

### *Experience*

Experience, according to the definition of Raymond Williams, has two meanings: (i) knowledge gathered from past events, whether by conscious observation or by consideration and reflection; and (ii) a particular kind of consciousness, which can in some contexts be distinguished from 'reason' or 'knowledge.'<sup>1</sup> Both meanings share the pivotal elements that are the subject who gains or accepts the experience and the object that causes or offers the experience. In both cases, the experience is prompted by something other than the subject, whether by an environment, activity, situation, or entity. Then, the experience is highlighted and accepted by the subject.

Williams then argues how the two experiences in the definition are "radically different," and even opposite to one another (pg. 84). The first meaning of experience, similar to "lessons," directs to the past, whereas the second meaning, close to "awareness," resides in the present (pg. 84). The former is a sort of knowledge obtained for further reasoning, consideration, reflection, and/or analysis, whereas the latter is an event that is immediate, current, and at its extreme, exclusive of all other forms of understanding except for the very acceptance of the experience itself. With the examples of the extreme cases for each occasion, Williams points out how the two meanings not only differ but exclude one another. In short, "experience" is an actively contested word (pg. 84).

Although the two meanings are valid, the argument for their mutual exclusion of one another is not quite agreeable. For the argument in the previous paragraph, Williams presumes that the two different occurrences of the meanings would not take place simultaneously, simply

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<sup>1</sup> Raymon Williams, "E," *Keywords: A Vocabulary Of Culture and Society*, page 83

because each has a different time-based characteristics. But the past, present, and future are never precisely separable, and any activity relates to more than one singular moment in time. Human mind works in a complicated, and often paradoxical way. The varied layers of experiences are obtained and/or accepted as "lessons" and/or "awareness" in a blurred magnitude of past, present, and future.

This amendment of detail directly connects to an important contemporary example, which is the "experience" section in the resume. Experience is the title of the primary section in the resume, and it contains information about the individual's workplaces, dates of employment, positions, major responsibilities and achievements. In this increasingly competitive and corporate world, one's resume tends to carry an overwhelmingly great value. The information in the "experience" section states "the knowledge gathered from the past events" at the said workplaces, at the same time signaling "a particular consciousness" that possesses certain capabilities, and ultimately suggesting the aptness and merit that will show at the recruiting workplace in the future. Resumes are evaluated based on the potential employee's past experiences, to determine the matter of recruitment in the present, in the hopes of satisfaction in the future. The simultaneous consideration of the past, present, and future in resume evaluation closely relates to the layered meaning of the word "experience."

Experience is a crucial concept in my studies as well, because an increasingly important genre of design technology is immersive experience. An immersive experience is participation in a comprehensive multisensory environment which has overarching, all-embracing presence. Whether digital, physical, or more frequently a mixture of both, the illusory environment creates, alters, or enhances reality. AR/VR, or Augmented Reality/Virtual

Reality, is a prominent category in immersive experience, which is realized through various digital technologies. It is helpful to note that AR is also synonymous with mixed reality or computer-mediated reality, because those synonyms emphasize the digital addition to the physical reality as the primary logic of the technology. Another prominent category is immersive exhibition that uses techniques such as projection, installation, and other audio or visual tools. Various museums, galleries or other platforms increasingly seek ways to incorporate multifaceted methods for their displays. These immersive experiences would consist heavily of "a particular consciousness" that belongs to the subject who views the show. The very nature of immersivity seeks to maximize and influence the viewer's "awareness" of the exhibit. This construction of experience is "then the fullest, most open, most active kind of consciousness, and it includes feeling as well as thought" (pg. 84).

Experience is increasingly important in today's art, design, and all realms of culture. In this growingly competitive, gentrified, and divisive world, people seek meaningful and pleasant experiences, and wish them to be at the core of their cultural involvement. There are various art, design, and music collectives that curate experiences. A significant portion of designers today are user experience designers. It is as exciting as it is important to observe how the definition of "experience" continuously evolves, and what new ideas it gifts us with in the meantime.