism is an organized series of situations. Feldman method is a process that requires an in-depth analysis of art issues, understanding the various critical trends, being aware of all artistic developments, artistic achievements, and being aware of the principles and elements of art. The relevance of criticism to art is closely related because criticism is centred around the work of art, and stems from analysis and distinction.

Keywords: Art, Art Criticism, Art Education, Feldman

1.0 RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Edmund Burke Feldman, Alumni Foundation Distinguished Professor of Art at the University of Georgia(1994), stated that art criticism is spoken or written “talk” about art.¹ Edmund B. Feldman’s criticism system uses inductive reasoning to reach a judgment from the supplied artwork based on four stages. Feldman is most noted for trying to create a more objective approach to interpret works of art. According to Feldman (1994) "there are four steps for interpreting a work of art: Describing and naming the facts or literal aspects of the work. Analyzing the facts and building visual evidence. Interpreting the evidence".² Also, Feldman stated that (1994) "the purpose of art criticism is to explain. Critics have an obligation to

¹Feldman, E.B. (1994). Practical Art Criticism. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
² See Feldman (1994:43).

explain art. Judging the work of art and estimating its value as art. In addition, he said that "Discussing art is critical to the process and mastery of art criticism (Feldman, 1994)³.

Feldman (1994) believes that the visual facts of a work of art should be given priority over words. He also believes that words should be used as "pointers" rather than as aesthetic facts. Words should only be considered valid to the extent that they can be confirmed through the critic's visual experience. Art criticism is based on an appreciation of artistic production. It creates a sophisticated artistic taste based on the senses, which feel the beauty and potentials in the work of art (Feldman, 1970)⁴.

Considering that art criticism is a focal point in the education of the various branches of art, especially the art of drawing, is the basis of any artistic work. What an art teacher does in the classroom is a form of art criticism because it teaches, describes, analyzes, experiments, and distributes works of art. The goals of art education are to transfer the teacher's experiences to the students. This involves helping them develop their taste and appreciation for the arts. This is achieved by teaching art education, as well as teaching and training students in artistic criticism to educate them technically and enrich them linguistically, to create creative art, cultural movement. By providing students with the sound of artistic information and concepts related to contemporary art, making the proper and optimal application of artistic skills from drawing and others involves cognitive visual and skilful experiences upon which all artistic fields are based (Barrett, 1994).⁵

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This paper addresses art criticism, which undoubtedly plays a significant role in enriching the art's creative and aesthetic state. The paper aims to identify the steps of art criticism from Feldman's perspective. Feldman developed a four-step method to be able to interpret, judge and evaluate artistic works.

■ 3.0 LITERATURE REVIEW

Art criticism is one of the most important fields of art education. Since art education has become a prescribed curriculum of the school at various stages, it is imperative to train

³ See Feldman (1994:45).

⁴Feldman. E. B. (1970). *Becoming Human Through Art: Aesthetic Experience In The School*. Englewood Cliffs. NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁵Barrett, Terry. (1994). *Criticizing Art Understanding the Contemporary*. California. USA: Mayfield Publishing Company.

students to practice visual experiences and enlighten them about design principles and its elements. Discussing art is considered integral to the critical experience, as well as the interpretation of the work of art. Feldman emphasizes the importance of interpretation and explaining the artwork. Feldman states that “Interpretation is tremendously challenging; it is certainly the most important part of the critical enterprise. Explaining a work of art involves discovering its meanings and also stating the relevance of these meanings to our lives and the human situation in general” (Feldman, 1982).⁶

Art criticism is not just an artistic review or a literary narrative through which the art critic records the events of artistic activities of art. Instead, it is a process that emphasizes studying art issues realistically in great depth. So, the art critic must understand the different critical trends by stressing the creativity and skill included in the artworks. Art criticism must be undertaken by art specialists' artists or academics with their artistic expertise. This is because specialization is the most important and most useful in everything related to art criticism.

The Feldman method allows students with no knowledge of art to critique any work of art, depending on the basic principles and elements of art and design. The Feldman method considers the simple way to critique an artwork, the judgment stage, is based on the visual elements, which makes it objective. The relevance of criticism to art is closely related, as criticism is centred around the work of art and expresses the critic's ability to understand artists' techniques (Feldman, 1994).⁷

Feldman (1970) stressed that neutral observers view the artwork in terms of a step by step description. The use of the word or expression that can show that revealed his own feelings are avoided at this stage. Smith (1973) argues that there is no need for the audience to be neutral toward artwork and no separate ratings for the assessment. According to Feldman, the evaluation should be implicit in other stages in art criticism. According to Barrett (1994), description and analysis are closely related to the interpretation and cannot be separated.⁸

■ 4.0 METHODOLOGY

This study relies on the descriptive and analytical approach to analyze the extent of art criticism that is practised and applied in the required and proper manner, meaning that this

⁶Feldman, E.B. (1982). *Varieties of visual experience*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.

⁷ See Feldman (1994:60).

⁸ See Barrett (1994:79).

study is not a field or statistical analysis; instead it monitors the appropriate application of artistic criticism.

■ 5.0 RESEARCH FINDINGS

The study found that the Feldman method for art criticism is used to evaluate the works of art. The following four stages of the Feldman method emphasize an explanation of any artwork. His criticism model has served as a model in four steps for making statements about a work of art. Feldman believes that if students can think and talk about art, they will know and like it better (Feldman, 1982).⁹Feldman's method presents a criticism model for students to use in art-critical performance: description, analysis, interpretation, and judgment.

METHOD OF CRITICAL ANALYSIS (FELDMAN METHOD 1970)

Description: is the first step of art criticism. The description means what the student sees in the work of art. This stage is about gathering information about the work of art, such as the artist's name, title, date of creation, size and medium. Make a list of all the things the students can see and observe in the work of art. Also, in the description stage, the students must identify the elements of art used; it is not analysis; it just states the facts. In other words, name the points and inventory the subject matter, noting what is immediately visible in the artwork. Feldman (1982) says the words in the description are used to attract the viewer's attention to something worth seeing to counter the artwork's ambiguous details. Depending on the style's nature, realistic works are easy to describe because they are clear, while many modern artistic trends and schools find them challenging to understand. Here, the role of the critic who describes these works to us comprehensively appears to make it easier for him to persuade the recipient. From here the right, clear and expressive description depends on the critic to convince people of the artistic work in front of them, through descriptive definitions of the work's name, raw material, idea, dimensions, production date, and the work environment, this Artist's biography, and style. According to (Feldman, 1982) "When describing abstract elements, critics need a broader knowledge of the field of techniques and methods of performance." (Feldman, 1982).¹⁰

Analysis: is the second step of the art crisis. Analysis means the way the work of art has been organized. Also, this step involves an analysis of the principles and the element of

⁹ See Feldman (1982:87).
¹⁰ See Feldman (1982:101).

design. The design elements include line, shape, form, space, colour, texture, and value. The design principles include emphasis, rhythm, movement, pattern, balance, proportion, and unity. Also in this step, the student must name the art elements that are present in the work of art while discovering the relationships and organization between the elements and principles within the whole work According to Feldman (1982) "analysis includes two aspects: first: formal analysis: is the disclosure of the relationship between things and the elements that the critic identifies in the description, as the different locations of similar shapes within the artwork.¹¹ It affects the viewer, so there must be a system that connects the shapes, colours and textures that reflect in their entirety the formations within the framework of the artwork." Second: Content analysis: for the implicit meanings, they relate to the constituents within the artwork, such as, presenting a symbol, ideological or historical context ... and so on, and here the role of the critic is to express what he perceived in those forms, through the idea inside the work of art to reach an interpretation of the purpose for which this artwork was produced. **Interpretation:** this is the third step of the critique process. Interdating is the process of finding the meaning of work or expressive qualities, such as mood, feelings, or emotions. This stage uses the previous description and analysis stages of the work to explain the critic's interpretation. It is the process of searching for the meanings inherent in the forms of art and its themes, which the critic presented with a description and an analysis in terms of form and content. According to Feldman (1994) "the interpretation differs from the description, as it includes the viewers' feelings about the content of the artwork and the meanings it contains". The interpretation here clarifies the content. The best type of interpretation is that which extracts meanings from the largest visual artistic entity and connects these meanings to the lives of the community members who see it. Because interpretation depends on the culture of the one who interprets it, by making a hypothesis about the artwork. To interpret the meanings that reveal the intellectual values, beliefs and facts that the artist described in his artistic work, and there is no doubt that the expressive language used by the critic will play a role in approximating the formal and sensual values, and their impact in terms of their feelings. Through artistic works that emphasize these values, we do not forget that the interpretation is presented concerning the artwork, not the artist. The interpretation helps explain the meaning of art, even if it differs from one person to another. From a certain

¹¹ See Feldman (1982:106).

period of time to another period, any interpretation can be corrected on its own (Feldman, 1994).¹²

Judgment: the fourth step of critical analysis is judgment. This step is about evaluating the work in relation to aesthetic excellence and other works of its type. The judgment is a conclusion drawn from the previous stages, what qualifies as aesthetic excellence is based upon the critic and the type of critical judgment they use. The issuance of a judgment is considered the most challenging stage of art criticism because the critic must give a material or intangible value to the work of art, and there may be a variation from one critic to another regarding issuing a specific judgment, because this is due to the critic's culture, inclinations. The judgment step uses aesthetic theories for support. According to Feldman, there are three steps to judge the work of art. The first step involves the imitational and literal qualities: Some critics favour the artwork's realistic presentation. People with this point of view feel that a painting should imitate life, that it should appear "real" before it can be considered successful. The second step is formalism and the design qualities. Other critics think that composition is the essential factor in a work of art. This theory stresses the importance of the arrangements of the elements of art. The third step is emotionalism and expressive qualities: Critics who support this theory are primarily concerned with the artwork's emotional content. They require a strong sense of feelings, moods, or ideas to be communicated from the artwork to the viewer. In terms of other criteria to consider, this includes the craftsmanship, originality, historical importance, and similar work (Feldman, 1994).¹³

■ 6.0 DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The study shows that using the Feldman method in art criticism is one of the more widely accepted practices in art education classrooms. The Feldman method allows a student to learn about art to critique based on the basic principles of the elements of art and the principles of design. The ability to simplify the critical steps and leave judgments based on observable facts and relationships makes the Feldman method objective. This method does not consider the viewer's emotional response to the work of art (Feldman, 1970).¹⁴

■ 7.0 CONCLUSION

The Feldman method is one of the commonly used critique methods in the classroom for its fundamental use of the elements of art and design principles. By having students practice and

¹² See Feldman (1994:87).

¹³ See Feldman (1994:115).

¹⁴ See Feldman (1970:88).

utilize their knowledge of the art fundamentals with the formalist method, students' development is strengthened as they inherently identify the elements and principles while critiquing a work of art. Art criticism is an organized series of situations, and it is a process that requires an in-depth study of art issues, assimilation of various critical trends, knowledge of all artistic developments, artistic achievements. The relationship between criticism and art is close because criticism revolves around art and stems from analysis and distinction. This is because the different styles and schools of art have made a gap between the viewer and the work of art, and here we say being able to read artworks and get to know them, in terms of their characteristics, and gaining knowledge of their techniques and the ability of the artist. Besides, Feldman's critical method allows the student to discover aesthetic innovations and gain aesthetic experience as it relates to the work of art. The Feldman method, a systematic process to discuss artwork, involves four stages: description, analysis, interpretation, and evaluation.

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