

AUTONOMY: RE-APPRECIATION OF ARCHITECTURE

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ABSTRACT

AUTONOMY: RE-APPRECIATION OF ARCHITECTURE

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The contradiction between architecture's "autonomy", its existence as an entity with its own "disciplinary specificity"- and its social "engagement", its involvement in culture, ideology and economy, has been the subject of numerous discussions in architectural discourse, initially in Europe and later in North America. It is argued in this thesis that although "autonomy" and "engagement" seem contradictory to each other, architecture's "critical status" is rooted in this contradiction. Autonomy is regarded as one of the essential sides of architecture's dual position. This suggests that the *in-between*, or in Stanford Anderson's terms, "quasi-autonomous" status of architecture can only be sustained through its existence as an entity that has a certain degree of autonomy. Autonomy is an agent for architectural discourse to isolate architecture from its involvement in the external reality and increase awareness within the discipline by concentrating on its specific knowledge. Autonomy aids

architecture to pretend to be “detached” while in reality it is “engaged”. To focus on the autonomous dimension of architecture, to search for architecture’s own intrinsic qualities, helps to produce knowledge within the discipline and provides a “critical distance” for architecture to resist any “external authority”.

Thus this thesis intends to explore the potentials of the conceptualization and problematization of “autonomy” in architecture and its employment as a critical tool by architectural discourse to re-assess architectural practice. The private house projects designed by Boran Ekinçi in Turkey are exemplified and utilized for the re-conceptualization of the term and enable the transfer of the discourse related with autonomy to the local context where the issue hardly gained a popularity. By doing so, both the appreciation of autonomy in general and re-appreciation of architecture in Turkey are aimed.

Keywords: autonomy, critical Architecture, quasi- autonomous, architectural criticism, Boran Ekinçi, negation, resistance, self- referential.

ÖZ

ÖZERKLİK: MİMARLIĞI YENİDEN TAKDİR ETMEK

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Mimarlığın “özerkliği” ve “toplumsal adanmışlığı” arasındaki çelişki özellikle Avrupa, ve sonra Amerika Birleşik Devletleri’nde birçok tartışmaya konu olmuştur. Bu çalışmada, mimarlığın özerkliği ve toplumsal adanmışlığı birbirine çelişkili görünse de mimarlığın “eleştirelliği”nin bu çelişkiden kaynaklandığı düşünülmektedir. Özerklik bu ikili durumun vazgeçilmez bir ögesidir. Başka bir deyişle, mimarlığın Stanford Anderson tarafından tanımlanan “neredeyse özerk” durumunu koruyabilmesi için belirli bir derecede özerk olması gerekir. Özerklik mimarlığı bir an için “dış gerçeklik” ile kurduğu ilişkiden soyutlayıp kendi disipliner bilgisine yoğunlaşmasını sağlayan bir araç olarak çalışır. Bu tez, mimarlığın kendi bilgisine yoğunlaşmasının mesleki bilgiyi ve bilinci arttıracığını ve bu yolla mimarlığın “eleştirel mesafesini” koruyacağını savunur.

Bu alıřmada, zerklik teriminin mimarlık sylemi tarafından kavramsallařtırılmasının ve problem edinilmesinin disiplini tekrar deęerlendirmek aısından kaınılmaz olduęu idda edilmektedir. Boran Ekinci'nin Trkiye'deki tek ev projeleri bu tezde zerklik teriminin tekrar kavramsallařtırılmasına yardımcı olarak kullanılmıřtır. Bu projeler, zerklik tartiřmasının, yerel baęlamda tartiřılmasına olanak saęlamaktadır. Bylelikle hem zerklik kavramının, hem de Trkiye'de mimarlıęın tekrar deęerlendirilmesi amalanmıřtır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: zerklik, neredeyse zerk, eleřtirel mimarlık, mimari eleřtiri, Boran Ekinci, reddediř, diren, kendine referanslı.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

This thesis intends to explore the potentials of the conceptualization and problematization of “autonomy” in architecture and its employment as a critical tool by the architectural discourse to re-assess architectural practice. It is believed in this study that to focus on the autonomous dimension of architecture, to search for architecture’s own intrinsic qualities helps to produce knowledge within the discipline and provides a “critical distance” for architecture to resist any “external authority”.

Autonomy is twofold here. First, it refers to architecture’s status in Modern society, as a secular institution and a “critical agent”, which is the outcome of Modern civilization and which distinguishes Modern Architecture from pre-modern, and second, it acts as a critical tool within criticism, which is a modern phenomenon as well. Focusing particularly on the latter, this study starts with the assumption that criticism has a potential in promoting a “critical practice” and the conceptualization of autonomy can contribute to produce knowledge and “self-awareness” within architectural discourse that provide necessary “critical distance” for architecture.

This thesis claims that the private house projects designed by Boran Ekinci that offer an alternative to the conventional housing projects in Turkey can be exemplified as a search for a new definition of autonomy in the Turkish architectural discourse.¹ Declaring their own existence against the conventional housing trends, the private houses of Ekinci resist the dominant system of values. Furthermore, Ekinci's latest projects by repeating the principles of the "International Style" rediscover the principles of Modernity in Turkey. This "belated" Modernity may be regarded as a "belated" reaction to the Turkish contemporary architectural context, both materially and conceptually. In a context where architecture can hardly attain its critical status, particularly Filip Amram, Durusu and Rıza Tansu Houses are examples of an architecture that negate their context and legitimize themselves by emphasizing their existence as "autonomous objects". Therefore they enable a discussion on the "autonomy" of architecture and the "authorship" of the architect in the local context where the subject hardly gained resonance unlike in Europe and America, where preoccupation with autonomy re-emerged continuously at certain times and under specific conditions.

As K. Michael Hays asserted, although the definition and conceptualization of autonomy in architecture is part of Modernism at large, during the 1970's the term had gained a renewed significance in Europe and America. Modern Architecture and its self criticism have been defined by Hays in his essay

¹ Conventional means here uncritical, usual, conformist and in a sense traditional. I particularly avoided using "traditional" here as the term has other connotations as well. It is significant to emphasize that conventional used here is not the same with the terms "conventions" and "conventionalism" as conceptualized by Stanford Anderson in his essay "Critical Conventionalism in Architecture". Anderson's terms will be further examined in the following chapters.

“Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” as “one resistant to the self confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time.”² As such, “critical architecture” places itself in an *in-between* position, affirms Hays, “*between* the efficient representation of preexisting cultural values and the wholly detached autonomy of an abstract formal system.”³

The essay was published in 1984 in the Yale Architectural Journal, *Perspecta 21*, where the editors Carol Burns and Robert Taylor in the editorial of the same issue declared that “architecture is not an isolated or autonomous medium, it is actively engaged by the social, intellectual and visual culture which is outside the discipline and which encompasses it.”⁴ As Robert Somol and Sarah Whiting asserted, Hays’s essay was indirectly criticizing the positions of the editors of the same issue in their reductive understanding of the “engagement” and “autonomy”.⁵ Defining a mediatory role for architecture, in this essay, Hays emphasized the dialectical situation of Modern Architecture, where “autonomy” is regarded as one of the necessary conditions of this critical position. This position suggested also that architecture, to be capable of being critical and resistant to the dominant modes of design has to have a certain degree of autonomy. Hays’s essay was part of an architectural discourse in which the contradiction between architecture’s “autonomy” and its “social engagement” had been frequently the subject of discussions, particularly during the 1970’s in Europe and America.

² K. Michael Hays, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” *Perspecta 21*, The Yale Architectural Journal (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984) 14

³ Ibid.

⁴ Cited from the text, Robert Somol, Sarah Whiting, “Notes around the Doppler Effect and Other Moods of Modernism” *Perspecta 33* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984) 72

⁵ Ibid.

The emergence of autonomy as a popular issue in the 1970's was not a coincidence. This period embraced various reactionary or critical attitudes towards Modernism all of which were in general labeled under the term of "Post-Modernism". This situation found its counterpart in architecture as well.

Starting with the 1960's and especially during the 1970's, the optimism of Modern Architecture for an enhanced future was replaced with a doubt and dissatisfaction with the present and with the examination of the past. As Neil Leach asserted, the slogans claiming to attain "a new architecture" at the beginning of the century turned to the "rethinking of architecture" in the 1970's.⁶ Consequently, as Leach affirmed, there emerged two distinct attitudes towards Modernism. The first is the reactionary attitude that rejects Modernism, and the second is the resistant one that re-evaluates Modernism from a critical viewpoint.⁷

As Hays asserted in the introduction of his edited book *Architectural Theory since 1968*, particularly the publication of two books *Complexity and Contradiction in Architecture* by Robert Venturi and *L'architettura della Citta'* by Aldo Rossi published in 1966 marked a critical period in both architectural discourse and profession.⁸ These authors were representing two antagonistic positions generally labeled as "Neo-Rationalism" and "Neo-Realism".

⁶ Neil Leach, "Introduction," *Rethinking Architecture A Reader in Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1997) xiii

⁷ This information is based on the information taken from Assoc. Dr. Ayşen Savaş. Ayşen Savaş, "Unpublished Lecture Notes," 2002-2004

⁸ This point was highlighted in his endnotes. See K. Michael Hays, "Introduction" *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1998) xvi

Borrowing the definition from Mario Gandelsonas, it can be stated that Neo-Realism cared for the present and for the popular aspects of culture such as pop art, advertising cinema and industrial design.⁹ Neo-Rationalism, on the other hand, claimed that architecture is a force and an accumulation of knowledge in itself, which solely speaks of itself.¹⁰

Hence, it can be asserted that, “autonomy project”¹¹, as Hays called it, of the 1970’s was initiated with the Neo-Rationalist tendency that emerged as a “reaction” and “resistance” to the situation in which architecture found itself at that time and to the eclectic revivals of Neo-Realism that submitted architecture to the popular culture.

For Hays, the 1970’s was a period in architecture “when architectural theory needed a re-foundation of its roots and architectural practice saw itself threatened by technological optimization and utilitarianism, by the demands placed on it by the service industry, as well as by positivist inquiries of the behavioral sciences, sociology and operations research, all of which threatened to undermine the specificity of architecture.”¹² Thus, as Hays suggested, architects that were claiming architecture’s autonomy struggled in two fronts.

⁹ Mario Gandelsonas, “Neo-Functionalism” *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) 7

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 7

¹¹ K. Michael Hays called the discussions on autonomy during the 1970’s as “autonomy project”. See K. Michael Hays, “Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Discipline,” *Perspecta 33: Mining Autonomy*, The Yale Architectural Journal (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001) 56

¹² K. Michael Hays, “Prolegomenon for a Study Linking the Advanced Architecture of the Present to that of the 1970’s through Ideologies of Media, the Experience of Cities in Transition, and Ongoing Effects of Reification,” *Perspecta 32*, The Yale Architectural Journal (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001) 101

The first was against the “instrumentalization” of architecture by technological optimism. This was the situation in which architecture found itself after 1945, after the World War II, when, deprived of its social vision, Modern Architecture, which aimed the transformation of the society using technology as a tool, became itself a tool used in the production processes and became a safe medium for capitalism.¹³ In that context architecture recognized that it lost its cultural domain that it had claimed at the beginning of the twentieth century not only to control but also to transform. As the autonomy of architecture was inherently interconnected to its “social engagement”, and architecture only as an autonomous discipline could have an impact on the other cultural systems, the loss of architecture’s domain of cultural intervention signified that the disciplinary specificity of architecture was at stake.

The second was the intrusion of different disciplines in architecture’s domain. As Hays problematized, during the 1970’s, the interventions in architecture coming from behavioral sciences, sociology and operations research reduced architecture to a mere embodiment of the scientific data denying its specific knowledge as an independent discipline.¹⁴ Consequently the act of design was reduced to the systematic evaluation of the data coming from the answers that people gave to the questionnaires of statistical inquiries or the mathematical optimization techniques that aimed to reach a standard efficient solution in architecture. Both of these approaches reduced architecture to a mere science removing it from its codes and breaking any resistance in architecture on the

¹³ Andreas Huyssen, “Mapping the Postmodern,” *Culture and Society*, ed. Jeffrey C. Alexander, Steven Seidman (USA: Cambridge University Press, 1990) 359

¹⁴ K. Michael Hays, “Prolegomenon for a Study” op. cit, 101

Hays raises the issue of the intervention of the behavioral sciences, operations research, etc. into architecture in his various texts. See also K. Michael Hays. “The Oppositions of Autonomy and History,” *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) ix

one hand, and optimizing it to gain the highest profit that rendered architecture as a safe medium for the capitalist intentions on the other. The architectural problem was evaluated either as a direct response to certain patterns of behaviors of people, or as a mathematical problem that should be solved in a systematic manner. As a result, in those works, architectural knowledge was replaced by the knowledge of the non-architectural disciplines such as sociology, physiology, mathematics or physics.

Within this context, not only architects, but also architectural historians regarded “autonomy” as the only remaining tool for architecture to have a critical distance from the “endless cycle” of the capitalist production and consumption; and maintain for architecture a critical social role.¹⁵ In general, the project searched for the “immutable laws” of the architectural discipline that resisted the historical change within the city and that constituted the knowledge specific to architecture. In so doing, architecture turned into itself to redraw its territory.

The debates on autonomy, or “autonomy project”, which included the works of Neo-Rationalists, were European, particularly Italian in origin. In Italy, it was represented by Aldo Rossi, who was the builder of the group called as *Tendenza*. In America, on the other hand, as Mario Gandelsonas asserted, Peter Eisenman and John Hejduk were the architects who were concerned with the issue of autonomy at that time.¹⁶ The debates on autonomy that were originally European, later transferred to America by means of the architectural

¹⁵ Editors’ Statement, *Perspecta33*, op. cit., 7

¹⁶ Mario Gandelsonas, “Neo-Functionalism” *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) 7

journals and exhibitions. Particularly the architectural journal, *Oppositions*, published between the years 1973-1984, where autonomy has been continuously the subject of discussions, had been a significant source for the American audience during 1970's to follow the European architectural discourse.¹⁷ Jorge Silvetti, Rodolfo Machado, Mario Gandelsonas and Diana Agrest were critics and practicing architects, who dealt broadly with autonomy both in their writings and projects.

In 1980, Fogg Art Museum organized an exhibition with the title of "Autonomous Architecture: The Works of Eight Contemporary Architects" that included the projects and writings of eight architects who were Diana Agrest, Mario Gandelsonas, Mario Botta, Oswald Mathias Ungers, Jorge Silvetti, Rodolfo Machado, Aldo Rossi and Peter Eisenman.¹⁸ One year later, the exhibition was taken as a special issue by *Harvard Architectural Review* in its 3rd volume with the same title of the exhibition catalog. Focusing on the exhibition in this issue, the journal raised a discussion on autonomy. It was a re-evaluation of the intellectual discourse of autonomy of the 1970's that had a wide acceptance in the writings and projects of numerous architects.

For the editors of the *Harvard Architectural Review*, the architects that participated in the exhibition were defining architecture's autonomy by accepting it as an entity that "has a particular quality, an essence, which is specific to it and which distinguishes it from other arts."¹⁹ According to that project, "the possibility of autonomy ultimately depended on architecture's

¹⁷ K. Michael Hays. "The Oppositions of Autonomy and History" *Oppositions Reader*, op. cit.,

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¹⁸ Editorial, "Autonomous Architecture," *Harvard Architectural Review*, vol3, Winter 1984, 93

¹⁹ Ibid.

reference to a priori, ideal forms. It was through this allusion to an ideal that autonomous architecture concerned itself with essence and transcended personal idiosyncrasies.”²⁰ Consequently, the works in the exhibition were architectural objects that were representing only the logic of a chosen formal structure rather than any other meaning outside this organization. In that sense, “autonomous architecture” placed the primary importance on the consistent formal structure of the design, which was established within the inner relations among the architectural elements. ²¹

Publishing a special issue with the title of “Mining Autonomy” after sixteen years of the publication of its 21st volume, where autonomy was the subject, *Perspecta* committed its 33rd volume once more to the concept of autonomy. As the editors asserted, rather than abandoning the “intellectual autonomy project” of the 1970’s, the aim of *Perspecta* 33 was to explore the relationship of autonomy to architecture’s potential to act as a critical agent²² and the possibility of a search for the term “autonomy” within the contemporary American context, where particularly digital technologies altered not only architectural representation techniques but also enabled to generate architectural design with this technology. As Hays claimed, the domination of computer technologies and media not only changed the production and representation of architecture, but also created a distinct mode of reception, thus making architecture unimaginable without the concept of media.²³ Concerning the situation of the new context, Hays asserted, “this position affirms a unity of techniques from different disciplines and cultural regions-

²⁰ Ibid. , 7

²¹ Ibid. , 7

²² Editorial, *Mining Autonomy*, *Perspecta* 33 (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2001) 7

²³ K. Michael Hays, ““Prolegomenon for a Study” op. cit., 103

architecture, physics, chemical engineering, computation, biology, and the flows of capital itself. One might characterize this shift one way from autonomy toward the production of a new whole with a liquification of disciplinary boundaries and a radical mixing of not only forms but materials and concepts culled from different disciplines.”²⁴ Regarding this fact, extending the search of the “1970 Autonomy Project” and re-evaluating the concept of autonomy within the new context *Perspecta* in its 33rd volume searched for an autonomy idea in architecture that lies “at the boundaries of the discipline”.²⁵ The publication of the special issue on autonomy in *Perspecta 33* in 2001 re-raised the issue that seemed today outmoded.

With reference to the discussions on autonomy pointed out so far, it can be stated that this term has been a common interest for numerous architects and architectural historians particularly during the 1970’s. In other words, in the history of Modern Architecture, the conceptualization and problematization of autonomy emerged at certain times and under specific conditions. Here I claim that autonomy provided architects with a critical tool to re-evaluate the discipline. In that sense, as Michael Hays asserted, the question why architecture discusses its autonomy over and over again and what kind of a situation leads architecture to ask this question is more interesting than to answer the question whether architecture is really autonomous.²⁶

Believing in the critical mediatory role of architecture as defined by Hays, and accepting autonomy as a modern concept, this thesis aims to search for the

²⁴ Ibid. , 104

²⁵ Editorial, *Perspecta 33*, op. cit, 7

²⁶ K. Michael Hays, “The Oppositions of Autonomy and History,” *Oppositions Reader*, op. cit.,

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potentials of the conceptualization of autonomy in Modern Architecture. Rather than making a historical reconstruction of the historical applications of autonomy in architecture, this thesis focuses in its critical status within Modern Architecture and rather than giving a single definition of the term “autonomy”, this study reveals the complexity of the juxtapositions of many definitions.²⁷ The thesis argues that “the adjectives, suffixes and prefixes attached, delayed the definition” of the term and conceptualized it to turn into a critical tool for the development of the architectural knowledge.²⁸ In that sense it is suggested here that autonomy is a critical tool for the discourse of architecture that constitutes its own knowledge through which it reads, criticizes and produces the practice of architecture.

It should be re-emphasized that the conceptualization of the term “autonomy” in the early Modern Architecture and its problematization later, particularly during the 1970’s, and its re-problematization could only be read in the European and American architectural discourse. In the Turkish architectural circles, the term did not have such a wide resonance. Only a few studies, which were prepared as graduate works for the Department of Architecture of the Middle East

²⁷ Liane Lefaivre and Alexander Tzonis made this kind of a historical reconstruction of the term in their essay “The Question of Autonomy in Architecture” *Harvard Architectural Review*, vol.3, Winter 1984

In Vitruvius’ advice to the architects to achieve the proper image of *ideae*, overcoming the problems of optical distortion, the authors find an argument in favor of autonomy. According to this idea, architecture is accepted as a field that deals “with the problems of pure visibility that are not only apart from construction and use but are also highly specialized as they belong to the world of illusions and optical corrections.” Similarly, in the middle ages, the beauty of forms are not seen as reflections of a higher order but they are seen beautiful as they have the capacity of reflecting that order. That understanding of architecture in the middle ages implies the autonomy, for Lefaivre and Tzonis, as architectural form is perceived as an end in itself having a measure of autonomy. That kind of a search of the concept of autonomy tries to reveal the extent of the specificity of architecture as well as the specific field of interest of the architects in the pre-modern times. In that sense, they use the term to search in the history the specific rules of architecture that interested only the architect. The architects considered to bring harmony or moral and formal perfection to the society.

²⁸ Ayşen Savaş, “Unpublished Lecture Notes,” 2002-2004

Technical University concerned with the term. Among them, evaluating “autonomy” from a phenomenological viewpoint, and drawing from Kantian tradition of art theory, Nergis Öğüt in her book, which was developed from her Ph.D. thesis, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture* draws a wide conceptual framework of the term. Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş frequently gives place to the discussions on autonomy in her master course “Introduction to Architectural Research”. Moreover, there are a few completed and ongoing studies at M.E.T.U that are directly or indirectly discussing the term.

Apart from these studies autonomy that was problematized insistently in Europe and America, did not obtained a wide reflection among the Turkish architects and critics. One may stretch the issue to say that the indifference related with the problematization of “autonomy” in Turkey may be linked to the application of the Modernity Project to Turkey without its social basis. Sibel Bozdoğan in her book *Rethinking Modernity and National Identity in Turkey* problematized the application of the Modernity Project in the non-Western countries by focusing particularly on the situation of Turkish architecture in the Early Republican Period. It is argued in that book that Modern Architecture emerged as a critical discourse; however the application of it outside Europe and America was highly problematical. In most of the non-Western countries, Modern Architecture became a tool for “power” and “politics”, as modernization did not emerge as “an output of the profound societal experience of great transformation into industrial, urban and market-oriented order”.²⁹ As a result of this, Bozdoğan

²⁹ Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press: 2001) 9

affirms, Modern Architecture became a representation of Modernity in the Non-Western countries without its social basis and materials, such as “industrial cities, capitalist production and an autonomous bourgeoisie”.³⁰

Bozdoğan points out that similar to the most non-Western countries, in Turkey, only the formal representation of Modern Architecture was taken from the West without considering its social and cultural intentions and used by politics to legitimize the new established Turkish Republic.³¹

In Turkey, the lack of a bourgeoisie that is supposed to be constituted by self-referential individuals and the lack of the critical discourse of Modernity did prevent an understanding of architecture as an autonomous, self-referential discipline operated by self-critical individuals. As Bozdoğan particularly emphasized, in the Early Republic in Turkey “style was not an autonomous aesthetic realm or simply a technical matter internal to the discipline of architecture. It was a powerful vehicle through which political leaders and nationalists elites “sought to “imagine” the nation where it did not exist.”³² It was particularly architecture in Europe that claimed intervention in politics, while in Turkey; it was politics that directed architecture.

Bozdoğan asserted that only after the 1950’s in Turkey, particularly with the establishment of the Chamber of Architects in 1954, an “oppositional voice in the political arena” emerged. With the institutionalization of architecture and the establishment of the departments of architecture in new universities, particularly

³⁰ Ibid., 10

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid., 294

the Department of Architecture in the Middle East Technical University, architectural discourse became more powerful and critical.³³

As asserted before, this thesis starts with the assumption that “autonomy” has been a critical tool for the intellectual discourse of architecture, particularly in Europe. Furthermore, a critical reading of an architectural work can be done through that concept and this critical reading can contribute to the knowledge of architecture. Since this study accepts the critical *in-between* status of Modern Architecture, and regards autonomy as a tool to maintain this status, the critical situation of Modern Architecture, as defined by Hays and the roots of the term autonomy will be sought in the first chapter. Diana Agrest’s proposition of “discursive autonomy” and Stanford Anderson’s “critical conventionalism” will be significant theoretical positions in formulating the conceptual framework of “critical architecture”.

In the second chapter, the re-discovery of the term “autonomy” as one of the critical tools for Modernity and the conceptualization of autonomy within Modern Architecture will be examined. As autonomy is a loaded term, which makes any single definition reductive, it is deconstructed into its self-descriptive propositions. To do so, a clearer comprehension of the term is aimed. After the conceptual framework of “autonomy” is drawn, this will be used as a critical agent to re-evaluate architectural production. As such, the goal is to show its potentials to unveil the hidden aspects of the unique architecture kept unknown

³³ Ilhan Tekeli. “The Social Context of the Development of Architecture in Turkey” *Modern Turkish Architecture*, ed. Renata Holod and Ahmet Evin (USA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) 26

by conventions.³⁴ That eventually will help the social re-appreciation of architecture as a profession and discipline in Turkey.

Within this framework, the private houses of Ekinci can be regarded as variations within a consistent architectural language. Filip Amram, Riza Tansu and Durusu Houses can be regarded as the ultimate point of this language that evolved from a more massive to a more transparent and minimalist design. The use of simple rectangular volumes, transparent facades, flat roofs, structural order, the combination of timber, steel, glass and aluminum in Ekinci's private house projects calls for the early Modernists style, the framework of which was formulated by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their book the *International Style*.³⁵

The consistency and repetition of some details and ideas within the private house projects are significant features of Ekinci's architecture that resist a priory authority. The main reason behind the selection of the private house projects of Ekinci for this study is their potential to open an autonomy discussion in terms of "negation" and "resistance". It should be noted that the main goal of this thesis is not to examine the private projects of Ekinci as a case study in its conventional sense in architectural research, but it is suggested that the discourse generated here is inherited explicitly in the projects themselves. Particularly, Filip Amram, Riza Tansu and Durusu Houses

³⁴ Here again the term convention is not used in the sense that Stanford Anderson conceptualizes the term in architecture as the untouchable principles of an architect or an architectural work. Convention here signifies the uncritical and standard design modes that are dominant in culture. It should be emphasized that my aim is not to negate the potential conventional or traditional modes of design. Rather, my point is progress is possible only through posing alternatives to the existing situation.

³⁵ Henry Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: Norton, 1966)

designed as freestanding objects rose above ground both visually and conceptually speaking their own reality are significant examples for that discussion. Thus, these projects are used as tools for the comprehension of the autonomy and the concepts discussed by Stanford Anderson and Diana Agrest such as “conventions”, “research program”, “disciplinary specificity”, etc. In that sense, in this study, the projects of Ekinici are used as subtexts and the texts and concepts of Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson are taken as a case study with an aim of clearer framing of the term “autonomy”.

CHAPTER 2

ARCHITECTURE AS MEDIATION: CRITICAL ARCHITECTURE

Behind the objectives of the “Modernity Project” there was a hidden agenda “to develop objective science, universal morality and law, and autonomous art according to their inner logic.”³⁶ This was a humanistic aim to use the accumulated knowledge within each field for the advancement of social life. It can be stated that the relation of architecture with Modernity, was stronger than any other cultural field. Especially during and after the First World War, architecture became a vital tool of Modernity to realize its utopian and humanistic aims. Consequently, as a carrier of these utopian aims, architecture “at least since the French Revolution, has been ideological, in the sense that it has been able to participate in and help to articulate political and social positions.”³⁷ Correspondingly, the Modern architect did not only claim to be the specialist of his own field, but he also declared to be the active actor in the social and cultural life with the aim of transforming it. The architects of the Modern Movement believed that it was possible through architecture to solve the social problems and reformulate the social life.

³⁶Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity: An Incomplete Project,” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983) 9

³⁷ Peter Eisenmann. “Post-Critical Architecture” found in <http://digilander.libero.it/rolandfabiani/english/PeterEisenman.htm>, 10 April, 2004

While architecture in the history represented and served for the dominant institutions such as the church or the royal family, as categorized by Peter Bürger as “sacral art” and “courtly art”, in the modern period it was supposed to become an individual act.³⁸ Although art and architecture initially represented the bourgeois values in that period, architect or artist were expected to act with their own free will.

Modern Architecture’s claim to create a new architecture proper to the conditions of time may be reckoned as a canon that directs architects to a utopian aim, however the method to reach that meta-aim was due to the preference of the architect’s free will. That aim was not canonic in that sense. The vocabulary for the new architecture was not determined and the emergence of new building types, such as factories and museums with the new modern situation required the introduction of new codes. Consequently, it can be asserted that as an independent discipline, released from the canons by which it was directed in the past, in the Modern period, architecture became a legitimate discipline. That means, instead of being dictated by a canon, architecture’s position in the society and the way to establish this position were up to the preferences of the architects, which brought, as Stanford Anderson noted, certain degree of “conventionalism” to architecture.³⁹

Here I claim that the secularization of architecture, the changing status of architecture from a cult object to the individual expression, enabled it to become an agent open to criticism. With that critical position having criticism as a

³⁸ Peter Bürger. “Theory of the Avant-Garde” (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 47

³⁹ Stanford Anderson discusses the conventionalism in architecture in “Critical Conventionalism in Architecture” *Assemblage 1*(Massachusetts, MIT Press: 1986)

distinct field of knowledge within the discipline in the modern era, architecture attained a dual yet a complementary nature. This dual and complementary nature of architecture as both a profession and a discourse enabled the production of new ideas that governed the design process. Moreover, the development of knowledge to criticize a design work became one of the essential tasks that contributed to the body of the theoretical knowledge of the discipline. Criticism created its own site, techniques and rules, its own tools, such as magazines, seminars and developed as an institution that directed and controlled the practice of architecture.⁴⁰ “If architecture traditionally provided the spatial representation of dominant institutions, asserts Miriam Gusevich, in modern times architecture houses institutions and yet critiques dominant expectations and values. Criticism defines architecture as distinct from building.”⁴¹ Therefore, criticism establishes architecture as a cultural act and helps it to resist the status quo.

In the light of these transformations in the discipline of architecture, it can be asserted that, as Eisenman claimed, architecture, from Piranesi, Schinkel, Ledoux, to Le Corbusier, presents itself as a critical act.⁴² In the Modern period architects approached the expectations of the society from a critical perspective. Instead of representing them as they are, architecture started to criticize and aimed to increase the quality of those expectations. In that way, architecture not only gained a capacity to criticize the society but also it started

⁴⁰ Miriam Gusevich. “The Architecture of Criticism: A Question of Autonomy,” *Drawing, Building, Text, Essays in Architectural Theory* (New York, Princeton Architectural Press: 1991)

11

⁴¹ Ibid.

⁴² Peter Eisenman, “Post Critical Architecture” in <http://digilander.libero.it/rolandfabiani/english/PeterEisenman.htm>

to be criticized and controlled by its internal agents. Therefore, “critical architecture” suggests here a social function and a capacity to be criticized.

In the early period of Modern Architecture, each architect was a part of this critical act. Starting with the 1960’s, especially in the 1970’s, Modern Architecture was said to be deprived of its social vision. Therefore, architectural discipline was evaluated dominantly according to two perspectives, as Hays stated, one that sees architecture as an instrument of culture and the other that sees architecture as a pure autonomous form.⁴³ According to the former vision, culture was the cause as well as the content of the built world and architecture was a tool to express the values of culture. In that sense, culture, as a subject, played the decisive role in the act of designing. This view reduced architecture to a passive medium that solely depends on the socioeconomic, political and technological variants.⁴⁴ According to the latter view, architecture was accepted as an independent entity that creates autonomous objects and that is completely detached from culture. Refusing external references, this view dealt solely with architecture’s formal operations.⁴⁵ While one approach accepted the hegemony of culture over architecture, ascribing to architecture only a passive role as a representative of culture, the other approach reduced architecture to a pure form denying architecture’s social and political efficacy.⁴⁶

As a critique and alternative to those views that resided in two extreme poles, Hays emphasized the “criticalness” of architecture that distinguishes Modern

⁴³ K. Michael Hays, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” *Perspecta 21, The Yale Architectural Journal* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1984) 14-16

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

Architecture from pre-modern. For Hays, “critical architecture” is “one resistant to the self confirming, conciliatory operations of a dominant culture and yet irreducible to a purely formal structure disengaged from the contingencies of place and time.”⁴⁷ In that way, architecture possesses a mediatory position between culture and form.⁴⁸ It is “worldly” and “self-aware” at the same time.⁴⁹

Hays gives the skyscraper projects of Mies van der Rohe as examples for a possible critical architecture “that cannot be reduced either to a conciliatory representation of external forces or to a dogmatic, reproducible formal system.”⁵⁰

Mies’s skyscraper projects between the years 1921-22, for Hays, start with two common ideas. First, they constitute a unity; instead of being composed of different parts, they are revealing themselves as one unique mass. The curtain wall that reflects outside is hiding the order of the inside. With their undisclosed inside configurations, the skyscrapers reveal themselves as autonomous objects with their own logical configuration that cannot be read as the consequence of any external authority than architecture itself. On the other hand, however, the glass curtain wall “alternately transparent, reflective, or refractive depending on light conditions and viewing positions –absorbs, mirrors, or distorts the immediate images of the city life.”⁵¹ (Figures 1-4)

⁴⁷ Ibid., 14

⁴⁸ Ibid.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 16

⁵⁰ Ibid.

⁵¹ Ibid., 18



Figure 2.1 Friedrichstrasse Skyscraper Project, Berlin 1921 by Mies Van der Rohe. Perspective view from north. Bauhaus-Archive Berlin

Hays claims that:

Against the autonomous, formal object of humanism in which the viewer can grasp in purely mental space an antecedent logic, deciphering the relationships between its parts and connecting every part to a coherent formal theme, the alternative posited by Mies is an object intractable to decoding by an analysis of what is only immanent and apparent.⁵²

In “classically derived form”, for Hays, the viewer can decipher the relationships between parts and the whole by establishing the physical connection of “every part to a coherent formal theme”.⁵³ Hays claims that Mies posited an alternative to this relationship by creating an architectural object that cannot be fragmented visually into its constitutive parts. Instead, Mies set the meaning in the reflective facade whose reading is changing according to the viewing positions and time.⁵⁴ This sets the buildings, “wrenching from atemporal, idealized realm of autonomous form”, in a place in the context, which Hays, borrowing from Stanford Anderson, calls “worldliness”, “in a specific situation in the real world of experienced time, open to the chance and uncertainty of life in the metropolis.”⁵⁵ For Hays, the silent existence of the buildings is radical critique of their context. In that sense, claims Hays, “Mies’s skyscraper project is not conciliatory to the circumstances of its context. It is a critical interpretation of its worldly situation.”⁵⁶

⁵² K. Michael Hays. *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992) 187

⁵³ K. Michael Hays. “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” *Perspecta 21*, op. cit., 9

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ K. Michael Hays. *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992) 189-190

⁵⁶ K. Michael Hays. “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” *Perspecta 21*, op. cit., 19



Figure 2.2 Glass Skyscraper Project, 1922 by Mies Van der Rohe
View of Model. Airbrushed gouache on gelatin silver photograph.

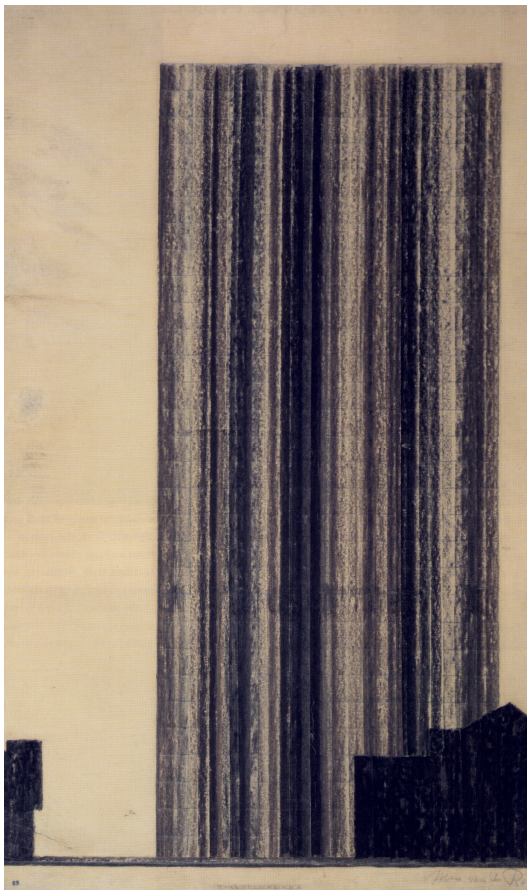


Figure 2.3 Glass Skyscraper Project Elevation Study. Charcoal, Conte Crayon on paper mounted on board.

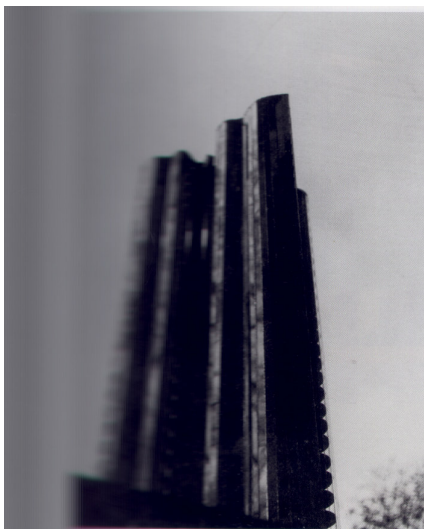


Figure 2.4 Glass Skyscraper Project Reflection Study.

Hays continues the search for the critical potential of Mies' architecture with the German Pavilion in Barcelona. In Barcelona Pavilion, asserts Hays, the composition of the architectural parts is not hierarchical and there are not identical units that are repeated in an endless chain.⁵⁷ Instead there exists an assemblage of different parts and materials. The passage through the pavilion enables one to perceive the varying relationships between architectural elements.⁵⁸ This creates a space that is outside the conventional and expected. The materials used in the pavilion, affirms Hays, begin to contradict with their own nature. (Figures 5-10) Hays asserts:

“Supporting columns dissolve in an invasion of light on their surfaces; the highly polished green Tinian marble reflects the highlights of the chromium glazing bars and seems to become transparent, as does the onyx slab; the green-tinted glass, in turn, becomes an insuperable mirrored screen; the pool in the small court-shielded from the wind and lined in black glass-is a perfect mirror, in which stands George Kolbe's “Dancer”.”⁵⁹

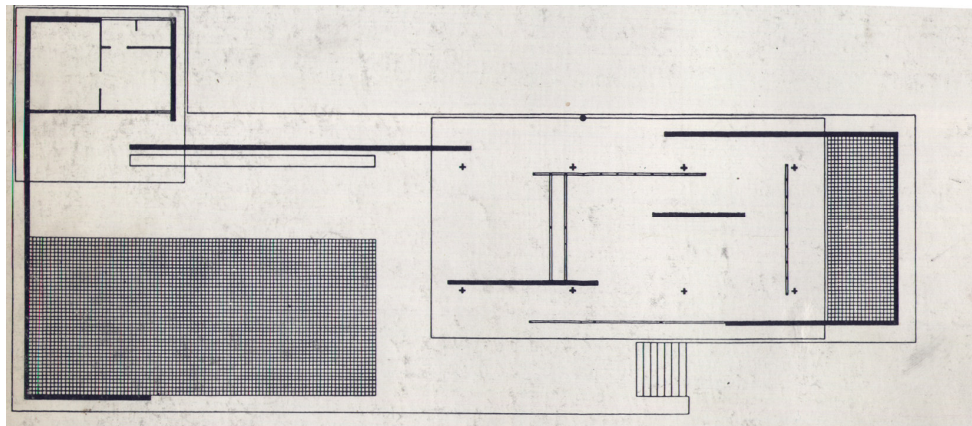


Figure 2.5 Plan of the German Pavilion, International Exposition, Barcelona.1928-29

⁵⁷ K. Michael Hays. “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form” op. cit, 23

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Ibid.



Figure 2.6 German Pavilion. View of secondary entrance looking toward attendant's lodge. 1929 Gelatin Silver Photograph

With this organization, for Hays, Mies's Barcelona Pavilion creates its own reality within the real world. Sharing the same temporal and spatial conditions with the real world on the one hand, the Pavilion insists on its own reality with its alternative spatial and material conditions on the other. In that sense, claims Hays, Barcelona Pavilion "tears a cleft in the continuous surface of reality."⁶⁰

With that study, Hays tried to reveal the governing principles in Mies' skyscraper projects. Mies' architectural program, Hays affirmed, was a "persistent rewriting of a few themes".⁶¹ For Hays, the "criticalness" of Mies' architecture lied in this persistent repetition of certain ideas.⁶² The opaqueness of the skyscraper projects to the audience in terms of unveiling of the relationships between parts and the whole, the reflection, refraction and

⁶⁰ Ibid. , 24

⁶¹ Ibid. , 26

⁶² Ibid.



Figure 2.7 Reflection Study

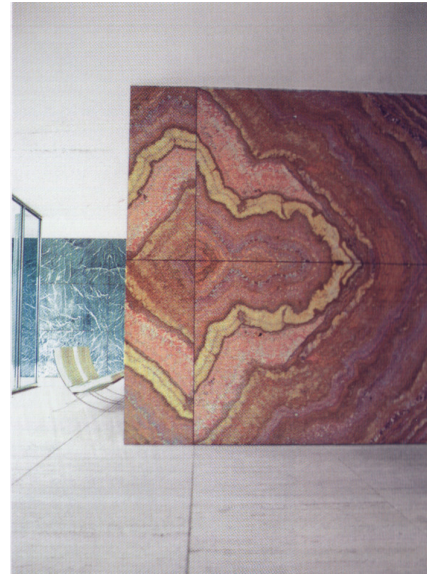


Figure 2.8 View of the onyx wall



Figure 2.9 View of the courtyard and reflecting pool.



Figure 2.10 View of the Interior

distortion of the surrounding by the curtain wall are repeated ideas adapted to changing circumstances. These are advanced and modified in time. For Hays, although the selection of these themes were initially arbitrary, eventually with continuous repetition within different projects they became legitimized governing principles for Mies' architecture, in Hays's terms, they became Mies' "authorial motivation".⁶³

As claimed by Hays and exemplified in Mies's architecture, the constancy and repetition of the principle ideas persistently rearticulated in an architectural work results in the accumulation of knowledge according to its "own special beginnings" and conventions denying any prior authority.⁶⁴ In that sense, for Hays, "repetition demonstrates how architecture can resist, rather than reflect an external cultural reality."⁶⁵

Within this theoretical framework, it is the repetition of certain governing principles within the private house projects designed by Boran Ekinci that enables his work to exemplify this position in the local context. This will be discussed in the following pages in accordance to the conceptual framework drawn by Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson.

2.1 The Theoretical Positions of Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson

For Hays, critical design practice and criticism should pose alternatives to the conventional and canonical forms therefore should be "resistant" and

⁶³ Ibid., 26

⁶⁴ Ibid.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

“oppositional”.⁶⁶ This position suggests a critical position that seeks an architecture that not only reflects the values of the context within which it finds itself, but also resists, critiques and even negates it. In that way, it brings new potentials to the discipline. “Critical architecture” claims a social vision not as utopian as it was in the early Modern Architecture, but progressive, critical and resistant at the same time.

With that position, Hays sets individual architect in a sensitive position. As the individual consciousness is part of the social situation and as he is the actor in it, Hays emphasizes that “critical architecture” is the choice of the architect and therefore it is his responsibility.⁶⁷ Both the designer and the architectural critic share this responsibility.

The two critical positions of Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson related with the concepts of “criticalness” and “autonomy” can be exemplified as theoretical positions related with the concept of a “critical architecture”. Both models, although they differ from each other, draw the theoretical framework of architecture as one that has a self-governing mechanism through which it interacts with the other cultural mediums. Architecture’s autonomy is seen as one of the necessary constituents of a “critical architecture”.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 16

⁶⁷ Ibid., 26

2.1.1 Diana Agrest and Discursive Autonomy*

Diana Agrest, in her theoretical model of architecture, refers to two complementary terms “design” and “non-design”, through the continuous interaction of which architecture maintains its disciplinary specificity.⁶⁸

She claims that:

“...design is that mode by which architecture relates to cultural systems outside itself, non-design describes the way in which different cultural systems interrelate and give form to the built world.”⁶⁹

Architecture, for Agrest, is a self-contained discipline with internal rules and codes that separate it from other cultural practices constituting the boundary between what is design and what is not.⁷⁰ This boundary, while preserving architecture’s identity as a distinct cultural system also acts as a “filtering mechanism” with certain permeability to other cultural systems.⁷¹ For her, this permeability is not an attack to the “autonomy” of the discipline, but rather a process through which architecture transforms and redefines itself continuously.

Her position suggests that, while architecture is a self-governing discipline with its own history and conventions that declare its autonomy on the one hand, on the other hand it is part of a large social context. The interaction of architecture with this social context is controlled through a mechanism that is particular to architecture and through that mechanism the emerging cultural activities are absorbed and internalized for the construction of new disciplinary codes.

⁶⁸ Diana Agrest, “Design versus Non-design,” *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton architectural Press, 1998) 333

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*

⁷¹ *Ibid.*

Nevertheless, this mechanism operates due to architecture's own regulations. This process benefits from ideology; as for Agrest, ideology being the social production of meaning plays a significant role for the elaboration of architecture⁷²

For her, architecture's autonomy lies in its maintenance of its disciplinary "specificity". Specificity is "a notion which permits the clarification of codes to their relation to design or other cultural systems".⁷³ Architecture's institutional character gives it its specificity and through this notion architecture guarantees its identity as a distinct accumulation of knowledge. Agrest exemplifies the beginning of the 20th century, when architecture needed the articulation of its disciplinary specificity to re-draw its limits in a period where civil engineering gained an increasing significance. In such a situation, for Agrest, architecture had to articulate this quality in order to maintain its autonomy.⁷⁴

Agrest's model of architecture consists of architectural codes, the levels of specificity of which differ within the discipline, from the most specific to the least. There are three types of codes according to her classification. The codes that can be evaluated as "exclusive to design", such as the codes establishing between the architectural drawings, the codes that are not only "specific to architecture" but also shared by various cultural systems and lastly the codes that are "not specific to architecture", but can be internalized by architecture by

⁷² Ibid.

⁷³ Ibid. , 335

⁷⁴ Agrest emphasizes this issue in her end note no. 7. Ibid. , 353

virtue of a shared characteristic, through the “metonymic” or “metaphoric” operations.⁷⁵

“Metonymic” and “metaphoric” operations are tools for architecture utilized for the translation of “extra architectural” codes into “intra-architectural” ones. For Agrest, Le Corbusier’s Villa Savoye exemplifies a metaphoric operation.⁷⁶ The similarity of functions between a house and ocean liner both of which are forms of habitation enables a metaphoric operation possible. The window, which is the common element for both ocean liner and house, is transferred from the former to the latter.⁷⁷ For Agrest, by means of the metaphoric operations, openings and closures are produced. Openings help to integrate design with culture, while closures maintain the disciplinary specificity, therefore the autonomy of architecture.

Agrest claims that, although metaphoric operations are the tools for design to interact with culture, they are essentially reductive acting as “filtering mechanisms” and rather than opening the design system beyond its limits they define those limits.⁷⁸

Consequently, the articulation of the codes in architecture is arranged according to the system’s own logic. The most specific codes remain unchanged within the body of architecture, while the less specific ones are exposed to the continuous transformation throughout history.⁷⁹ This articulation

⁷⁵ Ibid. , 335

⁷⁶ Ibid. , 337

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid. , 341

⁷⁹ Ibid. , 335

may be due to the internal forces of architecture as well as to the external forces. Modern Architecture's internalization of technology and expression of structure may be given as an illustration of this. As Agrest also stated, at the beginning of the 20th century, architecture articulated its codes by internalizing technology to redraw the limits of its specificity. It is the architecture's "specificity" that prevents architecture to be confused with the discipline of engineering that developed its technique through technology in that period.⁸⁰

Agrest claims that, ideology plays a significant role in achieving meaning in architecture. Architecture, with its relationship to other cultural systems can generate "meaning".⁸¹ The interaction of architecture with other cultural activities is twofold in Agrest's proposal. On the one hand, the specificity maintains the difference of architecture from other cultural systems therefore frames it as a distinct cultural enterprise, and establishes the relations to non-design. On the other hand, it is the same "specificity" of architecture that enables architecture's cultural intervention. Therefore, for her architecture can maintain its social function in the society as long as it maintains its autonomy. Agrest states that architecture, to have a capacity to evaluate and criticize its own "empirical reality" and the "praxis of life" has to maintain its autonomous status. In other words, architecture's autonomy not only prevents architecture to be confused with another cultural system, but also enables it to have an ideological role in the society.

⁸⁰ Ibid. , 336

⁸¹ Ibid. , 337

2.1.2 Stanford Anderson and Quasi-Autonomy

Stanford Anderson provides us with another position, which is based on the scientific research theory of Imre Lakatos.⁸² Anderson argues the possibility of an analogy between the scientific research methodology and the architectural design.

Karl Popper claims, as Anderson stated, that the accumulation of true scientific knowledge can be achieved through the method of what he called “falsifiability”: that only the theories that are testable and falsifiable by observation and experiment can provide scientists with reliable knowledge.⁸³ True results can come out from false theories; one experiment is not enough to test the theory. However, false results cannot follow true theories. Once, a theory is falsified, the scientist is convinced that the theory has to be abandoned. In that sense the progress of science depends on the falsified theories, as solely they provide secure knowledge.⁸⁴ Popper claims that each experiment is subject not only to the theory under test but also to the initial conditions.⁸⁵ If the theory is falsified, the negative results may come out as a result of a wrong theory or as a consequence of the initial conditions or as a consequence of the background knowledge.⁸⁶ This difficulty can be overcome with the recognition of certain degree of conventionalism in science. He argues that, “the scientific community can, and does, guess and agree as to what part of the system has failed.”⁸⁷

⁸² Stanford Anderson, “Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs,” *Architecture Theory Since 1968*, ed. Michael Hays (New York: MIT Press, 2000) 493

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Ibid., 493-494

⁸⁵ Ibid., 494

⁸⁶ Ibid.

⁸⁷ Ibid.

Imre Lakatos, a follower of Popper, contributing to Popper's theory, asserts that any progress in science is possible through the falsification of "research programs". A research program consists of a series of theoretical states. However, each of these consists of a common element, which Lakatos calls the "hard core". Consequently, each research program can be identified by its "hard core". The hard core is irrefutable. It is supported by the "auxiliary hypotheses", which form a "protective belt" around the "hardcore" that are exposed to change. The test results can only be directed to the auxiliary hypotheses, which maintain accord with the "empirical data" and the "hard core". The resistance of the "hardcore" to criticism enables the advancement of the program. In science there are many of these research programs that Lakatos call as "competing research programs". The strength of any research program is determined relative to other research programs.⁸⁸ "A research program is successful if all this leads to a progressive problem shift, unsuccessful if it leads to a degenerating problem shift."⁸⁹

Anderson emphasizes that our knowledge in every field is arbitrary. In that sense, he states that the initial invention of a convention depends on an agreement, on a receipt. Therefore, Anderson asserts, Modern Architecture recognizes its conventionalism.⁹⁰ The conventional nature of the discipline resists any transformation.⁹¹ However, it is articulated by culture over time and space when dramatic changes are experienced in the social context. As

⁸⁸ Imre Lakatos. "The Falsification and The Method of Scientific Research Programs"

⁸⁹ Ibid.

⁹⁰ Stanford Anderson. "Critical Conventionalism in Architecture" *Assemblage 1*(Massachusetts, MIT Press: 1986) 20

⁹¹ It should be re-emphasized that "conventional" here signifies the untouchable hard core of the discipline as defined by Stanford Anderson.

Anderson stressed depending on Lacatos's search, even the invention of new conventions does not necessitate the complete abandonment of the previous convention or conventions. This multiplicity of conventions makes any articulation within the discipline available. The simultaneous togetherness of the resistance and openness to change of a convention requires a critical preference rendering both the architectural practice and interpretation as critical acts.

Benefiting from Lacatos's model and his ideas about conventionalism, Anderson searches for a research program in architectural design. For him, for one or a body of architectural works it is possible to propose an unalterable "hard core" that directs the architectural work.⁹² The "hard core", upon which is agreed through the consensus of a community or an architect, includes architecture's internal endeavor and it is not subject of any alteration. This suggests the conventional part of architecture. The unchangeable core, together with "supporting hypotheses" constitutes the theoretical framework of architecture that controls, interprets, and criticizes its "empirical reality".⁹³ The conventional part of architecture resists criticism, and the supporting hypotheses that sustain a bridge between the core and the empirical data prevent architecture to fall to a completely arbitrary position placing it in a cultural context. In that way, Anderson assumes a critical position for architecture.

⁹² Stanford Anderson, "Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs," *op. cit.*, 496

⁹³ *Ibid.*, 497

He claims that any artifact implies more than it was intended, as once the artifact is realized, it is open to alternative uses and therefore it can be interpreted in different times regarding different concepts by different interpreters.⁹⁴ For him, any empirical reality of a research program can be re-interpreted by another research program. By assuming the theory and practice as parts of a research program, and yet accepting possible combinations between different theories and practices to constitute a program, Anderson precludes theory and practice from total arbitrariness. The address of the conceptual program to a social context prevents architecture to be totally made up. For Anderson:

This mitigation of the autonomy of the convention, this insistence on the convention's quasi-autonomous address to social practice is what protects the convention being merely made up. It is only this reciprocity of convention and practice that can sustain the convention. But it is also only such a critically sustain convention that can guide the practice without the appeal to arbitrary authority.⁹⁵

Similarly, he points out, it precludes any arbitrary criticism, as any interpretation of an artifact at any time has to include the environmental concerns and alternative uses of space, therefore addressing to a social context. While the conventions, agreed by a group of specialists, have autonomy, this autonomy is constrained by external factors. This situation places both criticism and design in a critical *in-between* position.

⁹⁴ Stanford Anderson, "The Presentness of Interpretation and of Artifacts: Towards a History for the Duration and Change of Artifacts" *History in, of, and for Architecture Papers from a Symposium: "History in Architectural Education"* ed. John E. Hancock (Ohio, Cincinnati Press: 1980) 6

⁹⁵ Stanford Anderson. "Critical Conventionalism in Architecture" *op. cit.*, 20

Anderson states:

The autonomous dimension of semi-autonomy-the limits to and reinforcements of, alternative uses and *readings*- precludes total arbitrariness of interpretation.⁹⁶

The rationality of the enterprise consist in improving the relationship between conventional and the historical setting.⁹⁷

Conventions and practice proliferate from each other and they criticize each another. This is what Anderson calls, “competing conventions”, or “competing research programs”.⁹⁸ Similar to the idea of the competing research programs in science, there are many architectural design programs each of which does not have any priority and each may proliferate from each other.

For Anderson, any research program in architecture consists of two programs. One is the conceptual program that is the theory of architecture; the other is what he calls the artifactual program including the systematic exploration of physical models.⁹⁹ An artifactual program follows a certain conceptual program. However, it can have a consistency with some other conceptual program. The inverse is valid as well. The given conceptual program may be applicable to other artifactual programs. In that way, by the union of these two programs in infinite combinations there are research programs in infinite numbers.

⁹⁶ Stanford Anderson, “The Presentness of Interpretation” op. cit, 6

⁹⁷ Stanford Anderson. “Critical Conventionalism” op. cit, 47

⁹⁸ Stanford Anderson. “Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs” op. cit, 496

⁹⁹ Ibid. , 497

Anderson highlights that any articulation in the discipline is achieved through the competition of the conventions.¹⁰⁰ The consensus of certain community of architects or intention of one architect directs and controls the act of designing. However, they are not totally decisive in the body of work. Through the altered and revised conventions, new potentials are recognized within the discipline. The research model proposed by Anderson works at the level of interpretation as well. For this model, autonomy belongs to the conceptual program of the discipline.

In the light of these ideas, Anderson examines Le Corbusier's works and ideas. Yet, he does not take merely one work of the architect. Maison Domino, for instance, is evaluated not as a complete research program, but only an initial search for such a program.¹⁰¹ Anderson believes that the ideas repeated in Le Corbusier's works that showed a range of applicability might constitute a program. In that sense, repetition is an important key word. Repetition provides resistance to change and the consistency achieved through repetition in time constitutes the "hard core" of the program.

Anderson sets architectural autonomy in architect's free will. In other words, it is the architect's option to draw his or her own strategy freed from any canon in the act of design. As any act of design or criticism cannot be isolated from the forms of social life, the free will of the architect and historian is constrained to a certain extent.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid.

¹⁰¹ Stanford Anderson, "Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs" op. cit, 503

For Hays, in Anderson's proposal, "conventions of architectural production are epistemologically compelling insofar as they involve considerations of relevant alternatives to the belief they support and the worlds they construct, and show themselves capable of sustaining time. Though a convention must have a degree of autonomy, architecture is never fully independent of larger concerns."¹⁰² In that sense, a convention is compelling only if the field it organizes can be related to other features of the cultural world.¹⁰³

As discussed, Stanford Anderson searched for the possibility of an "architectural research program" that is valid for an architect or a group of architects.¹⁰⁴ By examining the works of Le Corbusier and revealing the constant ideas within the work of the architect, Anderson tried to prove a "hard core" that governs the architecture of Le Corbusier.

The repetition and consistency of the ideas within a body of architectural works, of an architect or a group of architects, although these may be articulated and transformed in time, for Anderson, are significant features of an architectural work that is governed by its own principles.

¹⁰² K. Michael Hays, "Introduction" *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (New York: MIT Press, 2000) xiii

¹⁰³ Comment by K. Michael Hays for the essay by Stanford Anderson. "Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs" See K. Michael Hays, *Architecture Theory Since 1968* (New York: MIT Press, 2000) 493

¹⁰⁴ Stanford Anderson. "Architectural Design as a system of research programs," op. cit. 497

2.2 Self-Governing Architecture and the Authorship* of the Architect: Private House Projects by Boran Ekinçi

Despite their different approaches towards the social function of architecture both theories have a common point. Similar to Agrest's architectural mechanism with its porous cell, in the conventional model of Anderson, any articulation within the specificity of architecture is achieved from within architecture that is through architecture's intrinsic laws, through the "metonymic" and "metaphoric" operations as in the case of Agrest's model, or with the direction and the control of the "hard core" suggested by Anderson. In Anderson's model, which cultural forces, to what extent and in which ways will be internalized by the discipline are decided by the conventional part of architecture. Therefore, the penetration of the other cultural enterprises into the architectural discipline does not endanger the autonomy of architecture, as this process is articulated and controlled by architecture's own methodology. This methodology renders architecture as an entity that governs itself.

It is believed in this thesis that the private house projects designed by Boran Ekinçi exemplify the critical situation of architecture proposed by Michael Hays that was elaborated in accordance to the positions of Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson. For Boran Ekinçi, starting from the early years of his career, housing has been a special field within architecture.¹⁰⁵ Refusing conventional house designs, he searched for alternative solutions, most of which are suggested for imagined sites without an intention of realization. I think that this personal search of the architect can be conceived as an ongoing project within

¹⁰⁵ Boran Ekinçi, "Boran Ekinçi ile Konuşma" *Arredamento Mimarlık*, June 2003, 56

his professional life that may be regarded as a “research program” in Anderson’s terms. It should be emphasized that the aim of this study is not to scrutinize all the housing projects of Ekinçi or to draw the framework of this “research program”. Rather, the idea of a possible “research program” within the career of the architect that produces its own knowledge and as a consequence refines its language in time is essential here to propose a resistant architecture that brings new potentials to the discipline, which may be called at the end as an “autonomous project”.

When compared, both models of Agrest and Anderson are distinguished with their relation to ideology. Agrest’s relation to ideology is twofold. The ideology of other cultural enterprises can be internalized by the discipline to constitute its “specificity”. However, to do so, architecture also constitutes its own ideology with an intention of intervening to culture. In that sense, her understanding of ideology is Althusserian, who proposes instances and levels as “semi-autonomous”, each of which has a certain degree of pressure on each other.¹⁰⁶ For Anderson, however, the autonomy of architecture is part of architecture’s theoretical program and architecture whose specificity is articulated yet again by ideology, intervenes with this specificity merely in his own praxis.

It can be noted that these self-governing organizations proposed for the architectural discipline operates at the level of an architectural work of an architect as well. As discussed by Hays, an architectural design begins with a series of arbitrary propositions that govern the design process. The

¹⁰⁶ K. Michael Hays. “Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Architectural Discipline” *Perspecta* 33 (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002) 42 See also K. Michael Hays, “Architecture Theory, Media and the Question of Audience” *Assemblage* 27 (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1995)

reapplication of these principals within different projects renders their arbitrariness unproblematic and turns them the “authorship” of the architect.¹⁰⁷

Agrest’s model defines a procedure where external codes are internalized and become disciplinary codes. In this manner, she defines a course of action that proceeds from outside to the inside of the discipline. She discusses how architectural codes are articulated and new codes are introduced in the discipline. In that way, her model focuses on the production of knowledge of architecture and outlines a “discursive autonomy”.¹⁰⁸ Anderson defines a progression for the act of design and criticism that starts from its own receipts or agreements, which he calls as conventions. By the same token, he defines the process that initiates from the inside of architecture and proceeds to the outside. While Agrest focuses mainly on the production of the new disciplinary codes that are constituted through the filtering of ideology, Anderson accentuates the restriction and articulation of the conventions when they are exposed to culture. This restriction of the conventions by external forces addresses the “quasi-autonomy” of the conventions that prevents it from being totally made up.¹⁰⁹ Here I propose that architecture encounters both processes defined by Agrest and Anderson simultaneously. The internalization of the external codes by architecture through “metaphoric operations” results in the invention of new disciplinary codes. Which code, in what way will be used in the design process is decided by conventions.

¹⁰⁷ K. Michael Hays, “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form,” op. cit, 26

¹⁰⁸ The term “discursive autonomy” is used by K. Michael Hays in “Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Architectural Discipline” *Perspecta* 33, op. cit., 57

¹⁰⁹ Stanford Anderson, “Critical Conventionalism in Architecture,” op. cit, 22

The conventions and metaphoric operations can be epitomized in the early works of Ekinçi, where the ascendancy of geometry is apparent and there is an explicit search for a linearity ended up with the organization of successive spaces. (Figures 2.2.1-3) It is neither the site, nor the function, not even the user demands, but only the geometry that controlled his architecture. The order is given before the expectation of the house. The living room is always placed at the center of this order. Kule House is a particular search for an alternative living that applies the sequential plan organization in vertical plane. (Figure 2.2.4) The use of geometry in these early projects registers a “metaphoric operation”.¹¹⁰ Linearity, which is a feature of geometry, is internalized by Ekinçi’s architecture and becomes one of the guiding principles of the design process. As a result, linearity, a code that is specific to geometry, is transferred to Ekinçi’s architecture and becomes one of the “specific” codes that govern his design process. This procedure articulates the “specificity” of Ekinçi’s architecture. On the other hand, the selection of linearity as a governing rule for the design process is a receipt, in Anderson’s terms, a convention that was decided by the architect’s free will.

Two points are crucial here that enables the projects to be the object of that discussion. The first point is that the most of the private houses by Ekinçi, particularly earlier ones, were designed for imagined sites and for imagined clients. As the houses were not designed for a specific site, they were resisting any prior authority other than the architect’s own conventions. The lack of the prior authority, such as the site conditions or a priory program defined by the

¹¹⁰ The use of geometry as a “metaphor” by architecture is discussed by Diana Agrest, who gave the works of the Mannerist architecture and the works of Le Corbusier as examples. See Diana Agrest, “Design versus Non-Design” *Oppositions Reader*, op. cit, 336-338

client, enabled the design process to originate from its own premises and assumptions.

These assumptions are decided according to the architect's own free will. As Boran Ekinci asserted, "to reach to an alternative living", "a search for a minimum living space" or "a building without corridors and stairs" are some of his guiding principles that initiated his early housing projects.¹¹¹ The alternative living comes out as a result of the plan organization that is governed by geometrical rules or the proposed living concept suggests the same geometrical plan organization. There are projects that are results of different geometrical searches and their affects on living patterns. There are also projects that do not initiate from the geometrical propositions, but other concerns such as the relation of the open spaces to the closed ones.

As stated before, mostly geometrical rules become the guiding principles of his design. Another governing idea for his early house designs may be noted as the priority given to the open space organization. In Düz House, open space takes the half of the plan. A similar attempt is observed in Haliç and Yalnız House, where the bedrooms are solved in minimum space and the rest is assigned to the open space. (Figures 2.2.5-7) It can be asserted that the courtyard is the organizer of these plans. The housing proposed in those projects suggests a living pattern that is organized around the open space.

The second feature of Ekinci's architecture that enables a possible "research program" within the career of the architect is the recurrence of certain ideas and

¹¹¹ Boran Ekinci. "Boran Ekinci ile Konuşma," op. cit., 56

principles. The use of simple cubic forms, linear organization and the use of open spaces, verandas or courtyards are repeating themes of his early house designs.

It is explicit for most of the projects that minimum space is spent for bathrooms, whereas living room located at the center of the house, has the rich spatial organization. Generally, kitchen is designed as the part of the living room. In his latest houses particularly, the relationship of the bedrooms with the living space and of the kitchen with the living room becomes the conventional part of his architecture.

Particularly in his latest houses, in Filip Amram, Durusu and Rıza Tansu Houses for instance, the construction details are repeated. The details enabled by the current technology are internalized by Ekinçi and these became one of the repeating themes of his architecture. They became the part of the Ekinçi's architectural knowledge, which as Ayşen Savaş asserted, eliminates the time spent for the solution of details, and enables the "perfect production" of the architectural work.¹¹² This repetition and consistency in details provides to achieve a spatial and visual language that is specific to Ekinçi.

As discussed before, for Anderson, any articulation within the discipline is achieved through the competition of conventions.¹¹³ This "competing conventions" are valid for a body of architectural works of different architects, or for the works of an architect. The invention of different conventions does not

¹¹² Ayşen Savaş, "Tutarlı Kusursuz Soyut: Nur Sağlam Evi; Ümitköy, Ankara, 1994-1999," *Arredamento Mimarlık*, June 2003, 60

¹¹³ Stanford Anderson, "Architectural Design as a System of Research Programs," op. cit., 496

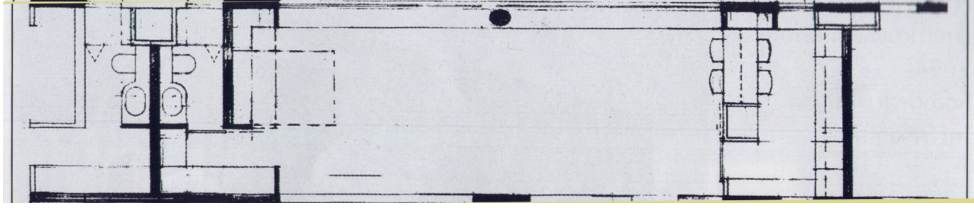


Figure 2.2.1 Duvar House designed by Boran Ekinci

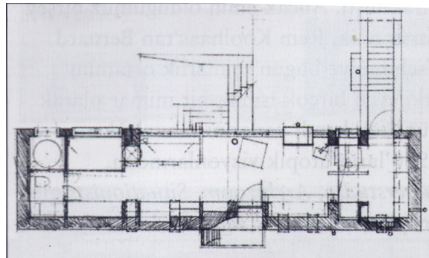


Figure 2.2.2 Armut House designed By Boran Ekinci

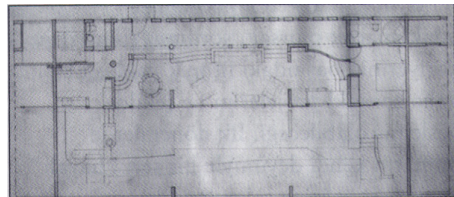


Figure 2.2.3 Düz House by Boran Ekinci

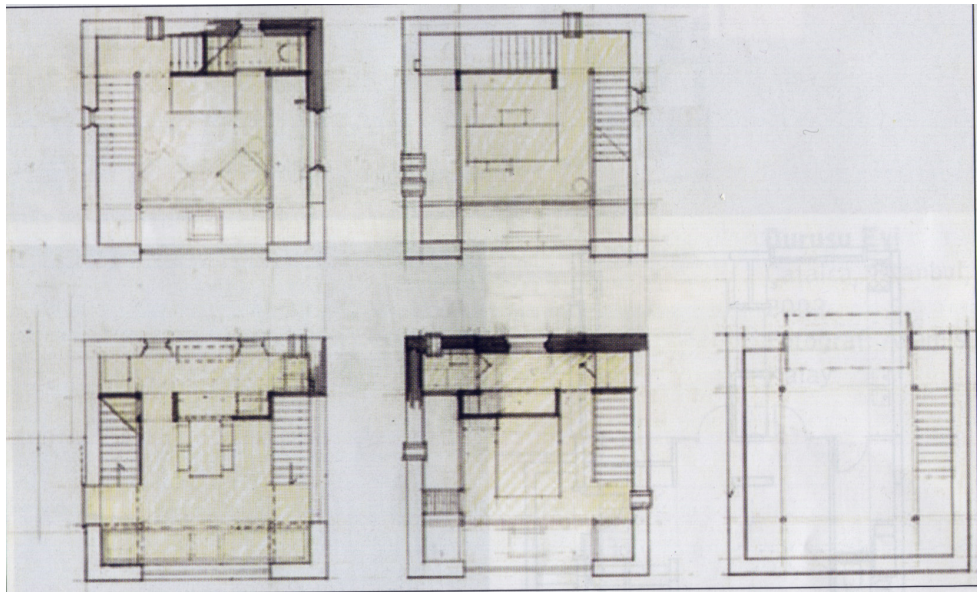


Figure 2.2.4 Kule House by Boran Ekinci

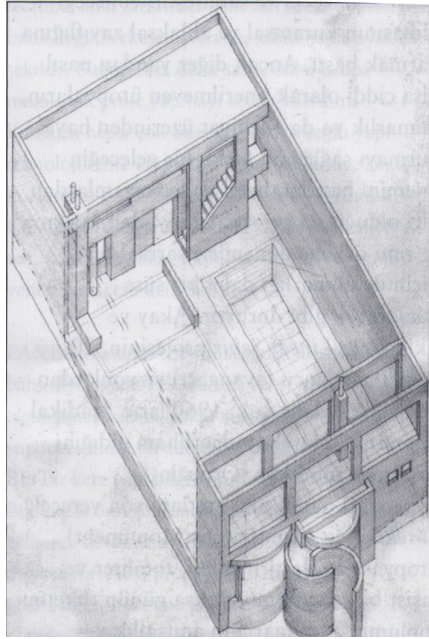


Figure 2.2.5 Haliç House by Boran Ekinci

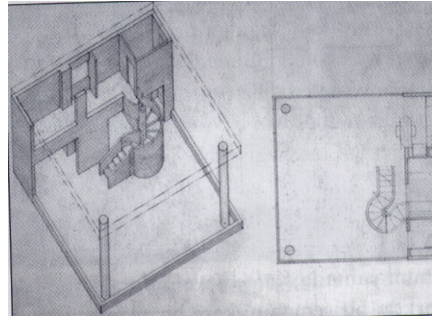


Figure 2.2.6 Yalnız House by Boran Ekinci

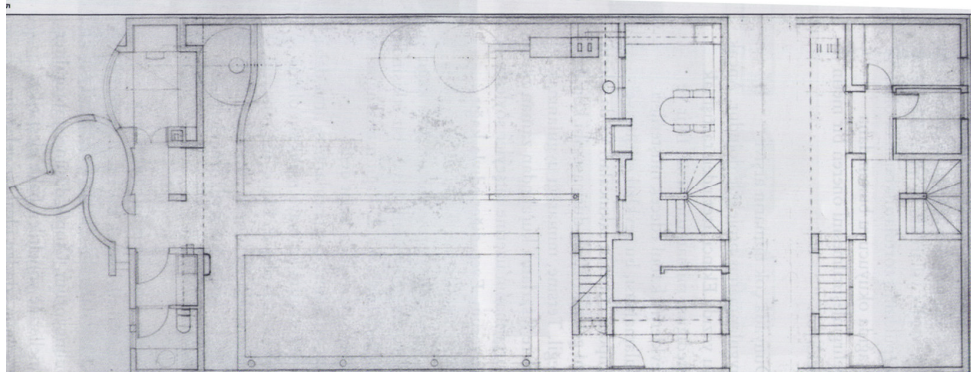


Figure 2.2.7 Haliç House by Boran Ekinci

necessarily require the abandonment of the previous conventions rather they articulate them.

Similarly, Ekinci's private house designs starts with conventions that are articulated in time. In the earliest examples, the buildings are more massive. These earlier ideas for alternative inhabiting and geometrical search evolved later to more consistent ideas that reveal themselves in his "minimalist design". In Rıza Tansu House, and later Durusu and Filip Amram Residences, the language became purer and plan organization much more minimal. Even the technological requirements turned to the repeating details such as the connections of the steel structure and aluminum window frames, which became "intra-architectural codes" of Ekinci's architecture. This process of articulation within the career of the architect enables the gathering of knowledge, which facilitates the production of an architecture that is, in Ayşen Savaş's terms, "consistent".¹¹⁴ The knowledge produced by Ekinci's architecture resists to the external determining forces and permits an architecture that originates from its own specific codes and its relationships.

To sum up so far, the private house projects of Boran Ekinci can be evaluated as varying applications of constantly repeating principles. The repetition of the principle ideas and details in Ekinci's architecture enables a design process that initiates from its own dynamics and so doing resists any external authority. These governing principles that are repeating are also articulated in time. In that sense, the serial private house projects of Ekinci are significant searches of

¹¹⁴ Ayşen Savaş, "Tutarlı Kusursuz Soyut: Nur Sağlam Evi; Ümitköy, Ankara, 1994-1999," *Arredamento Mimarlık*, June 2003, 60

an architect that constitutes his own architectural program independent from any prior authority. The repeating ideas in Ekinci's architecture legitimize his initial conventions and turn them to his "authorship". The authorship resists any external authority and legitimizes its own status as an alternative and critique to the dominant culture.¹¹⁵

In that sense, the projects of Ekinci have the critical status that is discussed by Michael Hays. By negating and resisting their contexts both physically and conceptually they legitimize themselves as autonomous objects. This issue will be discussed in the following chapter, in accordance to Filip Amram, Durusu and Rıza Tansu Houses, after the conceptual framework of autonomy is sketched.

¹¹⁵ K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form," *op. cit.*, 26

CHAPTER3

SELF-DESCRIPTIVE PROPOSITIONS OF AUTONOMY

In *Webster's Third New International Dictionary*, "autonomy" is defined as the following.

- 1) The quality or state of being independent, free and self-directing; individual or group freedom.
- 2) a: The degree of self-determination or political control possessed by a minority group, territorial division, a political unit in its relations to the state or political community of which it forms a part and extending from local self-government to full independence.
b: an autonomous body or community.
- 3) The sovereignty of reason in the sphere of morals: possession of moral freedom or self-determination; power of the individual to be self-legislating in the realm of morals.

In the same dictionary "autonomous" is defined as:

- 1) Of, relating to or marked by autonomy, living under one's own laws.
- 2) a: Having the right or power of political autonomy(states)
b: Undertaken or carried on without outside control: Self-Contained

c: Possessing individual autonomy: morally self-legislating; self directed in personality

3) biol. a: Existing or capable of existing independently, being a perfect whole not forming a part in the developmental sequence of an organism.

4) Issued by a political entity having the right of independent coinage.¹¹⁶

As defined in the dictionary, in general, autonomy is defined as the status of the separation of reason from the sphere of morals and religion and therefore implies self-referentiality and self-governance for an individual or group that acts with his free mind.

When conceptualized by architecture the term gained additional meanings. Particularly, with its re-conceptualization in the 1970's, the suffixes and prefixes attached to it enriched the sense of the term. Consequently, the autonomy in architecture turns to a loaded concept, which makes any single definition hard. In order to reveal the potential meanings of autonomy, this thesis will deconstruct the term in to its self-descriptive propositions.

Secularization, self-referentiality and self-governance are the implications of autonomy that were inherited by definition of the term. Here I claim that "resistance" and "negation" are implied by autonomy, particularly with its problematization during the 1970's in Europe and America.

¹¹⁶ Webster's Third New International Dictionary, USA: GGC. Merriamco, 1966 first published in 1909.

3.1 Autonomy in the 1930's

As Sibel Bozdoğan asserted, Modern Movement “encompassed a revolutionary aesthetic canon and a scientific doctrine in architecture originating during the interwar period.”¹¹⁷ As she pointed out as well, architects such as Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius and Mies Van der Rohe are epitomized as the masters of this new aesthetic.¹¹⁸ On the other hand, the architects of the Modern Movement believed that it was possible through architecture to solve the social and cultural problems of society. The “social engagement” of architecture was possible through its autonomy. Although in the early Modern Architecture, “autonomy” was not explicitly discussed, the projects inherited this concept.

With Modernism, architecture became both a social practice that aimed to organize the daily life and to solve the social problems, and an institution that needed to recode its visual language. The architects of the Modern Movement focused not only on the social problems but also on their own discipline to produce new disciplinary codes. The formulation of the principles of the “International Style” by Philip Johnson and Henry-Russell Hitchcock reveals this attempt.

Henry Russel Hitchcock and Philip Johnson in their book *International Style*, which was published following the exhibition organized by them at the Museum of Modern Art, conceptualized the principles of the Early Modernist Architecture.¹¹⁹ “Architecture as Volume” instead of mass, “regularity” and “the

¹¹⁷ Sibel Bozdogan. *Modernism and Nation Building: Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, op. cit, 4

¹¹⁸ Ibid. , 5

¹¹⁹ Henry Russel Hitchcock, Philip Johnson. *International Style*, op. cit, 56

avoidance of applied decoration” are three basic principles of Modern Architecture formulated in Hitchcock and Johnson’s book.

For Hitchcock and Johnson, in the early Modernist style, with the technological developments, the buildings had the effect of “mere planes surrounding a volume.”¹²⁰ In the classic construction of the buildings, the walls were used both for load bearing and construction. With the developments in construction technology, steel or reinforced concrete supporting systems are used and this enabled the free organization of both plan and facade. In that sense, the effect of mass in traditional architecture is replaced with an effect of volume that is “plane surfaces bounding a volume.”¹²¹ Window, that was creating contrast within the massive facade of the building as a hole in it, became transparent surface covering the whole facade.¹²² For Hitchcock and Johnson, the economic conditions required “regularity” in the arrangement of the structural parts.¹²³ Another feature of International Style for Hitchcock and Johnson was the avoidance of applied decoration. In its place, in Modern Architecture detailing of parapets, railings and window frames gained significance. Particularly, the detailing of the window frames was significant in giving the effect of “surface of volume.”¹²⁴ In that sense, it was the fine detailing that decorated modern design. Besides detailing, sculpture and painting could be used as decorative elements. However, sculpture should not be merged with architecture; it should be separated from its background.¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Ibid.

¹²¹ Ibid. , 56

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid. , 73

¹²⁴ Ibid.

¹²⁵ Ibid. , 85

With those principles, International Style was declaring the Modern buildings as autonomous objects independent from any external authority. The declaration of the principles of Modern Architecture by the “International Style” points to an attempt that tried to produce a disciplinary knowledge for Modern architecture that recognized its own internal logic.

3.1 .1 Autonomy as a Status of Secularization

Nergis Ögüt stated that “autonomy, defined as the capacity of a self sufficient agent to decide and act in accordance with its free will is a notion inseparably connected with self-consciousness and responsibility”¹²⁶ Therefore, it is a modern phenomenon, the philosophical background of which dates back to the Enlightenment.¹²⁷ Jürgen Habermas asserts that during the Enlightenment, the three spheres, “science”, “morality” and “art”, were separated from each other to be handled as independent institutions, thus enabling the accumulation of the specific knowledge in each. He states:

"These came to be differentiated because the unified world conceptions of religion and metaphysics fell apart. Since eighteenth century, the problems inherited from these older worldviews could be rearranged so as to fall under specific aspects of validity: truth, normative rightness, authenticity, and beauty. They could then be handled as questions of knowledge, or of justice and morality, or of taste".¹²⁸

¹²⁶ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture* (Ankara: METU Faculty of Architecture Press, 1999) 156

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Jürgen Habermas " Modernity: An Incomplete Project" *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983) 9

Thus, autonomy refers to the historical position in which secularization of science and art define a position against religion with morality. For the Enlightenment philosophers, separation of these three spheres would result in the specialization of knowledge in each field that could be used for the enrichment and rational organization of everyday life.¹²⁹

Regarding this issue Habermas states:

“Enlightenment thinkers of the cast of mind of Condorcet still had the extravagant expectation that the arts and sciences would not only promote the control of natural forces, but would also further understanding of the world and of the self, would promote moral progress, the justice of institutions, and even the happiness of human beings”.¹³⁰

Therefore, as Ögüt asserted, the autonomous status that distinguishes Modern art from pre-modern is the outcome of the Modern civilization, where the relation between “everyday praxis” and “art” transformed considerably.¹³¹ For Peter Bürger, the separation of the spheres in the Enlightenment resulted in the “detachment of art as a special sphere of human activity from the nexus of the praxis of life”¹³² This phenomenon enabled artistic activity, including, architecture to develop as an autonomous realm.¹³³ Peter Bürger stated:

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 84

¹³² Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984) 36

¹³³ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 1

“By the “modern concept of art as a comprehensive designation for poetry, music, the stage, sculpture, painting and architecture which did not become current until the end of the 18th century,” artistic activity is understood as an activity that differs from all others.” The various arts were removed from the context of everyday life and conceived of something that could be treated as a whole.”¹³⁴

The separation of art from other spheres as an independent sphere permitted it to become institutionalized. The specialization of art as an institution enabled the artist, who used to be a server of the church or a royal family, to act individually.¹³⁵ Therefore, with Modernity and through autonomy, art and science started to have a social function in the society. In particular, art had believed to have a significant task in the betterment of the social life and happiness of man. Peter Bürger stated that “F. Schiller attempts to show that it is on the very basis of its autonomy, its not being tied to immediate ends, that art can fulfill a task that cannot be fulfilled any other way: the furtherance of humanity.”¹³⁶

In the light of these ideas, it can be asserted that autonomy was closely linked to the utopian ideals of Modernity. It did not signify a total apartness from society, as it was considered frequently, on the contrary the goal was the enrichment of society and the happiness of humanity. As Habermas noted, art played a considerably significant role for these utopian goals of the “Project of Modernity”. Art, in order to be able to be critical and to have a transformative power, had to have a certain distance from the “nexus of life” and that was to

¹³⁴ Peter Bürger, op. cit 42 cited from H. Kuhn, “Aesthetic,” in *Das Fischer Lexicon. Literatur* 2/1, ed. W. -H. Friedrich, W. Killy (Frankfurt, 1965) 52- 53

¹³⁵ Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, op. cit., 47-48

¹³⁶ *Ibid.* , 44

declare its autonomy. Autonomy provided certain degree of distance from society. For Theodor Adorno, claims Bürger, with the separation of art from life, art would not fall under the principle of the maximization of profit.¹³⁷ In other words, emancipation of art from religion and science provided it with a certain critical distance that enabled art to maintain a social function in society.

Implying both a detachment from social life and social engagement, autonomy contained by definition a mediatory role in society. Therefore autonomy was necessary for art to transform the society. Bürger, regarding the utopian aim of art, asserted that “Schiller introduces art, to which he assigns no less a task than to put back together the “halves” of man that have been torn asunder- which means that it is within a society already characterized by the division of labor that art is to make possible the development of the totality of human potentialities that the individual cannot develop in his sphere of activity.”¹³⁸ For Schiller, art was the sphere, which will bring harmony to society, as it had the unifying power.¹³⁹ The only communication between the separated spheres could be achieved through art. In Modernity, art was the sphere that proposed the utopic function towards society.

Apart from referring to the historical position of the secularization of art and science, the concept of autonomy addressed to the emergence of the bourgeois class, as Ögüt asserted, a society composed of self-referential

¹³⁷ Ibid. , 45

¹³⁸ Ibid.

¹³⁹ This issue was discussed by Nergis Ögüt and Peter Bürger.

individuals, “liberated from the authority of religion and acting with moral responsibility”.¹⁴⁰

For Bürger, the secularization of art provided it with a “freeing a capacity for the perception and shaping of reality that hitherto being integrated to cultic ends”¹⁴¹ This phenomenon also coupled with the emergence of a subject whose role towards society, as defined by Michael Hays, was that of “an originating agent of meaning, unique, centralized and authoritative.”¹⁴² The subject of art was particularly commanding to take the heroic role of controlling the society’s destiny.

As discussed by Bürger, the autonomy of art by definition carried a dialectical character. The artist, subject, starting from the Renaissance became an individual; however his work, because of his responsibility towards society, was expected to be social. In other words, formally, the work of art was separated from the “nexus of life” as aesthetics appeared as a distinct sphere obeying its own laws, however its content was related to the society.¹⁴³

On the one hand, the development of art as a distinct cultural sphere provided it with a critical power, on the other, however, it resulted in a certain alienation.¹⁴⁴

Nergis Ögüt stated:

¹⁴⁰ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 20

¹⁴¹ Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, op. cit. 45

¹⁴² K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject* (Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1992) 5

¹⁴³ Peter Bürger. “Theory of the Avant-garde” op. cit, 49

¹⁴⁴ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 2

“The conventional role of the architect as artist/craftsman shifted to the role of individual designer whose medium no more involved direct confrontation with materials and techniques, but abstraction of these through representational means (such as drawings, perspectives, models.), which naturally entailed a certain degree of alienation from direct practice.”¹⁴⁵

For Bürger also, the discourse related with autonomy of art that started in the eighteenth century and later developed to the aestheticism in the nineteenth and early twentieth century intensified the emancipation of art from the life praxis thus causing alienation.¹⁴⁶ For Bürger, it was this alienation of art from society as an autonomous institution that resulted in the negation of the autonomous institution of art by the Avant-Garde. Nergis Ögüt asserted:

“While on the one hand, autonomy status made possible the development of architecture as an independent discipline, granting the artist/architect a freedom for creative experimentation, for unlimited self-expression; on the other hand, this same autonomy status had caused its alienation from direct practice leading architecture to a position of social ineffectualness.”¹⁴⁷

On the other hand, Hays claims that “various transformations of the presumed modernist paradigm have depended on the notion of a removed, inward, self-critical, and self-referential architectural practice, one in which autonomy is taken as a sign of architecture’s irreducible value as a high art.”¹⁴⁸ The subject became autonomous, however it is embedded within a social cultural and

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

¹⁴⁶ Jochen Schulte-Sasse, “Foreword: Theory of Modernism versus Theory of the Avant-Garde” *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, op. cit, xiii

¹⁴⁷ Nergis Ögüt. *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 2

¹⁴⁸ K. Michael Hays, “Reproduction and Negation: The Cognitive Project of the Avant-Garde” *Architectureproduction*, ed. Joan Ockman, guest ed. Beatriz Colomina (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1988) 155

political context. For Hays, it is with Modernism that cognitive status of autonomous form as well as the subject for which that form is a metaphor that is problematized.¹⁴⁹ For him, “autonomy is exactly what humanist readings of architecture hoped for”.¹⁵⁰

To sum up, in the 20th century, on the one hand, architecture became a pure act as an institution with its own problems, rules and field of interest and acting with its own demystified knowledge; on the other hand, it found itself responsible for the fulfillment of the utopian promises of Modernity. In that sense, autonomy did not mean a total separateness from the nexus of life; on the contrary autonomous status indicated that these concerns could exist within architecture.

Architecture’s expected; even utopic function towards society and its autonomous status rendered it as a critical act placing it in a critical position in society.¹⁵¹ Architecture to act critically had to have a critical distance from life praxis. Thus, architecture’s social engagement was intrinsically bound up with its autonomy and the critical potential of architecture lied in the maintenance of this autonomy.¹⁵²

3.1.2 Autonomy as Self-Referentiality

Self-referentiality is another aspect that autonomy implies and it refers to the inexplicability of architecture as a self-referential system by non-architectural

¹⁴⁹K. Michael Hays, *Modernism and the Post Humanist Subject*, op. cit, 154

¹⁵⁰ Ibid.

¹⁵¹ Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 8

¹⁵² Ibid.

concerns and stresses architecture's existence as an institution. This understanding reveals itself when architectural criticism and the act of design are regarded.

This notion denotes that architectural work contains qualities that cannot be explained outside of architecture. These qualities such as defining a space, implying closure or having a three dimensionality, through which any architectural work can be evaluated, are said to be common for each building and are specific to architecture.

There is no doubt that all architectural works stand within a complex web of cultural and ideological relationships and socio-economical concerns from which they cannot be isolated. Architecture inevitably is influenced and as a result reflects those concerns. However, I claim that this representation of external values in or by architecture is not a direct procedure and cannot be read within the transparency of the work. During the cognitive process of the act of design, those concerns are internalized by the architect and transformed to the architectural formal vocabulary. What is suggested here is that the social, political or economical concerns can be an input for the cognitive process of the act of design, however the end product is purely architectural. It conceals the origins of its formation and communicates its own internal logic. To the extent that a work is architecture it differs qualitatively from other cultural activities.¹⁵³

Agrest defines design as a social practice that “functions by a set of socially sanctioned rules and norms-whether implicit or explicit and therefore is

¹⁵³ K. Michael Hays. “Critical Architecture: Between Culture and Form,” op. cit., 26

constituted as an institution.”¹⁵⁴ This institutional character, continues Agrest, “is manifested in the normative writings and written texts of architecture, which fix its meaning and reading. These texts insure the recoding of the codes of design and guarantee their performance as filters and preserves unity.”¹⁵⁵ In that sense, what make “design” a closed system are its “institutionality”, “limits and specificity” and the problem of the “subject”.¹⁵⁶

The homogeneity and closure of the discipline given by its institutional character assures any act of design or criticism to operate within the limits of the discipline. As discussed before, for Diana Agrest, the transformation of the “extra-architectural” concerns to “intra-architectural” codes is operated through a mechanism that acts by means of “metaphoric operations”.¹⁵⁷ Although these operations provide the relation of architecture to other cultural systems, they are essentially reductive and formulate the specificity of architecture. In other words, they do not allow external values to pass as they are, but turn them into architectural codes. This operation eventually preserves the specificity of architecture and renders it as a self-referential system.

Architectural criticism, on the other hand, as a modern agent, establishes its own field, own agent, tools, and terminology and governing conventions within the architectural discipline.¹⁵⁸ All these features give to criticism its institutional character. While evaluating the architectural work, criticism establishes its own methodology and vocabulary that is desired to be purely architectural. As a

¹⁵⁴ Diana Agrest. “Design versus Non-Design” op. cit, 343

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid. , 341

¹⁵⁸ Miriam Gusevich. “The Architecture of Criticism: A Question of Autonomy” op. cit, 11

result, the reading and criticism of any architectural work is made within the defined realm of the architectural concepts and explained by a shared architectural terminology. In that sense, architectural criticism operates from within the discipline itself.

A mechanism, similar to one that operates in the design process, acts within architectural criticism. An architectural work can be evaluated according to its relationship to a certain social or cultural context or may be evaluated according to a criterion that is not “specific” to architecture. In that case, this criterion is internalized and turned into a “less-specific code” of architecture.¹⁵⁹

To sum up, the architectural work produces knowledge about architecture. The knowledge produced is reused in the production of architecture. In that sense, architecture defines a closed system that renders it as self-referential. To further elaborate this issue, I think that the book by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson called as *The International Style* can be epitomized. The book was a conceptual re-production of the early Modern Architecture. The principles of the “International Style” were dictated by Hitchcock and Johnson by reading some of the early Modernist buildings, which they regarded as examples of that style. Later, these principles became a formula that was used both tools for the production of architectural work and reading of an architectural work.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁹ Diana Agrest. “Design versus Non-Design,” op. cit., 335

¹⁶⁰ Here, I my aim is not to criticize or endorse Hitchcock’s and Johnson’s book. I am pointing out that any written text about architecture produces knowledge about architecture this may effect the production of architecture as well.

3.1.3 Autonomy as Self-Governance

A discussion on autonomy may or may not change the status of architecture that exists within an ideological field constituted by the economical, political and aesthetic realms, which constitute a structural totality. Hays asserts that “the autonomy of each disciplinary level allows the development and advance of that discipline’s particular techniques”¹⁶¹. On the other hand, however, each realm that specifies and improves its own techniques within its boundaries applies pressure to the other realms as well as receives pressure from them.¹⁶² Architecture, Hays suggests, like any other discipline within that structure is obliged to have a certain degree of autonomy in order to be able to survive within it. It has to constitute its own regulation to determine its stand against the affect of this non-architectural ideological and economical totality. In that sense, autonomy in architecture can be defined as its capacity to govern itself as an entity, which contains specific regulating systems within its body. This system is not different from modern nation that has the mechanisms within itself to govern its own systems and maintain the interaction with the other nations.

As examined in Diana Agrest’s proposition, architecture develops the mechanism to manage the organization of the relationships within itself. The

¹⁶¹ K. Michael Hays, “Prolegomenon for a Study Linking the Advanced Architecture of the Present to that of the 1970’s through Ideologies of Media, the Experience of Cities in Transition, and Ongoing Effects of Reification,” *Perspecta* 32, op. cit, 102

¹⁶² Hays barrows the term “quasi-autonomy” from Stanford Anderson and claims that one of the theoretical positions towards autonomy depends on the Althusserian concept of “semi-autonomy” of “levels” or “instances” within an ideological field-the economic, juridical, cultural, aesthetic realms. “What results is a set of insides and outsides that are reciprocally constituted and related by way of their ultimate structural difference rather than their identity.” In K. Michael Hays, “Prolegomenon for a Study Linking the Advanced Architecture of the Present to that of the 1970’s through Ideologies of Media, the Experience of Cities in Transition, and Ongoing Effects of Reification,” *Perspecta* 32, op. cit, 102

same mechanism controls the interaction of architecture with the other cultural media. At certain times this interaction is much more intensive and by selective admittance of the “extra-architectural codes” the discipline turns them into the “intra architectural codes”, so that architecture advances its own vocabulary. ¹⁶³

The governing principles of architecture maintain architecture’s specificity. Architecture, in order to maintain its institutional character and in order not to lose its domain in society, has to be autonomous. Because of this, as Hays emphasized, autonomy must be understood as a relational concept not an isolationist position. If architecture loses its autonomy, it loses the specificity of its cultural intervention”¹⁶⁴

3.2 Autonomy after the 1970’s

“Resistance” and “Negation” are two critical positions against Modernism, as Neil Leach discussed, that were re-emphasized particularly during the 1960’s and 1970’s.¹⁶⁵ In architectural discourse as well, these terms are persistently used to describe the critical position against the instrumentalization of architecture.

The thinkers of the Frankfurt School, from a neo-Marxian point of view proposed an alternative leftist view that set self-criticism at the center of any

¹⁶³ The terms “extra-architectural” and “intra-architectural” are used by Diana Agrest in her essay “Design versus Non-Design” *Oppositions Reader*, (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) 337

¹⁶⁴ K. Michael Hays. “Prolegomenon for a Study,” op. cit, 103

¹⁶⁵ Neil Leach, “Introduction,” *Rethinking Architecture* (London, Routledge: 1997) xiii

cultural system.¹⁶⁶ For them, certain aspects such as critical ideology, reason and mind, issues rose during the Enlightenment, had a potential and had to be recovered through a reconsideration of the European culture from its own roots.¹⁶⁷ Rejecting the possibility of a total revolution, which, due to Marxism, was supposed to be made by the labor class, critical theory anticipated a resistance to the current status quo with the critical re-foundation within the cultural media of society.¹⁶⁸ Rather than a total revolution, it was the theory that started with the self-criticism that would be a catalyst for any social change and resistance. In that sense, philosophy had to be mediated with all fields of social life. The main struggle of the thinkers was with “instrumental reason” that was the uncritical reason under the hegemony of capitalism, which they see responsible for the relevant crisis in the society and for the un-fulfillment of the humanistic aims of Modernity.¹⁶⁹ Basing on Kant’s belief in the possibility of knowledge within knowledge, Critical Theory aimed to produce knowledge within each cultural medium and as such destroy myth. This act would help to resist the dominant status quo. Consequently, the philosophers of the Frankfurt School dealt with art and aesthetic theory closely. Critical Theory also emphasized the need in communication among the cultural media. In that sense, it placed language at the center of man’s any action.¹⁷⁰

Creating an attempt to restructure architectural theory from a leftist point of view, this critical attitude had its reflection also in the architectural discourse.

¹⁶⁶ Nergis Ögüt. *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture*, op. cit, 84

¹⁶⁷ Ignacio Sola-Morales, “Critical Discipline” *Oppositions Reader* op. cit, 662

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity an Incomplete Project” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983) 9

¹⁷⁰ Nergis Ögüt, Nergis Ögüt, *The Autonomy of Art and Aestheticism in Architecture* (Ankara: METU Faculty of Architecture Press, 1999) 48

Parallel to the idea of the Frankfurt school that claimed an insistent self-criticism, a critical reappraisal within architecture would help architecture to progress.¹⁷¹ The reformation within the architectural discipline could be achieved with a production of architectural knowledge based on criticism. Within this framework, as stated by Ignacio Sola-Morales, the search of Neo-Rationalists for the basic types and therefore the immutable laws was with an aim of revealing the inner logic and structure of the architectural discourse thus creating a simple architecture, an answer to the empty professionalism of the capitalism.¹⁷² It was a search to return to reason that was raised during the Enlightenment as a vital issue and the potential of which was obscured by the domination of the “instrumental reason” .¹⁷³

3.2.1 Autonomy as Resistance

In light of these ideas, it can be asserted that “autonomy as resistance” implies architecture’s potential as an institution to defend itself against the normalizing functions of the dominant status quo. This resistance is achieved through criticism. It is believed in this thesis that autonomy is a tool for architectural discourse in achieving this resistance. For clearing this position, the autonomy discussions during the 1970’s are crucial.

When the conditions of late capitalism were felt extensively and reversed the utopian intentions of Modernity after the Second World War, in many fields Modernism as an ideology and Modernist production started to be questioned

¹⁷¹ Ibid. , 14

¹⁷² Ignacio Sola-Morales, “Critical Discipline” op. cit, 664

¹⁷³ The domination of “Instrumental Reason” is discussed in Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity: An Incomplete Project,” “Modernity: An Incomplete Project” *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*, ed. Hal Foster (Port Townsend, WA: Bay Press, 1983)

and re-evaluated. Postmodernism emerged as an alternative term and various attitudes towards modernism were labeled under that title. As a reflection of that context at that time, especially during 1960's and 1970's architecture started to question its role in the society. It was a time when all the revolutionary claims in architecture "towards a new architecture" turned to the passive search for the lost domain of the discipline by "reading of architecture"¹⁷⁴ Starting with the 1960's, and especially during the 1970's, autonomy as a concept became a tool for architects and historians to resist the status quo and became a method or a theoretical medium to increase the awareness in architecture. With the claim of autonomy, both architects and historians tried to achieve a critical distance from the dominant ideology.¹⁷⁵

This tendency of architects and critics during 1970's is defined by Hays as the "autonomy project"¹⁷⁶ The origin of the configuration of the thoughts that would lead later to the autonomy project was of European in origin.¹⁷⁷ Particularly, the Milan Polytechnic played an important role in that configuration that shaped the ideas of Neo-Rationalists.¹⁷⁸ The discussion over autonomy is later transferred to America with the help of the architectural magazines, especially with the publication of *Oppositions* that appeared in 1973 and became a vital magazine

¹⁷⁴ This issue is discussed by Neil Leach in his book. See Neil Leach, "Introduction," *Rethinking Architecture A Reader in Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 13

¹⁷⁵ Massimo Scolari. "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Michael Hays, (New York: MIT Press) 131

¹⁷⁶ K. Michael Hays, regarding the 1970's uses the term. As during 1970's autonomy was common interest for numerous architects and critics, the discussions and claims for autonomy in architecture can be titled as "autonomy project". K. Michael Hays. *Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Architectural Discipline*" *Mining Autonomy Perspecta* 33 (Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2002)

¹⁷⁷ . This is explained in details by Massimo Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," op. cit, 131

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

during the 1970's for the transfer of the European discussions to the American audience.

In general, the project searched for the “immutable laws” of the architectural discipline that resisted to the historical change within the city. That was a search for an architecture whose very “authenticity” depended on its “reiterability” that is “an architecture whose success at evoking and recollecting solid, concrete memories depended on its repetition of an already iterable code.”¹⁷⁹ “The iterable code” what they called as “type” represented the resistant and autonomous core of architecture. By re-collecting types in the city and by recombining them in a different context, the architects of the “autonomy project” intended to achieve an architecture that speaks solely of itself.

It was a search for the re-invention and re-drawing of the boundaries of the discipline, which were thought to be threatened by other disciplines at that time.

Regarding this situation Hays asserted:

“The various researches into architecture’s autonomy can now be understood in their historical trajectory as nothing quite so much as attempts to *recode*, to reterritorialize, to reinvent the boundaries and specificities that delimit the discipline.”¹⁸⁰

In general, “autonomy project” declared a “return to the discipline”. With a necessity of re-gaining its identity, architecture claimed to return to its basic repertoire. As Antony Vidler asserted, it was a search for the objective and

¹⁷⁹ K. Michael Hays, “Prolegomon,” op. cit, 103

¹⁸⁰ K. Michael Hays, “Twenty Projects at the Boundaries of the Discipline” op. cit, 55

qualified knowledge within architecture that is outside both ideology and functionalism, but purely architectural. Vidler claimed:

“Disillusioned as to the socially utopian promise of architecture and urbanism, discarded by the very forces of production and consumption it sought to control, architecture is now turning inward and investigating the nature of its own specific practice.”¹⁸¹

The architects of the autonomy project abandoned the heroic role that the architects of the early Modern Architecture held, and tried to retrieve the autonomy of architecture by drawing the limits of the discipline and re-assessing the discipline within these limits. The defenders of “autonomous architecture”¹⁸² renounced the claim to transform the social life and any responsibility for the fate of the world.¹⁸³ The project was an attempt to move architecture away from the dominant ideology of capitalism. It was a resistance, through autonomy, to the existing status quo, as well as an attempt to re-gain architecture’s social and critical role in the society. Although the project of autonomy did not claim a utopian role as it had claimed in the early years of the century, the claim for autonomy of architecture in the 1970’s was not only to re-evaluate and re-invent the knowledge in the discipline, but also to regain the territory it aimed to control. Regarding the architecture in the 1970’s Massimo Scolari stated:

“...architecture is a cognitive process that in and of itself, in the acknowledgement of its own autonomy, is today necessitating a re-

¹⁸¹ Antony Vidler, “Commentary,” *Oppositions Reader* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1998) 365

¹⁸² The term “autonomous architecture” is used in the exhibition organized in 1980 in the Fogg Art Museum, which one-year later taken as a special issue in the *Harvard Architectural Review*.

¹⁸³ Editorial, “Autonomous Architecture,” *Harvard Architectural Review*, vol3, Winter 1984, 8

founding of the discipline; that refuses interdisciplinary solutions into its own crisis; that does not pursue and immerse itself in political, economic, social, and technological events...but rather desires to understand them so as to be able to intervene in them with lucidity."¹⁸⁴

In other words, under the intention of architecture in the 1970's, to re-invent its territory narrowing down the limits of its disciplinary specificity there was also an intend for the re-determination of its function in culture.

Architecture sought to delimit its status in the social context, internally deciphering and recoding its episteme, and externally framing its field of intervention, its intervention in the other cultural systems, not with much utopian aim, yet still with a social vision. This social vision was not directed to any utopian future, but rather it was directed to the past to understand it and to restructure the present. For Silveti as well, this attitude should have been essentially anti-utopian, as, for him, an architecture that was dealing only with its own consciousness could operate within the known, that is, within the present and past, and therefore could not have any claim for the future.¹⁸⁵

The project was a search for the objective knowledge within architecture that is regarded to lie outside both the ideology and functionalism in architecture, but only within the formal operations of it. As Agrest also noted, at that time the production of theoretical knowledge was crucial for architecture to have a critical distance from the existing context. Rodolfo Machado and Jorge Silveti

¹⁸⁴ Massimo Scolari, "The New Architecture and the Avant-Garde," *Architecture Theory since 1968*, ed. Michael Hays, (New York: MIT Press) 131-132

¹⁸⁵ Jorge Silveti, "On Realism in Architecture" in the book by K. Michael Hays, *Unprecedented Realism: The Architecture of Machado and Silveti* (New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 1994) 29

stressed as well the significance of the criticism and theory within architecture that produces knowledge that delimits and controls the discipline of architecture.

The influence of the structural linguistics on the architecture of the 1970's had been profound and occurred along with different lines. With its codes architecture, "like language" believed to be communicating ideas, architecture believed to mean something. Jorge Silvetti asserts:

"The return to language is marked by an unusual degree of self-consciousness in architecture, which starts with the recognition that architecture, like any other cultural product, can be studied as a system of signification establishing different layers of meaning and sense, and constituting one of the many symbolic spheres instituted by society."¹⁸⁶

Consequently, architecture, "like any other cultural product" can be regarded as a system of signification that is independent from extrinsic concerns. As a consequence of this idea the return of architecture to its own roots started with the recognition of that architecture can be accepted as a language with its specific codes and grammar.

As Ignasi de Sola- Morales stated, this concern reveals itself as an analogy to the language system proposing an analytic methodology for the typological examination of the city.¹⁸⁷ Due to this tendency, architecture was regarded as a sign system, the elements of which and their interrelations had to be discovered

¹⁸⁶ Jorge Silvetti, "The Beauty of Shadows," *Oppositions Reader* op. cit, 373

¹⁸⁷ Ignasi de Sola-Morales, "Critical Discipline: Giorgio Grassi, *La Arquitectura Como Oficio*," *Oppositions Reader*, op. cit, 664

through the scrutiny of the city. For the followers of this tendency, for the Neo-Rationalists, the autonomy of architecture lied in its “permanence” and “immutable laws” that can be searched throughout the city in history. For the Neo-Rationalists of the Tendenza, city was the site within which various architectural texts could co-exist. For them, as Kenneth Frampton asserted, the synchronic situation always contained the traces of the past, which are like the constitutive elements that give the meaning.¹⁸⁸ In that sense, architect would search for the meaning that already existed in the city.

Accordingly, architecture searching for its basic repertoire, could examine the city where it could discover the architectural constitutive parts and the grammar between them to reveal a system. Thus, for the defenders of that approach city was acting as a generative grammar. Architecture and the city are chained together, the gathering of architecture constitutes the city, and the city acted as an entity to unfold architectural elements. Consequently, typology acted as “a means for ordering the history and as a basis for generating new work.”¹⁸⁹

For Vidler, this tendency was regarded as the third typology that is different from the previous “two typologies” that of the 18th century appeal to nature and the early 20th century concern for the technology.¹⁹⁰ The architectural system of that third typology was neither functional nor technological, but purely architectural. Vidler asserted:

"We might characterize the fundamental attribute of this third typology as an

¹⁸⁸ Kenneth Frampton, "Modern Architecture and Historicity," *Essays in Architectural Criticism. Modern Architecture and Historical Change*, ed. Alan Colquhoun (New York: Opposition Books, MIT Press, 1981) 14

¹⁸⁹ Editorial, "Autonomous Architecture" op. cit, 8

¹⁹⁰ Antony Vidler, "The Third Typology" *Architecture Theory since 1968*, op. cit, 286

espousal, not of an abstract nature, not of a technological utopia, but rather of the traditional city as the locus of its concern".¹⁹¹

"The columns, houses, and urban spaces while linked in an unbreakable chain of continuity, refer only to their own nature as architectural elements, and their geometries are neither scientific nor technical but essentially architectural."¹⁹²

3.2.2 Autonomy as Negation

In *Webster Dictionary*, negation is defined as "the act of denying; assertion of the non-reality or untruthfulness of anything; declaration that something is not, or has not been, or will not be; denial."¹⁹³ In the *World Dictionary*, it is defined as "negative statement; a statement that is the refusal or denial of some other statement."¹⁹⁴

The "practice of negation" is conceptualized by Michael Hays, who borrowed the term from T. J. Clark, in architecture to define the cognitive project of Hannes Meyer's *neue Sachlichkeit*.¹⁹⁵

Hays claims that Hannes Meyer's League of Nations Project is a "practice of negation" with its "dismantling of traditional formal conventions, the production of ruptures and discontinuities, the repudiation of the individual author as the originator of the meaning, and the denial to the viewing subject of a space apart

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Ibid.

¹⁹³ www.webster-dictionary.org/definition/negation, July 2004

¹⁹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁹⁵ K. Michael Hays. "Post Humanist Subject," op. cit, 154

from life in which the mind is free to dream, to escape.”¹⁹⁶ With its denial of the subject as the originator of the meaning in favor of a an architectural practice “worldly” and “engaged”, Meyer takes part in the “practice of negation”, affirms Hays, which is fundamental in the avant-garde work such as dadaism and constructivism.¹⁹⁷

For Hays, “negation is not just nay saying; it is the active construction of a new situation through form”¹⁹⁸ In that sense, “negation” can be understood not only denial of the conventional and producing discontinuities and ruptures within the context, but also offering alternatives to the existing situation.

Borrowing the concept from Hays, in this study “negation” is considered as one of the potential implications of autonomy. This notion suggests that architecture as an entity with its specific knowledge has the potential to deny and stay away from the conventions of the current ideology by producing new alternatives to that.

3.3 Autonomy in the Local Context

“Resistance” and “Negation” were one set of the binary oppositions that came out during the criticism of Modern Architecture in the 1970’s. While Modern Architecture in Europe emerged both as a critical discourse and practice at the beginning of the 20th century and experienced its self-critical period during the 1970’s, it was only during 1960’s in Turkey that Modern Architecture started to

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. , 155

¹⁹⁸ Ibid. , 154

gain its criticality. When Modernism arrived in Ankara, as asserted by Sibel Bozdoğan, “Kemalist Regime embraced the high modernist faith as one of its founding ideologies.”¹⁹⁹ “Modern Architecture was imported as both a visible symbol and an effective instrument of this radical program to create a thoroughly westernized, modern, and secular new nation dissociated from the country’s own Ottoman and Islamic past.”²⁰⁰

In that sense, the application of Modern Architecture to Turkey followed a different path in Turkey.²⁰¹ As the social, cultural and economical transformations that Europe had been experiencing since three centuries were lacking in Turkey, Modern Architecture was imported to Turkey without its social basis. She affirms that republican leaders wanted Modernism without its “liberal philosophy, socialist overtones and international connotations”.²⁰² Modern Architecture was used by politics for the legitimization of the Turkish Republic.

Consequently as emphasized by Bozdoğan, Modern Architecture became a representation of Modernity in Turkey without its social basis and materials, such as “industrial cities, capitalist production and an autonomous bourgeoisie”.²⁰³ The liberating potentials of Modern Architecture, its critical

¹⁹⁹ Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press: 2001) 6

²⁰⁰ Ibid. , 6

²⁰¹ My knowledge on this issue depends on the issues of nationalism and its architectural representation discussed in the course “Arch 526 Politics and Space” given by Assoc. Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargın. For further information about the representation of Modernity in Turkey see Güven Arif Sargın, “Kamu Adına Örgütlü Unutma ve Yeniden- anımsama,” *Arredamento Mimarlık*, 2002, 11, 46-50 See also, Güven Arif Sargın, “Siyaseten Kentsel Mekanı Tüketmek: Şiddet, Direniş ve Donusturma Üstüne,” *Arredamento Mimarlık*, 2001, 4, 70-75

See also Ali Cengizkan, *Modernin Saati:20. Yüzyılda Modernleşme ve Demokratikleşme Pratiğinde Mimarlar, Kamusal Mekan ve Konut Mimarlığı* (Ankara: Boyut Yayın Gurubu, 2002)

²⁰² Sibel Bozdoğan, *Modernism and Nation Building Turkish Architectural Culture in the Early Republic*, op. cit, 6

²⁰³ Ibid. , 8

discourse and self-transforming approach to art and architecture was missing in Turkey.²⁰⁴ For Bozdoğan, the missing of an autonomous bourgeoisie that would cultivate architecture as an entity independent from the state was one of main the reasons of that consequence.²⁰⁵

Although Modern Architecture was imported as a style from Europe and America, it could not be applied without national features. At the beginning, as Sibel Bozdoğan asserted, the interest in Modern Architecture coupled with the nationalist ideology and Turkish architects tried to “nationalize the modern”.²⁰⁶ By the same token, the claim of Modern Architecture to reach timeless qualities through International Architecture was objectionable in Turkey.

Ilhan Tekeli asserted that it is only after 1950 that “International” Style became dominant in Turkey, when architects abandoned their nationalist tendency.²⁰⁷ For Tekeli, the reason for this change may be the “impossibility of continuing a national architecture in a peripheral country integrated politically and economically into the international order.”²⁰⁸

With the establishment of the Chamber of Architects in 1954, an oppositional voice of the architects could be enabled.²⁰⁹ For Tekeli, the socio-economical status of architects was improved, particularly after the growth in construction market. Therefore, after 1960’s the social consciousness of the architects

²⁰⁴ Ibid. , 7

²⁰⁵ Ibid. , 301

²⁰⁶ Ibid.

²⁰⁷ Ilhan Tekeli. “The Social Context of the Development of Architecture in Turkey,” *Modern Turkish Architecture*, ed. Renata Holod and Ahmet Evin (USA: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1989) 25

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Sibel Bozdoğan. “Re-thinking Modernity and Nation Building,” op. cit, 301

increased.²¹⁰ With the increase in number of the architectural schools in 1950's and the entry of the social sciences in the curriculum, architectural criticism advanced.²¹¹ Tekeli asserted that after 1960's faculty members no longer had the practical experience in building.²¹² This isolation from practice resulted in their concentration on the architectural theory, criticism and history.²¹³

Depending on these facts, it can be asserted that critical architectural discourse besides descriptive texts and historical reconstruction is a new developing field in Turkey. It was only after 1960's the "critical status" of architecture, which was one of the liberating promises of Modern Architecture, started to be concerned by the architects. In that sense, it may be asserted that only after 1960's Modern Architecture started to be "Modern" in Turkey, in the sense of possessing self-criticism and self-transformative power that was inherited by Modern Architecture.

In that sense, Modernity in Turkey may be a still ongoing project, borrowing Habermas's terms, "an incomplete project", the potentials of which are still open to a re-discovery. This thesis believes that autonomy can be used as a critical agent to re-assess the architectural criticism and production in Turkey that will help the social re-appreciation of architecture as both a profession and discipline. The private house projects by Boran Ekinçi, among which Rıza Tansu, Durusu and Filip Amram houses are highlighted here, resisting and negating their context both physically and conceptually have the potentials to

²¹⁰ For Tekeli, particularly Department of Architecture at the Middle East Technical University was significant in that period as a school following prevailing trends of the period. İlhan Tekeli. "The Social Context of the Development of Architecture in Turkey," op. cit, 27

²¹¹ Ibid.

²¹² Ibid. , 30

²¹³ Ibid.

reveal the hidden aspects of the architectural discipline in Turkey that was kept unknown by conventions.

4.3.1 Autonomy between Late-Resistance and Late-Negation²¹⁴

It is claimed here that Filip Amram, Durusu and Rıza Tansu Houses designed by Boran Ekinci can be conceived as a new implication or a new interpretation of autonomy. It is argued here that the discussion generated by focusing on these houses will draw attention to the hidden potential of architecture in Turkey to criticize, negate and resist the dominant culture and as such facilitates the re-appreciation of the discipline.

As discussed before, the idea of the entire search of Boran Ekinci for “housing” can be conceived as a “research program” that proves the possibility of the production of specific knowledge within the discipline and can be evaluated as a critical architecture that continuously articulates and recodes its “disciplinary specificity”. Since each private house design by Ekinci is regarded as part of that search, any other private house project by Ekinci could be evaluated within the conceptual framework of a resistant architecture. However, the particular projects focused here call for the “International Style” and follow the aesthetic principles formulated in the book *The International Style* written by Henry Russell Hitchcock and Philip Johnson -particularly the Glass House designed by Philip Johnson- and thus can be regarded as self-criticism within Modern

²¹⁴ This topic is published as an essay with the title of “Direnç ile Reddediş Arasında Mimarlık: Göl Evi, Canakkale, 2004” in the Journal of *Yapı*, in the vol. October 2004

Architecture that presents itself as a statement in the local context. I will turn this issue later.

It can be noted that the houses discussed here are the ultimate form of a continuous physical and conceptual language constituted by constantly repeating codes that are refined and articulated in time. Particularly in these latest houses, there is an evolution to a more minimal design, both in the plan organization and in the visual language. Rıza Tansu House that was designed with Rıza Tansu in 2001, in Çanakkale, is the earliest project among the three buildings. In this house, living space is located at the center of the rectangular plan, where kitchen is a part of that space. Two identical bedrooms are situated at two sides of the living room, each having its personal bathroom. The front facade is designed as a transparent surface. This plan organization is repeated in 2003 in the Filip Amram House designed again in Çanakkale. Similar to Rıza Tansu House, the front facade, equally divided into four parts by steel structure, is organized as a transparent surface that is composed of sliding doors. The building is supported by steel columns and beams set with regular intervals. The steel structure is covered in the exterior by timber and in the interior by gypsum board. A large veranda is attached in front of the building.

Durusu House was designed by Ekinçi in 2002 in Durusu, Çatalca, Istanbul. In this house, although the plan organization slightly differs, the details are identical. Living space is set in front of the rectangular plan, where the bedrooms are located at the back. The kitchen is again not separated from the living space and exists as a part of it. Among the three bedrooms, only one has its private bathroom. The integration with the open space is solved this time

with a courtyard set within the building. The transparent front facade continues at both sides of the building until it reaches the back facade covered with timber.

The resistance in Ekinci's projects is twofold here. First, it implies, as discussed before, architecture's potential as a closed system to guard itself against the dominant modes of housing in Turkey that are generally dictated by the client. Here, both the process and the end product are resisting. Since the projects are initiated by their own conventions, they do not follow any external authority. The continuous establishment of the internal relations within the projects of Ekinci enabled them to declare their own internal organization. The relationship of the kitchen with the living room is a repeating theme in the houses. Similarly, the direct relation of the bedrooms to the living room, unlike the conventional²¹⁵ housing, where this relationship is established through corridors, is another recurrent principle in the buildings. Technical details are also repeating. The steel connection details and aluminum sliding door details are the same within three buildings. Consequently, the repeating concepts and details result in the accumulation of a more specific and precise knowledge.²¹⁶ The accumulation of both technical and spatial knowledge "according to its own special beginnings" so far within the "research program" of Ekinci, facilitates, as Ayşen Savaş called, the "consistency" of the details and intention within the projects.²¹⁷

²¹⁵ The term "conventional" used here is not in the sense Stanford Anderson uses the term.

²¹⁶ K. Michael Hays, "Critical Architecture Between Culture and Form," op. cit, 26

²¹⁷ Ayşen Savaş, "Tutarlı Kusursuz Soyut: Nur Sağlam Evi; Ümitköy, Ankara, 1994-1999", *Arredamento Mimarlık*, June 2003, 60



Figure 3.3.1 Filip Amram House, Çanakkale 2003 designed by Boran Ekinci.



Figure 3.3.2 Filip Amram House, Çanakkale 2003 designed by Boran Ekinci.



Figure 3.3.3 Filip Amram House, Çanakkale 2003 designed by Boran Ekinci.



Figure 3.3.4 Filip Amram House, Çanakkale 2003 designed by Boran Ekinci.

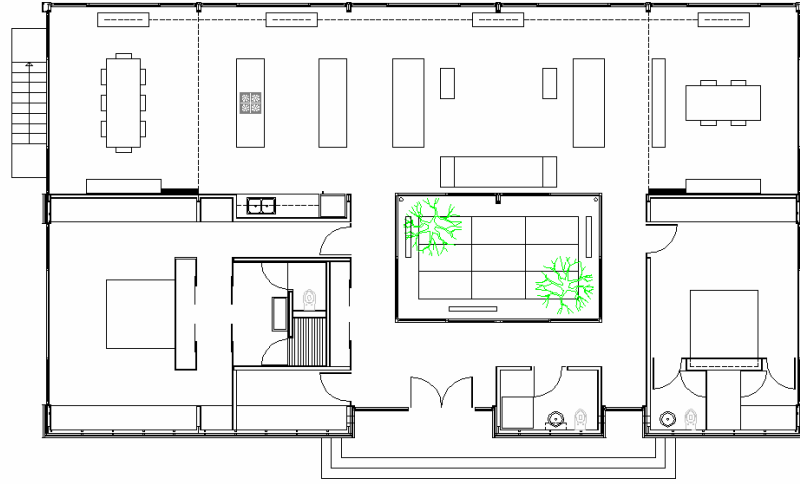


Figure 3.3.5 Durusu House Plan, Çanakkale, 2003

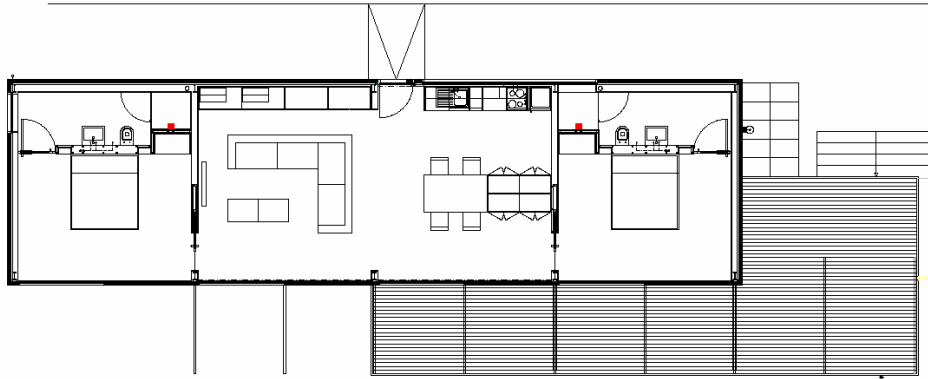


Figure 3.3.6 Filip Amram House Plan, Çatalca, İstanbul, 2002

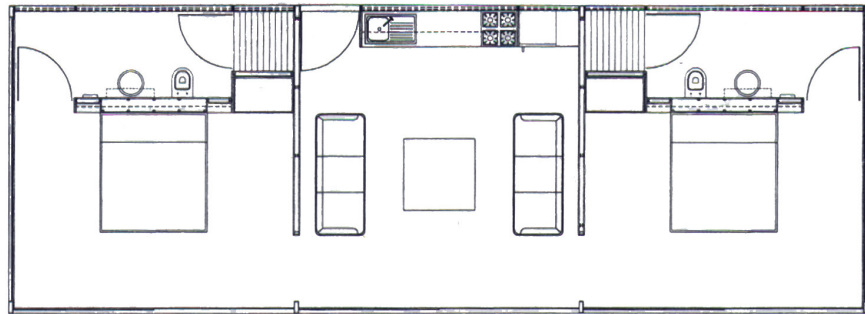


Figure 3.3.7 Rıza Tansu House Plan, Kazdağı, Çanakkale, 2001

The consistency and repetition of these ideas and details not only permit the gathering of the disciplinary knowledge, but also legitimize the existence of the buildings as “autonomous objects” that resist to any change declared by external authority. This sort of “resistance” coupled with the implication of “negation” as well. “Negation”, or the “practice of negation” is proposed by Hays as an attitude that reacts and therefore renounces the conventional modes of design.²¹⁸ Hays adds that “negation” is not just “nay saying”, but also offers new alternatives to the negated.²¹⁹ By standing against the conventional inhabiting patterns in Turkey, therefore opposing to the dominant “system of values”, the projects declare their own internal logic and autonomous existence. The houses designed far from the city as freestanding objects that stood on steel supports can survive at any site being independent from the site conditions. In that way, the buildings present themselves as an essential critique and a challenge to their context, not only visually but also conceptually.

The representation of the buildings, both in plans and photos, affirms this attitude. Both the drawings and photos of the buildings do not give any clue about the surrounding and the relationship of the buildings to that surrounding. (Figures 1-13) Rather, buildings are represented as autonomous objects that can exist anywhere independent from the site conditions. Being opaque to the deciphering of the relationships of design to its surrounding, the plans reveal solely the codes that are “specific” to architecture and interrelationships of these architectural codes. In that sense, Ekinci’s work itself acts as a “filtering mechanism” to the external concerns. The projects create discontinuity and

²¹⁸ K. Michael Hays. *Modernism and the Posthumanist Subject*, op., cit, 154

²¹⁹ *Ibid*, 154

rupture within their context, and thus it can be asserted that both projects resist and negate their contexts both physically and conceptually.

As asserted before “resistance” was one of the key concepts that became popular in the 1970’s, which implied an alternative critique to the Modern Architecture that was considered to be wrenched from its basic intentions, by the capitalist cycle that was dominated, in Habermas’s terms, by the “instrumental reason”.²²⁰ Resistant attitudes, believing in the basic intentions of the Modern Architecture aimed to reassess the discipline rather than to reject it totally. This critical stance was in fact inherited within the liberating potentials of Modern Architecture.²²¹ Therefore, resistance in that sense, denoted more than its usual signification that implied to survive as an entity within a set of complex relations and not surrender to its authority. It referred to a self-critical period in Modern Architecture. In this thesis, the autonomy discussions of the 1970’s are discussed as an example of that critical attitude. It is claimed in this thesis that the architecture of Boran Ekinci demonstrates a “belated” self-criticism of Modern Architecture in the local context.

The buildings, with their simple cubic forms, transparent surfaces, regular structural organization and use of glass, timber and steel in simple details replicate the basic principles formulated by the *International Style* as “volume

²²⁰ Jürgen Habermas claims that, after the separation of three spheres, one of them, in fact reason started to dominate the others. One of the negative consequences of this was the emergence of the “Instrumental Reason,” which was the uncritical reason working for the capitalist forces. It was this uncritical reason that led “societal Modernization” lost the spirit of “Modernity Project”. Jürgen Habermas discusses this in his essay “Modernity an Incomplete Project”.

²²¹ Neil Leach, “Modernism,” *Rethinking Architecture A Reader in Cultural Theory* (New York: Routledge, 1997) 4



Figure 3.3.8 Durusu House, Çatalca Istanbul, 2002 by Boran Ekinci



Figure 3.3.9 Durusu House, Çatalca Istanbul, 2002 by Boran Ekinci



Figure 3.3.10 Durusu House, Çatalca Istanbul, 2002 by Boran Ekinci



Figure 3.3.11 Durusu House, Çatalca Istanbul, 2002 by Boran Ekinci

instead of mass”, “regularity” and “avoidance of applied decoration”.²²² As a second meaning of resistance through autonomy, I claim here that Ekinci’s architecture- calling for the International Style, particularly taking the Glass House of Philip Johnson as a “metaphor”-can be deemed as a self-critique within Modern Architecture that was experienced during the 1970’s in Europe and America. This self-criticism suggests a belief in the basic intent of the Modern architecture. It is argued here that this “belated reaction” in the local context has its potential for the re-appreciation of Modern Architecture in Turkey.²²³

Within the architectural context of Turkey, where architecture could hardly attain its critical power, the houses of Ekinci are not only the critiques of the current situation of architecture in Turkey but also by repeating the “International Style” of the early 20th century at the end of the century, they are the self-critiques in Modern Architecture. In that sense, Ekinci’s houses reveal themselves as “resistance” and “negation” or better “late-resistance” and “late-negation” within the Turkish Modern Architecture.

The “late-resistance” and “late-negation” discerned in the houses of Boran Ekinci acquaints the potential of architecture in Turkey in legitimizing itself as a self-contained discipline that situates itself in a critical position in culture.

²²² Henry Russell Hitchcock, Philip Johnson, *The International Style* (New York: Norton, 1966).

²²³ I am grateful to my thesis advisor Assoc. Prof. Dr. Ayşen Savaş .for the term “belated reaction”.



Figure 3.3.12 Rıza Tansu House, Kazdağı, Çanakkale, 2001 by Boran Ekinci **with** Rıza Tansu



Figure 3.3.13 Rıza Tansu House, Kazdağı, Çanakkale, 2001 by Boran Ekinci **with** Rıza Tansu

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION

The contradiction between architecture's "autonomy" and its social "engagement" has been the subject of numerous discussions in architectural discourse, initially in Europe and later in North America. Usually, architecture's autonomy-its existence as an entity with its own "disciplinary specificity"- and engagement-its involvement in culture, ideology and economy-have been reckoned as two dialectical positions of architecture.

It is argued in this thesis that although architecture's "autonomy" and "engagement" seem contradictory to each other, architecture's "critical status" is rooted in this contradiction. Autonomy is regarded as one of the essential sides of this dual position. This suggests that the *in-between*, or in Stanford Anderson's terms, "quasi-autonomous" status of architecture can only be sustained through its existence as an entity that has a certain degree of autonomy. To argue autonomy, or better, to emphasize the autonomous dimension of architecture's "quasi-autonomous" status, is not to refute this dual position of the discipline. Rather, autonomy is an agent for architectural discourse to isolate architecture for a while from its involvement in the external reality and increase awareness within the discipline by concentrating on its

specific knowledge. Autonomy aids architecture to pretend to be “detached” while in reality it is “engaged”.

The production of knowledge within architectural discipline is an autonomous procedure that operates within the internal logic of architecture. In this thesis, this system was discussed in reference to two different positions proposed by Diana Agrest and Stanford Anderson. Autonomy maintains “the disciplinary specificity” of architecture, which is, for Agrest, controlled through a mechanism that by opening and closing architecture’s boundaries to the social context provides articulation within the discipline.²²⁴ Anderson focuses on the application of this knowledge by architect’s free will. I claim that Agrest’s and Anderson’s positions are complementary to each other and they both draw the framework of a possible “critical architecture”. Both together define a procedure of de-contextualization and re-contextualization.²²⁵ Architecture de-contextualizes itself focusing on its own internal logic directed by conventions and re-contextualizes itself by establishing relation to the context, in Anderson’s terms, placing itself in a “worldly situation.”

One of the points that are emphasized within this study is that autonomy is one of the key concepts of Modernity, the philosophical background of which dates back to the Enlightenment.²²⁶ Consequently, the conceptualization of autonomy in architecture is a modern phenomenon. In the history of Modern Architecture, however, the term is persistently (re) problematized. It can be asserted that the preoccupation with autonomy came out under specific circumstances. Starting

²²⁴ Diana Agrest, “Design versus Non-Design,” op. cit, 335-338

²²⁵ I am grateful to Assoc. Prof. Dr. Güven Arif Sargın for taking my attention to that point.

²²⁶ As discussed by Jürgen Habermas, the term referred to the separation of the three spheres, during the Enlightenment. Jürgen Habermas, “Modernity: An Incomplete Project,” op. cit, 9

with the 1960's and particularly, in the 1970's, autonomy gained a renewed popularity and it was used by the architectural discourse as a tool to defend architecture against the instrumentalization by the capitalist cycle of the production and consumption.²²⁷ This is believed to achieve with the production of knowledge within the discipline. Renouncing the utopian role in society, the return of the "autonomous architecture" to itself during the 1970's with a claim of commenting solely on itself demonstrates this attempt.

This return of architecture into its own discipline was for Jorge Silvetti an evidence for awareness in the discipline to operate within the specific knowledge of architecture.²²⁸ For Silvetti, this was an attempt of producing knowledge "from within the discipline". For him, the objective of this attempt as called by him as the "criticism from within" architecture, was to produce qualified knowledge in the discipline that "even if short-lived will emerge as an apparition against a background of transparent myths."²²⁹

Benefiting from these ideas, this thesis started with the assumption that autonomy can be employed as a tool to produce "qualified" knowledge within architectural discourse that would increase awareness within architecture against the normalizing functions of the dominant culture. Autonomy is taken here both as a term that defines the secular and critical status of architecture after Modernism and a critical concept within architectural criticism.

²²⁷ K. Michael Hays. "Twenty Projects," op. cit, 55

²²⁸ Jorge Silvetti. "The Beauty of Shadows," *Oppositions Reader*, op. cit, 372

²²⁹ Ibid.

The conceptualization of autonomy in architecture in the early Modern Architecture provided the discipline with one of its critical concepts. Its re-conceptualization during the 1970's embraced a critique of the Modern Architecture. Yet, this self-criticism was embedded within the discourse of Modern Architecture itself. It is claimed in this thesis that the irrelevance of autonomy in the Turkish architectural discourse until recently was due to the lack of a fully developed critical discourse, which was one of the liberating promises of Modern Architecture and which would act as an agent to evaluate the architectural production.

It is claimed in this study that the private housing projects by Boran Ekinci can be conceived as a "research program" that produces its own knowledge and have the potential to develop a discourse related with autonomy in Turkey, as it is believed that the discourse generated here is inherited in the private house projects of Ekinci. In that sense, rather than being a case study, his works were epitomized for a search for the new definition of autonomy. It should be re-emphasized that in this study, only a few of Ekinci's houses were focused. This is not sufficient for a detailed analysis of a "research program" within the career of the architect. Yet, the aim was not to determine the aspects and draw the framework of such a program in Ekinci's architecture. Rather, the personal attempt of the architect to create rupture in Turkey by negating the housing trends was considered as a "project" within his career that conveys the critical potential of architecture, which was concealed in Turkey.

The design process of Ekinci's private houses follows its own conventions. This helps his design process to resist the existing paradigm and its dominant

modes and a design process that is dictated by the client. The projects first de-contextualize themselves by obeying solely the internal logic of the knowledge accumulated by the “research program”. When they re-contextualize themselves, they reveal themselves as statements that establish their relation to the context through negating, criticizing and resisting it. That is, Boran Ekinçi’s private houses, among which Filip Amram, Durusu and Rıza Tansu houses are particularly highlighted here, stress the autonomous dimension of architecture by resisting and negating the values of the dominant status quo. In that sense, it is not only the process, but also the end product that resist in Ekinçi’s architecture. By replicating the canonical building of the “International Style” in the 2000’s in a context which did not experienced the high Modernism in its full sense, the end-products reveal themselves as a “statement”, that not only criticizes the current situation of architecture in Turkey, but also demonstrate a belief in the basic intends of Modernism. It is the design process and the form of the buildings that create a discontinuity both visually and conceptually in the Turkish architectural context. The coming out of this critical attitude that occupied architectural discourse of Europe and America in the 1970’s in the 2000’s in Turkey points to a late reaction or late self-criticism and has the potential for the re-appreciation of Modern Architecture in Turkey.

The main aim of this thesis was to explore the potential of autonomy as a concept to generate knowledge for architecture. Ekinçi’s projects helped to locate the general discourse related with autonomy in a local context, where Modernism and its discourse were transferred and still being transferred with a time lag. Ekinçi’s works were used as subtexts to (re)-conceptualize autonomy

not only in architectural discourse in general, but also in the Turkish context specifically.

It should be re-emphasized that it was not the aim of this study to answer the question, whether architecture is really autonomous. Rather, it is argued here that there is not a straight answer for that question. As autonomy is a loaded term rendering any single definition reductive and as autonomy of architecture is recognized together with its counterpart -which is the “engagement”- the answer of that question would change due to one’s receipt of the term and would not be satisfactory.

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