

ADORNO'S CONCEPTION OF AUTONOMOUS ART
IN LIGHT OF KANT'S AND HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHIES

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İLAY İNCEEFE

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Prof. Dr. Tülin Gençöz
Director

I certify that this thesis satisfies all the requirements as a thesis for the degree of
Master of Science/Arts / Doctor of Philosophy.

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan
Head of Department

This is to certify that we have read this thesis and that in our opinion it is fully
adequate, in scope and quality, as a thesis for the degree of Master of
Science/Arts/Doctor of Philosophy.

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan
Supervisor

Examining Committee Members (first name belongs to the chairperson of the jury
and the second name belongs to supervisor)

Prof. Dr. Ş. Halil Turan (METU,PHIL)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan (METU,PHIL)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Çetin Türkyılmaz (Hacettepe U., PHIL)

I hereby declare that all information in this document has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic rules and ethical conduct. I also declare that, as required by these rules and conduct, I have fully cited and referenced all material and results that are not original to this work.

Name, Last name: İlay İNCEEFE

Signature :

ABSTRACT

ADORNO'S CONCEPTION OF AUTONOMOUS ART IN LIGHT OF KANT'S AND HEGEL'S PHILOSOPHIES

İNCEEFE, İlay

M.A., Department of Philosophy

Supervisor: Assoc. Prof. Dr. Barış Parkan

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In this thesis I tried to to analyze Adorno's conception of autonomous art through his conception of "truth content". Within the aesthetic debates in the Frankfurt School, Adorno uses the conception of "autonomy in art/autonomous work of art" as opposed to "politically committed art", which is defended by Benjamin and Brecht. However, while his understanding of autonomous work of art seems to defend the elitist understanding of art, this study aims to show that Adorno's conception of "autonomy" or "truth content" should not be considered and elaborated without looking at the work of art's relation with the society and history.

Adorno's conception of "truth content" gives a clear understanding of autonomus art/autonomous work of art. Because of this reason, I tried to analyze his conception of "truth content" in *Aesthetic Theory* in detail. *Aesthetic Theory* includes many references to Kant's and Hegel's philosophies and aesthetics. In order to understand the historical relationship between Kant, Hegel and Adorno, which shapes Adorno's

conception of “truth content”, I presented Kant’s and Hegel’s philosophies and aesthetics in terms of their effects on the conception of “autonomous art” and “truth content”.

Close examination of the “truth content” in *Aesthetic Theory* with the historical relationship with Kant and Hegel gives a clear understanding of what Adorno means by “autonomous art/work of art” especially in his debates with Benjamin and Brecht. At the end of this research, how and in what way Adorno’s conception of autonomous art and work of art include what is social and political can be reached and understood clearly.

Keywords: Autonomy, autonomous work of art, truth content, subjectivity, objectivity.

ÖZ

KANT ve HEGEL FELSEFELERİ IŞIĞINDA ADORNO’NUN OTONOM SANAT ANLAYIŞININ ANALİZİ

İNCEEFE, İlay

Yüksek Lisans, Felsefe Bölümü

Tez Yöneticisi: Doç. Dr. Barış Parkan

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Bu tezde Adorno’nun otonom sanat anlayışını içeriğin gerçekliği (truth content) kavramı ışığında incelemeye çalıştım. Frankfurt Okulu’nun sanat ve estetik tartışmaları içerisinde Adorno otonom sanat anlayışını Benjamin ve Brecht’in savunduğu politik açıdan işlenmiş/politik içerikli sanat anlayışının karşısına koyar. Adorno’nun otonom sanat anlayışını bu tartışmanın ve tezatlığın içinden kuruşu, onun otonomi anlayışının elitist bir sanata ya da daha genel anlamıyla “sanat için sanat” anlayışına dayandığı yanlış kanısına kapılınabilir. Bu çalışma, Adorno’nun otonom sanat anlayışının ve içeriğin gerçekliği (truth content) kavramının aslında sanat eserinin toplum ve tarihle olan ilişkisinden bağımsız düşünölemeyeceği ve değeriendirilemeyeceğini göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Adorno’nun içeriğin gerçekliği (truth content) kavramı onun otonom sanat anlayışından bağımsız düşünölemeyeceği için, Adorno’nun Estetik Kuram kitabındaki

içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının detaylı bir incelemesini yapmaya çalıştım. Estetik Kuram kitabı Kant ve Hegel felsefelerine ve özellikle estetik anlayışlarına birçok referans içeren bir kitaptır. Adorno'nun içeriğin gerçekliği (truth content) kavramının oluşumunu etkileyen Kant, Hegel ve Adorno arasındaki tarihsel ilişkiyi sunmak ve çözümlmek adına, Kant'ın ve Hegel'in estetik kuramlarının Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışı ve içeriğin gerçekliği kavramlarını etkileyen yönlerini sundum.

Estetik Kuram kitabındaki içeriğin gerçekliği (truth content) kavramının Kant ve Hegel estetikleriyle olan tarihsel ilişkisinde değerlendirilmesi, Adorno'nun Benjamin ve Brecht'e karşı savunduğu otonom sanat anlayışı ile ne demek istediğinin detaylı bir açıklamasını vermektedir. Bütün bu araştırmanın sonunda, Adorno'nun otonom sanat ve sanat eseri anlayışının sosyal ve politik olanı içinde barındırdığı yargısına nasıl ve ne şekilde ulaştığı açık bir şekilde anlaşılabilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Otonomi, otonom sanat, içeriğin gerçekliği, öznellik, nesnellik.

To Ali Naif Inceefe

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TABLE OF CONTENT

| | |
|--|------|
| PLAGIARISM..... | iii |
| ABSTRACT..... | iv |
| ÖZ..... | v |
| DEDICATION..... | vi |
| ACKNOWLEDGMENTS | vii |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS..... | viii |
| CHAPTER | |
| 1. INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| 2. KANT | 13 |
| 2.1. The Critique of Pure Reason..... | 14 |
| 2.1.1. Two Main Sources of Knowledge/Cognition: Sensibility and Understanding | 14 |
| 2.1.2. Synthetic a priori | 15 |
| 2.2. The Critique of Judgment | 20 |
| 2.2.1. Four Moments of the Beautiful | 21 |
| 2.2.1.1. Disinterestedness..... | 22 |
| 2.2.1.2. Subjective Universality | 25 |
| 2.2.1.3. Purposiveness without Purpose..... | 27 |
| 2.3. In Place of a Conclusion: Kant's Influence on Adorno | 29 |
| 3. HEGEL | 31 |
| 3.1 The Concept..... | 31 |
| 3.1.1. Being-Nothing-Becoming | 31 |
| 3.1.2. The Movement of Being: Dialectic | 34 |
| 3.2. Concrete Universal | 38 |
| 3.2.1. Universal | 40 |
| 3.2.2. Particular | 40 |
| 3.2.3. Singular | 41 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 3.3. Geist | 42 |
| 3.4. Aesthetic Theory | 44 |
| 3.4.1. Common Ideas of Art | 44 |
| 3.4.2. Content | 47 |
| 3.4.3. Romantic Art | 48 |
| 3.5. In Place of a Conclusion: The Criticism of Kant/Objectivity..... | 51 |
| 4. ADORNO..... | 52 |
| 4.1 Enigmaticalness and Emergence of Truth Content | 53 |
| 4.2. Truth content..... | 58 |
| 4.2.1. Form and Content | 59 |
| 4.2.1.1. Form | 60 |
| 4.2.1.2. Content and Material..... | 62 |
| 4.2.2. Subjectivity and Objectivity | 65 |
| 4.2.3. Negative Dialectic | 72 |
| 4.3. “Fantasy” in the Work of Art and “Truth Content” | 74 |
| 4.4. The Criticism of Brecht and “Autonomy” | 76 |
| 5. CONCLUSION | 81 |
| REFERENCES..... | 91 |
| APPENDICES | |
| A.TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET | 97 |
| B.TEZ FOTOKOPİSİ İZİN FORMU | 108 |

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

“What is art?” or “What are our criteria when we find something beautiful or aesthetic?”. It is hard to find lasting answers for these questions since the definition of art is dynamic in the sense that the understanding of it has changed throughout history. Each period in history develops its own approaches to art and the work of art. In our time, the understanding of art and the artwork has become more and more complicated. It cannot be wrong to say that the main reason behind this complexity is the rise of capitalism and its effect on every sphere of our life. Capitalism has dramatically changed our understanding of social, economic and political life and within this changing process, the criticism of aesthetic and art has also changed.

The Frankfurt School (i.e., The Institute for Social Research), which was founded in 1923 by Felix Weil in order to explore the connections between the economic life of society and the changes in the realm of culture has provided us with some of the most insightful analyses of art and culture (along with other dimensions of ideological production) for us to be able to understand and question the meaning and purpose of art in our own complicated epoch. Even though they were writing half a century ago, and it would be a mistake to assume that the conditions of capitalism haven't changed since then, their writings still serve to illuminate our own age as well as more enduring questions that have retained their relevance for centuries.

Aesthetic criticisms in the Frankfurt School, especially Benjamin's and Adorno's critiques, do not lose their importance and validity today, and some of their polemics on aesthetics and art can be located within a more recognizable scheme (e.g. the “art for art's sake” vs. “art for society's sake” debate). Adorno defends what he calls “autonomous art” both as part of his critique of the culture industry and his critique of the political art employed and defended by Benjamin and Brecht.

This thesis will argue that Adorno's conception of "truth content" is crucial to an understanding of what Adorno means by "autonomous art", and for this reason, in this thesis I try to articulate a proper understanding of "truth content". Adorno does not elaborate the conceptions of "truth content" and "autonomous art" only within the debates in the Frankfurt School; he refers back to more quintessential issues that have been taken up by major philosophers like Kant and Hegel within a large historical context.

My analysis will be structured as follows. In what follows in this chapter, I will present the discussion between Adorno and his contemporaries (specifically, Benjamin and Brecht). In Chapter 2, I will discuss Kant's aesthetics, focusing on those aspects of it, which have affected Adorno's conception of autonomous art. In order to understand and analyze Kant's aesthetic understanding better, I will first present his philosophy in general. The general background of Kant's philosophy is also necessary for understanding Adorno's conception of "truth content". In Chapter 3, I will present Hegel's (understanding of) philosophy of art and aesthetic mainly. Before this, I will try to give a general background, which will help us to understand the ground of his aesthetic understanding. In Chapter 4, I will engage in a close reading and analysis of Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory*. After presenting Adorno's discussion of the enigmaticalness of the work of art, which seems to hold the key to his discussion of truth content, I will move on to a detailed examination of the concept of truth content. Lastly, I turn back to the question of autonomous art. The clarification of Adorno's concept of truth content enables us to understand what he defends autonomous art against Benjamin and Brecht. Further, in my analysis of the notion of truth content, I analyze sections from *Negative Dialectics* and *Minima Moralia*, which reveal that Adorno's critique extends beyond Benjamin and Brecht to a critique of certain aspects of Hegelian dialectic.

In the following paragraphs, I will begin with the debates within The Frankfurt School, which constitute the intellectual background from which the concept of "autonomous work of art" has emerged.

The Frankfurt School can be distinguished into four periods and each period has its own characteristics. In his book *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics*, Tom Bottomore briefly summarizes each period as follows. The first period was between 1923 and

1933, and was influenced by the materialist and empirical character of Marxism. From 1933 to 1950, the inclination of the second period of the School concentrated around neo-Hegelian critical theory. With the participation of Marcuse and Adorno in the Frankfurt School, the school started developing its own philosophical style and the theoretical and systematic approach of The Frankfurt School began to widen. In the 1950s, the relevance of their intellectual and political outlook increased, and the influence of the Frankfurt School began to spread throughout Europe. The last period (the early 1970s), the popularity and influence of the School declined slowly.¹

The critical approach of The Frankfurt School is mainly based on a criticism of the understanding of traditional theory. Horkheimer's *Traditional and Critical Theory* essay dwells on the criticism of traditional theory and the emergence of critical theory. Horkheimer begins the essay with the question of "what is 'theory'?" and he explains that for most researchers, theory is the "sum-total of propositions" and "stored-up knowledge". He continues "The general goal of all theory is a universal systematic science, not limited to any particular subject matter but embracing all possible objects".² Traditional theory tries to explain facts by using the mathematical system of symbols and numerical explanations. Formal (deductive and instrumental) reasoning seems to be a significant characteristic of traditional theory.

In light of these characteristics of traditional theory, Horkheimer emphasizes that traditional theory is not interested in "what theory means by human life" and it ignores the "social process of production."³ However, Horkheimer points out that in the understanding of critical thinking and theory, "the facts which our senses present to us are socially preformed in two ways:" (1) "through historical character of the object perceived" and (2) "through the historical character of the perceiving organ [the subject]". In other words, the subject and object do not have strict or stable definitions, and they are shaped and changed by the social and historical processes. Critical theory

¹ Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics*, p. 12-13.

² Horkheimer, *Critical Theory Selected Essays*, p. 188-189.

³ Horkheimer, p.197.

does not forget that “the facts which the individual and his theory encounter are socially produced”.⁴

Critical theory is another name for the Frankfurt School, their method of analysis and criticism. However, the questions “how did Critical Theory emerge?” and “what is the background of the emergence of Critical Theory?” are also essential to understand Adorno’s criticism of the work of art.

The main reason behind the emergence of critical theory is the “Marxian tradition of ideology critique”.⁵ In the Marxist tradition, it is always kept in mind that “definite” individuals who are engaged in active production do so in certain historical circumstances defined by the means of subsistence, mode of production, and the concomitant ideology and social relations they find in existence at a specific point in the development of history.⁶ In this way, Marx analyses the mode of production and social relations under capitalism. With the rise of capitalism, new modes of production emerge. These new modes of production deepen economic and social inequalities among the individuals. On the one side, there is a ruling class (bourgeois), who have the means of production such as machineries or (specific) technologies. Having the means of production is related with the economic power of the ruling class. On the other side, there is working class (proletariat), who are (forced to be) excluded from the process of production, and alienated from all production processes and what they produce. In addition to the economic power of the ruling class (bourgeois) over the proletariat, the ruling class has also social, political, and religious power in society. “The function of ideology, also, is to legitimate the power of ruling class in society”.⁷ So, the proletariat may feel free under the pressure and the ideology of the ruling social class, even though they “are not free to choose their social relations [and] they are constrained into them by material necessity”.⁸ So, the ideology of the bourgeois also creates its own social and cultural spheres which specifically affect the understanding

⁴ Horkheimer, p.200.

⁵ Piccone, *The Essential Frankfurt School Reader*, p. x.

⁶ Marx and Engels, *The German Ideology*, p. 150-154.

⁷ Eagleton, *Marxism and Literary Criticism*, p.3.

⁸ Eagleton, p.3.

of art, aesthetic, media, entertainment. In short, the ideology of ruling class affects production in every sphere of life as well as the life-style of the individuals.

D. Hell points out that “the emergence of the entertainment industry”, “the growth of mass media” and “the blatant manipulation of culture by the Nazis” were the indicators of “changing patterns of culture” in the 1930’s and 1940’s.⁹ These changing patterns of culture give rise to new concepts such as “mass culture” and “popular culture”, which the members of the Frankfurt School began to apply themselves to. However, the meaning of ‘mass’ or ‘popular’ culture needs a more detailed explanation. In other words, we should ask what does “popular” or “mass culture” mean?

In *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception*, Adorno and Horkheimer use the expression “culture industry” instead of “mass culture”. Later, Adorno wrote about the aim of this change of terms in “Culture Industry Reconsidered”: “We replaced that expression (mass culture) with “culture industry” in order to exclude from the outset the interpretation agreeable to its advocates: that is a matter of something like a culture that arises spontaneously from the masses themselves...”¹⁰

In “Fetish Character in Music and Regression of Listening,” Adorno also points out that “in broad areas the same thing is offered to everybody by the standardized productions of consumption goods”.¹¹ This is the main characteristic of ‘mass culture’. They can be popular films, hit songs and bestseller books, which we are exposed to, see and listen to everywhere. So, we can say that culture industry is everything, that is created under the monopoly of the ruling class, who (aim to) produce standardized consumption goods. His analysis reveals that the individual, who feels himself/herself as having the right to choose what they want in society, is in fact enchained by what the culture industry serves them.

Under the effect of mass culture, the understanding of art loses its own/main value, which Adorno later calls “autonomy”. In order to emphasize the changing relationship between people and music in popular culture, he says “The consumer is really

⁹ David Held, “The Culture Industry: Critical Theory and Aesthetics.”, p.78.

¹⁰Adorno, “Culture Industry Reconsidered.”, p.12.

¹¹ Adorno, “On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening.”,p. 280.

worshipping the money that he himself paid for the ticket to Toscanini concert. He has literally “made” the success which he reifies and accepts as an objective criterion, without recognizing himself in it”.¹²So, in ‘mass’ or ‘popular culture’, what is most important in the relationship between the individual and the work of art is the amount of money for buying the ticket, rather than the concert and the music itself. This also shows that the (value of) work of art seems to be produced for the sake of profit (money) in the culture industry. The concert is only listened to when the money is paid for it. So, it creates its own industry. As another example, Horkheimer and Adorno point out that films and what gets played on radio are no longer seen as art, but they are the products of industry.¹³ As a part of the products of the industry, for example, films (Hollywood films) are considered to be directly related with their budgets and famous actors, who act in the film. This creates a film industry, where film studios compete with each other to make more money.

The development of technology plays a crucial role in the emergence of culture industry and popular culture. There is a strong relationship between technological reproducibility, culture and art. Horkheimer and Adorno continue that technology and monopoly (in the production process) create “standardized forms” in culture industry. These “standardized forms” are directly related with the modes of production in society. For example, in today’s world, the (popular and trend) music is created with digital platforms. In other words, the particular piece of music is created/produced with standard forms designed for categorized consumers and in a way suitable for mass production and reproduction (as seen in the similar tones, rhythm and also words in music). As a result of this, every piece of music becomes similar to others and these standardized forms constitute the masses.

Adorno thinks that the culture industry prevents the development of “autonomous” and “independent” individuals.¹⁴In addition to that, he also points out that art/aesthetic

¹² Adorno, ‘On the Fetish Character in Music and the Regression of Listening’, pp. 278-279.

¹³ Horkheimer and Adorno, “The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception.”, p.95.

¹⁴ Huyssen, “Introduction to Adorno.”, p.4.

is enchained and predominated by the culture industry. In other words, he says; “autonomy of the works of art [...] is tendentially eliminated by the culture industry”.¹⁵

In the light of this analysis of the relationship between the culture industry and art, the conception of “autonomy” in the work of art for Adorno can be seen to be the opposite of the popular and mass culture.

Adorno’s understanding of autonomous work of art should also be explained by taking into consideration his criticism of Benjamin and Brecht. Thus, we need to look at Benjamin’s main understanding and criticism of the work of art in order to understand how Adorno formulates his conception of “autonomy” against Benjamin and Brecht.

In ‘The Work of Art in The Age of Mechanical Reproduction’, Benjamin tries to define and understand how the understanding of art changes in the age of mechanical reproduction. In the text, Benjamin tries to observe the relation between the transformation of production and understanding of the work of art. His approach to the understanding of the work of art in the mechanical age does not appear to be pessimistic. More specifically, in the text he asks, in the process of transformations in production, how political tendency in relation to the work of art emerges as a result of the destruction of the aura of the work of art.

Bottomore says “...Benjamin considered that ‘mechanical reproduction’ had revolutionary implications inasmuch as it tended to destroy the elitist ‘aura’ of art and led to a ‘tremendous shattering of tradition’”.¹⁶ Benjamin defines the aura of the work of art as the “unique existence” of the work of art and its “presence in time and space”.¹⁷ In other words, aura means being here and now. Aura can be considered to designate the authenticity of the work of art. Benjamin states “the unique value of the authentic art has its basis in ritual, the location of its original use value”.¹⁸

The uniqueness of the work of art or aura of it cannot be thought without the relation with its tradition, rituals and time periods. In other words, authenticity of the work of

¹⁵ Adorno, ‘Culture Industry Reconsidered’, p.13.

¹⁶Bottomore, *The Frankfurt School and Its Critics*, p.19.

¹⁷ Benjamin, “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction.”, p.3.

¹⁸Benjamin, p.6.

art is related with its ritual basis and the location of its original use value. However, with the rise of mechanical reproduction, the work of art has started to be reproduced and loses its authenticity. For example, the emergence of the photograph and printing leads to the disappearance of the importance of an “original” and this transforms our understanding of aura and authenticity. With the diminishing of the importance placed on the aura of a unique artwork in a specific time and place, the origin of which is based on rituals and ritual functions, art seems to lose its original meaning. Benjamin states that as a result of this destruction of the aura, the work of art begins to be based on another practice: politics.¹⁹ The destruction of the aura may seem to be a negative transformation in the understanding of aesthetics and work of art, but Benjamin evaluates it as a positive development for the following reasons: (1) the work of art becomes accessible to the masses and (2) the use/purpose of the work of art is (or potentially can be) transformed into a political one (for and by the people).

After highlighting the emergence of politics in art as a result of the destruction of aura, Benjamin continues to express his views on politics and political tendency in the work of art in *Author as Producer*. Since he believes that “social conditions” are determined/affected by the conditions of production and he asks, “what is the attitude of a work to relations of production of its time?” After that, he specifies his question; “what is its [work of art] position in them [production of its time]?”²⁰ He believes that these questions are directly related with the function of the work of art in society. Benjamin believes that the artist cannot detach his/her work of art from his/her society and social production, and that the artist should express his/her political tendency in the work of art. Further, he strictly believes that “the place of intellectuals in the class struggle” can only be identified through what position they assume in the process of production.²¹

In short, Benjamin says that the work of art should be the voice of the specific class, namely, the proletariat; and telling the political truth and shaping the content according to the idea that is useful should be the main basis of artworks.

¹⁹ Benjamin, p.7.

²⁰ Benjamin, “Author as Producer.”, p.257.

²¹ Benjamin, p.261.

What is useful seems to be a revolutionary message, according to Benjamin. This can be seen, for instance, in his discussions of Renger-Patsch's picture anthology, "A Beautiful World". The collection consists of New Matter-of-Fact photography, which represent the world as it is in a fashionable way. It includes many daily objects and buildings such as factory chimneys, knife, glass, trees as well as famous people and cities. However, Benjamin believes that these kinds of pictures do not have the ability to change the function and meaning of the objects. In other words, representing the world as it is in the photographs does not say anything more than what is represented. However, Benjamin says "what we require of the photographer is the ability to give his picture that caption which wrenches it from modish commerce and gives it revolutionary use-value".²² So, representing the world as it is in the photographs does not reveal the revolutionary use-value in the sense that the photographer does not add anything new, such as his/her world view or the message for the people.

In the revolutionary use value of the work of art, we see the aim or function of the work of art. So, we can infer that what is more important in Benjamin's understanding of the work of art is that the work of art should direct or instruct people; making them think and follow specific actions and attitudes.

The political tendency Benjamin encourages in the work of art becomes clearer in his examples from Brecht and Brechtian theatre. He sees the epic theatre of Brecht as a powerful example to illustrate the political effect of the work of art. Benjamin thinks that the epic theater of Brecht does not "reproduce the situations", but rather "discovers them"²³ In other words, his theatre has an educational role on the audiences and it creates/opens new ways of looking at the situation around them. For example, "the alienation effect" in Brechtian theatre can be remembered at this point. The alienation effect involves many techniques, such as explanatory captions or illustrations and actors stepping out of character to lecture. The main aim of the alienation effect is to distance the audience from the stage or theatre. More specifically, the alienation or distance effect aims to remind the audience that they are watching a play/they are in theatre. By means of the alienation effect, Brecht tries to keep the attention of the

²² Benjamin, p.263.

²³ Benjamin, p.266.

audience and draw it towards the message of the play. The didactic play aims to inform the audience about a real political situation in society. The alienation effect will also be discussed by Adorno in terms of the debate on form and content of the work of art, and the political purpose in the work of art (especially Brechtian theatre) will be strongly criticized by Adorno.

Adorno's arguments and criticism of the understanding of the work of art of Benjamin and Brecht in 'Commitment' is a good beginning point to develop a general idea on what Adorno means by "autonomy" of the work of art. Although the essay 'Commitment' includes comprehensive criticisms against his contemporaries such as Benjamin, Brecht and Sartre, it mainly criticizes the political and propagandist nature of art, which are defended by Benjamin and Brecht.

In 'Commitment', Adorno criticizes Benjamin's understanding of the artwork by identifying it as "politically committed" art. His main discussion also includes the criticism of (didacticism of) Brechtian theatre. The criticism of Brecht's epic theatre/didacticism is an important part since it shapes the main arguments of Adorno in this text.

Adorno points out that Brecht tries to educate and direct the spectator to a new attitude through his plays. The way Brecht follows in his didactic theatre is basically simplifying the political truth in order to reach every type of audience to affect the people. We can say that, in Brechtian theatre, political simplicity is crucial to attract the interest of the audience, but Adorno looks at this issue from a different aspect. In 'Commitment', he says "Where Brecht distorts the real social problems discussed in his epic drama, in order to prove a thesis, the whole structure and foundation of the play itself crumbles".²⁴ Although I will discuss this point in the Chapter IV in detail, it is useful to remind that in Brechtian theatre and understanding of aesthetics, the content of the artwork seems to shape the form of the artwork, so the most important point in this criticism of Brecht is the form and content debate. Adorno's criticism of Brecht will be explained in detail in Chapter IV after Adorno's conception of

²⁴ Adorno, "Commitment.", p.310.

autonomy is understood through his relation with Kant and Hegel and within the framework of *Aesthetic Theory*.

In the light of the criticism of political tendency and effect of the work of art in Benjamin and Brecht, Adorno defends the “autonomous work of art”. Adorno uses the term “autonomy” at the end of the “Commitment”. In this text, “autonomy of the work of art” appears as an expression contrary to politically committed art.

So, we can say that the political aim/tendency in the work of art does not comply with Adorno’s conception of autonomy, but putting autonomy as the mere opposite of politically committed art can lead to the understanding of pure ‘l’art pour l’art (art for art’s sake). This misconception about the autonomy of the work of art might make Adorno look as if he is defending a bourgeois understanding of the work of art and aesthetics. However, although the term ‘autonomy’ appears to point to an elitist understanding of art and the artist as an individual isolated from his/her society, Adorno says that art “even in its opposition to society remains a part of it”²⁵ In light of this reference, we can infer that autonomy for Adorno does not indicate pure/mere detachment from society. He emphasizes that autonomous art still includes the sociopolitical dynamics and relations within itself and he adds “This is not a time for political art, but politics has migrated into autonomous art...”²⁶

Understanding the differences between committed and political art, defended by Benjamin and Brecht, and autonomous art, defended by Adorno, was the first step to comprehend what Adorno simply means by the conception of autonomous work of art and what his position is in these debates. After analyzing the contemporary debate between Benjamin, Brecht and Adorno, the need of looking at Adorno’s *Aesthetic Theory* and the historical relationship between Kant, Hegel and Adorno arises because the true meaning of ‘autonomy’ in these debates is not as visible as the political character of the politically committed art. In other words, the conception of autonomy needs to be analyzed in terms of its background. The detailed background and history

²⁵ Adorno, p.317.

²⁶ Adorno, p.318.

can give an answer for what Adorno exactly means by “autonomy” in his understanding of art and aesthetic.

CHAPTER II

KANT

Kant's three critiques, the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Practical Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*, taken together can be considered as constituting one *magnum opus*, which propounds a unified system in Kant. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant focuses on the structure of the human mind, theoretical cognition and systematic knowledge. The *Critique of Practical Reason* focuses on our moral judgments and understanding of morality. In other words, "Theoretical knowledge is knowledge of what is, or of what exists, whereas practical knowledge is the knowledge of what ought to be, or what ought to exist."²⁷—in other words, about morality.²⁷ The *Critique of Judgment*, which includes both aesthetic and theological judgments, is Kant's last critique.

It is often alleged that there is a gap between the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (i.e., between Kant's understanding of scientific knowledge and ethics) and that the *Critique of Judgment* can be read as an attempt to bridge this gap.

Grasping this gap between the first and second Critiques requires giving an account of Kant's distinction between the Understanding and Reason. Kant uses the term 'Reason' (*Vernunft*) to refer to that aspect of our mind that wants to attain absolute and unified knowledge. Because of this tendency, Kant believes that, Reason tends to overstep its limits, and according to Kant, this is how metaphysical controversies and contradictions (what he calls "antinomies of reason") arise. Kant believes that, while Reason will inevitably have this tendency, he also wants to curb this tendency, and show the limits of Reason, so that speculative metaphysics and science can be distinguished from one another. To put limits on this Reason, he defines the

²⁷ Engstrom, "Kant's Distinction Between Theoretical and Practical Knowledge.", p.57.

‘Understanding’ (*Verstand*) as that part of Reason whose operations are limited to phenomenal experience and providing the conditions of the achievement of knowledge within the limits of experience. So, Kant puts a limit on Reason in his first *Critique*.

In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, Kant goes beyond the limits of experience, which is the subject matter of the Understanding or theoretical reason. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the subject acts within the limits of experience of the phenomenal world. However, in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the subject is free and acts outside of the causal relations within phenomenal world. In other words, in practical knowledge/sphere, “reason deals with the subject, namely with his power of desire.”²⁸ The subject can create the moral law, which everyone agrees on. In the practical use of reason, Kant tries to determine the “basis of this will”, which is not to be found in the phenomenal world.²⁹

It is often pointed out that the gap between theoretical and practical knowledge in Kant’s philosophy is typical of the modern era and its dualisms, such as the fact-value dualism. The gap between the first two *Critiques* presents two different worlds, and the main question is: how can we integrate these two different worlds? In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant seems to present his aesthetic theory to resolve this gap, or at least to suggest that there may be more to the story concerning this gap between the Understanding and Reason. Therefore, understanding the basic terms and main points in Kant’s philosophy (such as *a priori*, *a posteriori*, universality and the transcendental) is necessary for understanding the background of the *Critique of Judgment*.

2.1. The Critique of Pure Reason

2.1.1. Two Main Sources of Knowledge/Cognition: Sensibility and Understanding

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant gives a kind of general map of the relationship between the subject and the object in terms of knowing the object. According to Kant,

²⁸ Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, p.30.

²⁹ Engstrom, “Understanding and Sensibility.”, p.8.

the fundamental sources of our knowledge/cognition are based on (1) “receptivity/reception of the sensations” and (2) the “faculty of cognizing” the objects. In the former, the object is given to us (the subject) and the latter is “thought in relation to that representation”.³⁰

Intuition is possible only if the object is given to the subject and this object can only be given through sensibility. According to Kant, objects given to us through our sensibility become subsumed under the categories of the understanding so that through the understanding intuitions become thoughts. Kant says; “If we call the receptivity of our mind to receive representations insofar as it is affected in some way sensibility, then on the contrary the faculty for bringing forth representations itself, or the spontaneity of cognition, is the understanding”.³¹ So, intuitions and concepts are the main constitutions for our knowledge and it seems that they are not separable from each other. In other words, intuition without concepts or concepts without intuition are not sufficient for cognition/knowledge.³²

2.1.2. Synthetic a priori

Kant accepts that our cognition (towards the object) begins with experience. However, although our cognition starts with experience, it does not mean that our cognition emerges from this experience. Kant investigates the possibility of cognition, which is apart from experience and the impression that the senses make on us and he says; “one calls such cognitions a priori and distinguishes them from empirical ones, which have their sources *a posteriori* namely in experience”.³³ Kant claims that phenomena (appearance) are given to us *a posteriori*; but the form of intuition, space and time, through which they are received, is in our mind *a priori*. Kant says, “accordingly the pure form of sensible intuitions in general is encountered in the mind a priori...”³⁴ and

³⁰ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A50/B74, p.193.

³¹ Kant, A51/B76, p.193.

³² Kant, A51/B76, p.193.

³³ Kant, B2, p.136.

³⁴ Kant, A21/B35, p.156.

continues with the claim that pure form of sensibility means pure intuition. It is true that all appearances are given to us *a posteriori*, but their forms are in our mind prior to our experience.

It is normal that we always treat objects as outside us, and by this, we understand them to be “out in space”. However, for Kant, the a priori form of space should be in our mind, for us to be able to sense external objects. In other words, it is not derived from empirical and external experiences; rather it is like a capacity of grasping and being affected by the objects around us. So, space is not an empirical concept.³⁵ He says, “Space is necessary representation *a priori*, forming the very foundation of all external intuitions”.³⁶

Like space, time is not an empirical concept, which can be inferred from the experiences and the external world. Kant says, “For time cannot be a determination of outer appearances; it belongs neither to shape or a position, etc., but on the contrary, determines the relation of representation of our inner state”.³⁷

To emphasize a priority of space, Kant compares it with taste and color. He asserts that taste and colors belong to the sensations. Kant gives an example from the taste of wine. For him, the taste of wine is not about the objective determination of it, but rather it depends on “the particular constitution of sense in the subject”³⁸, who feels and enjoys it. Similarly, colors do not have determinate or objective qualities. They change according to the sight of the subject who is affected by them, or the light position. Kant says “space, on the contrary, as a condition of outer objects, necessarily belongs to their appearance or intuition”.³⁹ Although colors and taste belong to appearance and sensations, space concerns only the pure form of intuition and does not include sensation.

³⁵ Kant, A23/B38, p.157.

³⁶ Kant, B50, p.158.

³⁷ Kant, B50, p.163.

³⁸ Kant, A29, p.161.

³⁹ Kant, A29, p.161.

In addition to the ‘a priori’ and ‘a posteriori’ distinction, another distinction Kant makes in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is the distinction between analytic and synthetic judgments. For Kant, in analytic judgments, the predicate belongs to the subject and the judgment is constituted through the identity between the subject and the predicate. On the contrary, synthetic judgments extend our knowledge, which means that in synthetic judgments, the predicate is not identical with the subject.⁴⁰ For instance, “all bodies are extended” is an analytic judgment because the information of “extension” is already included in the “body”. On the contrary, “all bodies are heavy” is a synthetic judgment because the predicate “is heavy” is different than the concept of ‘body’. In other words, the predicate “is heavy” extends our knowledge about the body.

Kant continues to claim that all analytic judgments are a priori because they do not depend on experience. For a priori analytic judgments like “a body is extended”, Kant says; “for before I go to experience, I already have all the conditions for my judgment in concept...”⁴¹. All a posteriori judgments, on the other hand, are synthetic. Kant points out that the predicate of weight is added to the subject through the experience of the subject and other experiences can also be added to the body. However, not all synthetic judgments are *a posteriori*. In fact, the aim of *Kant* in the *Critique of Pure Reason* is searching for the possibility of synthetic a priori judgments.

Kant’s explanation of synthetic a priori can be understood by looking at the debate between Kant and Hume on causality. Kant appears to disagree with Hume’s understanding of causality. He states the difference between himself and Hume in the *Prolegomena*.

Hume’s understanding of the relation between cause and effect, and necessary connection is a broad subject, but within the limits of this thesis only the main point through which we can understand Kant’s main criticism toward Hume will be stated.

In the understanding of causation in Hume, the necessary connection between cause and effect is not derived from one particular experience, but from a constant conjunction of two experiences that are interpreted as ‘cause’ and ‘effect’. He claims

⁴⁰ Kant, p.141.

⁴¹ Kant, p.142.

that we make an inference and believe that we know what will happen next based on our past experiences. For example, when one ball strikes another, we know that the second ball will move because we have experienced the second ball's moving after the first ball hits it in the past. Our past experience about the specific event, like striking balls, constitutes the cause and effect relationship in our mind. He says; "...we could foresee the effect, even without experience; and might, at first, pronounce with certainty concerning it, by mere dint of thought and reasoning."⁴²

However, for Hume, in order to say that X causes Y, we need to empirically experience this causality in the world. In light of the (particular) experience of constantly experiencing X and Y in the world, causality is asserted as a universally valid law. However, according to Hume, we cannot assert this connection as a universally valid law—i.e., as a *necessary* connection: we arrive at this claim of universality through an inductive generalization, but inductive generalizations can never yield certain knowledge. The knowledge thus attained can never be necessary and/or universal. For example, the sentence/judgment "If a body is illuminated by the sun for long enough, then it becomes warm" seems to explain a necessary connection between sun (cause) and the earth's becoming warm (effect). However, Hume claims that there is no such experience of the causal relationship between the sun's light and the earth becoming warm. Kant reiterates this point by highlighting that according to Hume, here, based on possible experience, an empirical observation is stated as law: "The sun through its light is the cause of the warmth".⁴³

Kant criticizes Hume's understanding of causation in the *Prolegomena*. The essential point to be remembered in this discussion of Hume's understanding of causality is his emphasis on experience. Kant disagrees that the necessity/or necessity connection, is derived from the mere form of experience. He claims that if it can be said that X causes Y, it is inevitable to assert/accept that something causes X before this causality relationship between X and Y. So, in Hume's understanding of causality, there is a problem/question of what the origin or source of this causality is. Kant tries to solve this problem by stating;

⁴²Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, p.45.

⁴³Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 4:313, p.64.

For having a try at Hume's problematic concept, namely the concept of cause, there is first given to me a priori, by means of logic: the form of a conditioned judgment in general, that is, the use of a given cognition as ground and another as consequent.⁴⁴

Thus, Kant gives an a priori origin for the solution of the problem of causality in Hume. Although causality is empirically experienced between two or more things in the world, we, who experience this causality and have a priori concept of causality, are the source of this causality.

This shows that the subject has an active role in the process of knowing the objects, and the main function of Kant's synthetic a priori judgments/principles is to illustrate this active contribution of the subject to the attainment of knowledge.

About the importance of the subject, Kant says,

What we meant to say was this, that all our intuition is nothing but the representation of phenomena; that things which we see are not by themselves what we see, nor their relations by themselves such as they appear to us, so that, if we drop our subject or the subjectivity form of our senses, all qualities, all relations of objects in space and time, nay space and time themselves, would vanish.⁴⁵

This quotation shows the importance of the subject in the process of knowing the object. A further important outcome of the active contribution of the subject to the production of knowledge is the change in our understandings of the terms 'objectivity' and 'subjectivity', which results from the 'phenomena'/'noumena' distinction brought about by Kant's Copernican Revolution. In Kant, although noumena are the thing in themselves, phenomena are the appearances and they make experience (and knowledge) possible. As a result of the a priori structure of our minds, we can know the objects only as (and insofar as) they affect our minds/are presented to our minds. Although the objects have their sources in themselves, they remain unknown to us if they are not given to our intuition. Kant says; "All synthetic a priori principles are nothing more than principles of possible experience... and can never be related to things in themselves but only to appearances as objects of experience."⁴⁶ Thus, the

⁴⁴ Kant, 4:312, p.63.

⁴⁵ Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, p.34.

⁴⁶ Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, p.65.

synthetic a priori and Kant's use of 'a priori' judgments, categories and forms of intuition denote his Copernican Revolution. In this epistemological framework, objectivity for Kant does not refer to the "thing-in-itself" (noumena), which we do not know or cannot arrive at. Instead, objectivity in Kant refers to the universality and necessity of judgments, which depend on the subject who acts and experiences in the phenomenal world.

The importance of the subject in Kant's philosophy and aesthetic will be also important for Adorno because, as we will see in Adorno section/chapter, in his discussion of objectivity he refers to the objectivity in Kant's aesthetic as "subjectively-mediated objectivity". So, it cannot be wrong to say that all these important points of Kant philosophy show the paths, which help to constitute the main claim of Adorno's aesthetic understanding. (Autonomy)

2.2. The Critique of Judgment

In the beginning of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant states that there are concepts of nature and concepts of freedom. He says, "concepts of nature make possible a theoretical cognition governed by a priori principle, whereas the very concept of freedom carries with it [...] gives rise to expansive principles for the determination of the will, which are therefore called practical".⁴⁷ This distinction also denotes the separation between the first and second *Critiques*.

The third *Critique*'s discussion of the beautiful is considered by many to be suggestive of possible solutions for the incompatibility between the first two *Critiques*. For example, Kant's distinction between determinate and reflective judgments in the appraisal of beauty, which I will explain below, constitutes quite an important step towards diminishing the strict opposition between the Faculties of Understanding and Reason.

Kant claims that we can think of judgments as the subsumption of the particular under the universal. "If the universal (the rule, principle, law) is given, then judgment, which

⁴⁷ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.10.

subsumes the particular under it, is *determinative*".⁴⁸ In the determinative judgment, the particular does not need to find or construct its own law since it is subsumed under the universal. The determinative faculty of judgment belongs to understanding, which enables us to correctly apply the logical categories, which in turn are a priori.⁴⁹ On the contrary, in reflective judgments, the particular "searches for" its own universal law. Kant says, "if only the particular is given and judgment has to find the universal for it, then this power is merely reflective".⁵⁰ The difference between determinative and reflective judgments also shows the difference of *application* and *acquisition* of concepts or general rules.⁵¹ In other words, in determinative judgments, the universal laws and rules are applied to the particular in the world. This is the application of the universal law. However, if a particular is given, which tries to find its own universal law, this turns out to be the acquisition of universal law.

This is one sense in which some see the *Critique of Judgment* as Kant's attempt to overcome or at least moderate his compartmentalization of Reason into faculties that are isolated from one another: in reflective judgments, the faculty of sensibility and understanding are brought into play with each other.

The reflective judgment is also essential to understand the ground of Kant's subjective universality, which will be named as "subjectively mediated objectivity" by Adorno in his aesthetic.

2.2.1. Four Moments of the Beautiful

In the third *Critique*, Kant focuses mainly on the judgment of the beautiful and the judgment of the sublime, but in this thesis, the judgment of the beautiful will be our focusing point. Judgment of the beautiful has four moments: disinterestedness,

⁴⁸ Kant, p.18.

⁴⁹ Van Den Braembussche, *Thinking Art: An Introduction to Philosophy of Art*, p.135.

⁵⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.18-19.

⁵¹ Nuzzo, "Reflective Judgment , Determinative Judgment , and the Problem of Particularity.", p.10.

subjective universality, purposiveness without purpose, and subjective necessity. In what follows, the first three moments will be discussed.

In the very beginning of the *Critique*, Kant begins by analyzing the definition of taste, which is the ability to judge the beautiful.⁵² Subjective judgment is the basis of our aesthetic judgments, but it is important for Kant that the basis of our aesthetic judgments should also be universal. How our aesthetic judgments can be both subjective and universal at the same time is a crucial point in Kant's aesthetics. Another important point, which we should always keep in mind while analyzing Kant's aesthetics, is that in our aesthetic judgments, we deal with the presentation of the object, not the object itself. After these general remarks and introduction of Kant's aesthetics, we can begin to explain first three moments.

2.2.1.1. Disinterestedness

In the first moment, what is important is disinterestedness: we should be devoid of all interest while judging the beauty of an artwork. According to Kant, when we judge the beauty of the work of art, we should be free of any kind of pleasure as well as social or moral considerations. At this point, we can ask: what is the meaning of insisting on free and pure judgment for Kant?

To answer this question, we should begin by explaining the differences between free and pure judgment, and judgment based on interests. If our judgment is based on some interests, our judgments will not be free and pure. The answer of the meaning of free and pure judgments will be clear under the explanation of the agreeable and the good, which are two sorts of liking that are both to be distinguished from liking the beautiful.

According to Kant, in our aesthetic judgments, we are not interested in the actual existence of the object, which we judge as beautiful or not. Beautiful is the representation of the object, which affects the subject that matters when considering whether an artwork is beautiful or not. The subject and the way the subject's cognitive

⁵²Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.43.

faculties are engaged are the basis of judgments about the beauty of the work of art, not the objective existence of what is judged to be beautiful. In other words, taste concerns our subjective faculties.

The importance of this claim is also related with the claim of judgments based on interests. In the very first sentence of Part 2 of “Analytic of the Beautiful”, ‘interest’ is defined as “the liking we connect with the presentation of an object’s existence.”⁵³

Disinterestedness is an important moment to understand and clarify Kant’s perspective towards his notion of the autonomy of aesthetic. To clarify the notion of ‘disinterestedness’, Kant compares three sorts of liking, which are the beautiful, the good and the agreeable.⁵⁴ Contrary to the beautiful, liking of the good and the agreeable are always related with interest. In the first sentence of the “A Liking for the Agreeable is Connected with Interest” section of the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant says; “Agreeable is what the senses like in sensation”.⁵⁵

The term “sensation” is important since it is directly related with the agreeable. In other words, Kant says; “when [something determines the feeling of pleasure or displeasure and this] determination of that feeling is called sensation, this term means something quite different from what it means when I apply it to the presentation of a thing”.⁵⁶

Kant wants to maintain a careful distinction between what he calls “subjective sensation” (the feeling of sensation that is determinative of pleasure or displeasure) and “objective sensation” (which has to do with the presentation of the object, “an objective presentation of sense”). He claims that the sensation that is merely subjective can be called “by its customary name: feeling.” In order to clarify what he means by such “feeling” (liking of the subject in the sensation of the agreeable), he gives an example: while the color of the meadows is about the objective sensation, the color’s agreeableness can only be explained and understood in subjective sensations. Color’s

⁵³Kant, p.45.

⁵⁴Kant, p.51.

⁵⁵ Kant, p.47.

⁵⁶ Kant, p.47.

agreeableness turns out to be object of our liking and feeling. The important conclusion, which should be derived from the liking for the agreeable, is that the liking supposes something more than mere judgment or being affected by the object. It is not just liking, it also gratifies us. Gratification simply means enjoyment and it gives us inclination.⁵⁷ So, it can be simply said that ‘the agreeable’ is “that which gratifies” our desires and is always related with interest and inclination.

As with the liking for the agreeable, liking the good always gives purpose and it leads us to want the object of the good to exist. In the beginning of the section “A Liking for the Good is Connected with the Interest”, Kant insists on the similarity between considering something to be good and considering something to be intrinsically good. In the former, we like something as a means and in the latter, we like something for its own sake.⁵⁸ But in both of them, the good is connected with a concept and purpose. In order to judge something as good, one should have a determinate concept of it, and one should want it to exist.

So, what is important for liking the good is that the subject is dealing with the concept of the object as well as the existence of the object, when considering something to be good or not. Thus, when we judge something to be good, we should have a determinate concept of this object. In Fricke’s words, in liking the good, “a rational person’s will is determined by the concept of an object when this person tries (with or without success) to bring this object into existence moved by a desire of that object conceived under that concept.”⁵⁹

In this part, Kant also mentions that the good and the agreeable can be seen as one and the same thing. He says; “Thus people commonly say that all gratification (especially if it lasts) is intrinsically good, which means roughly the same as to be (lastingly) agreeable and to be good are one and the same.”⁶⁰ However, it is obvious that for Kant, liking the good and liking the agreeable are different from each other. While the

⁵⁷ Kant, p.48.

⁵⁸ Kant, p.48.

⁵⁹ Christel Fricke, “The Hypotheses of the Faculty of Reflective Judgement in Kant’s Third Critique.”, p.48.

⁶⁰ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.49.

agreeable is directly related with the senses, the good is about concepts. However, the similarity between these kinds is that they both contain interest.

In contrast to liking the good or the agreeable, when we like the object devoid of all interest, this object of liking is called the beautiful. Liking the beautiful is different from both of these two kinds of liking in that judgments of beautiful do not presuppose any inclination or interest. In addition, when we judge something to be beautiful or find something beautiful, we do not need to have a determinate concept of it. This claim will be discussed in detail in the next paragraphs.

As an important claim in this part and in order to highlight the difference between these three kinds of liking, Kant points out that beauty is only for human beings, i.e., beings who are animal and yet rational.⁶¹

The first moment can be summarized by Kant's own sentence: "Taste is the ability to judge an object, or a way of presenting it, by means of a liking or disliking devoid of all interest. The object of such a liking is called beautiful".⁶²

2.2.1.2. Subjective Universality

In the first moment, we see that appreciating the beautiful is different from other kinds of liking, such as liking the agreeable or the good; however, this liking does not remain as merely a subjective judgment for Kant. The second moment is important for understanding how aesthetic judgments are, for Kant, both subjective and universal at the same time. This means that if someone finds something beautiful, everyone should agree with this judgment. This is certainly a claim of universality in aesthetic judgments. This moment is also important for Adorno's main criticism about Kant's aesthetic.

In order to emphasize the subjective universality of aesthetic judgments, Kant underlines the differences between the claims to universality in judging something to

⁶¹ Kant, p.52.

⁶² Kant, p.53.

be agreeable or good or beautiful; the subjective universality involved in judgments of the beautiful is different from the other two. About the agreeable, Kant claims that people can agree (or disagree) on what is agreeable about the object. In an example, which Kant gives for this claim, someone can know what is attractive and enjoyable in a party and everyone can like the party via these agreeable things. Although there seems to be universal agreement in finding the party enjoyable, the party is agreeable in general; this agreeableness is not universal.

It is also Kant's contention that the good is valid and universal for everyone, and liking the good is always related with the concept. So, the agreement on what is good is universal, and yet this agreement is different from both the agreement on what is agreeable and the agreement on what is beautiful.

What Kant means by the subjective universality of aesthetic judgment is different, not only from agreement on the agreeable and the good, but also from the universal validity of type of judgments that he analyzes in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. The subjective universality of aesthetic judgments differs from the agreement on the agreeable, because this universality is grounded subjectively; yet the universal judgments are not just mere generalizations. It differs from the universal validity of moral judgments, because aesthetic judgment does not deal with concepts as in the *Critique of Practical Reason*. The *Critique of Pure Reason* deals with the object itself and is also based on universal concepts, so, the universality of aesthetic judgments again differs from the universal validity of scientific judgments for similar reasons.

This explanation is also related to the difference between determinative and reflective judgments, which is stated and discussed in the previous paragraphs. So, we can say that the subjectively grounded universality is directly related with reflective judgments, which search for and constitute their own universal law, in Kant.

Thus, his second moment can be summarized as follows: Every singular judgment of taste should have universal validity, without being based on universal concepts.⁶³

⁶³ Kant, p.64.

2.2.1.3. Purposiveness without Purpose

The third moment, which is about purposiveness without purpose, will help clarify why it is important for Kant that the judgment of taste should not be based on concepts. This part is also important for elaborating Adorno's conception of autonomous art.

The section begins with Kant's distinction between "purpose" and "purposiveness". Before explaining purposiveness without purpose in the judgment of beautiful, he tries to make this difference clear. "Purpose" for Kant is "the object of a concept insofar as we regard this concept as the object's cause"⁶⁴ In other words; purpose is the object, which is aimed at. However, "purposiveness" is different from "purpose". Kant says, "purposiveness is the causality that a concept has with regard to its object"⁶⁵ In other words, "purposiveness" seems to refer not to an object that actually exists as a cause, but to a property: the appearance of a "causality" that this object (cause) would have if it actually existed.⁶⁶

Purposiveness can be understood better by looking at Aristotle's doctrine of four causes since the causality Kant has in mind here seems to be similar to the Aristotelian notion of final cause, and more specifically, the relation between formal cause and final cause. In *Physics*, Aristotle speaks of four causes: formal, material, efficient and final. Formal cause simply means the form. For instance, a shoemaker (the efficient cause) has a concept of the shoe in his/her mind and this concept is the formal cause of the shoes, which can vary in size, heel or lace.⁶⁷ Moreover, according to Aristotle, "form follows function".⁶⁸ This means that the shape, size or color of the object around us is designed in order to fulfill a certain function. For example, the hammer has a long wooden handle and a short metal head. These peculiarities of its shape (form of hammer) are directly related with its function and function is also related with the final cause (the end, i.e., the aim of the hammer) of the object. Moreover, Aristotelian formal cause seems to show that the formal cause/form is related not only with the

⁶⁴ Kant, p.64.

⁶⁵ Kant, p.65.

⁶⁶ Kant, p.67.

⁶⁷ Brent Kalar, *The Demands of Taste in Kant's Aesthetics*, p.67.

⁶⁸ Brent Kalar, p.68.

final cause, but also with the matter/material cause of the object. This relation can be inferred from the relationship between the form of the hammer (with its long handle) and the material/matter (wooden) of the handle.

For Kant, purposiveness does not indicate any specific function of the object. As mentioned in the previous section 2.2.1.2., in aesthetic judgment, liking the beautiful is universally acceptable even though it has no relation with the concept or purpose. Still, the form of the aesthetic object evokes purposiveness in our mind. Judgment of taste has to do with the subjective apprehension of purposiveness in the presentation of objects, which do not have any purposes. In addition to refraining from positing a final cause (despite the purposive appearance of the beautiful object), Kant does not relate purposiveness with the matter/material cause/purpose, either.

Kant summarizes the third moment by saying “*Beauty is an object's form of purposiveness insofar as it is perceived in the object without the presentation of a purpose*”.⁶⁹ He says,

...we do call objects, states of mind, or acts purposive even if their possibility does not necessarily presuppose the presentation of a purpose; we do this merely because we can explain and grasp them only if we assume that they are based on a causality (that operates) according to purposes, i.e., on a will that would have so arranged them in accordance with the representation of a certain rule.⁷⁰

Dalton summarizes the purposiveness in general in Kant by saying; “Thus purposiveness is a sign that an object was created by a rational agency following the pattern provided by rational concept”.⁷¹ Therefore, beauty gives us hope, but Kant refrains from actually asserting that there is such a teleology in nature since he is careful to temper the tendency of Reason to overstep its limits and fall into speculative metaphysics. Nevertheless, Kant’s “purposiveness without purpose” can also be seen as one of the places in the third *Critique* where Kant tries to overcome the dualities of the first two *Critiques*.

⁶⁹ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.84.

⁷⁰ Kant, p.65.

⁷¹ Dalton, “How Beauty Disrupts Space, Time and Thought: Purposiveness Without a Purpose in Kant’s Critique of Judgment.”, p.6.

The notion of “purposiveness without purpose” is also related to Kant’s “reflective judgments”. Although the judgment of taste is the subjective apprehension of the object, the “purposiveness”/”purposiveness without purpose” of the object serves to reveal the universal nature of judgments, in that everyone agrees on the beautifulness of the object. This universal agreement comes from the claim that the purposiveness of the object is not posited by the object itself, but the subject assumes the purposiveness of it, because all subjects have the same faculties (of understanding and sensibility) which are activated when contemplating an object that appears to be purposive. This contemplation is a perfect example of reflective judgments. The objectivity/universality is “subjectively mediated”; it is based on the universality of subjective faculties.

2.3. In Place of a Conclusion: Kant’s Influence on Adorno

The three moments in the *Critique of Judgment*, and especially the first and third are important steps for understanding the importance of Kant’s aesthetics for Adorno’s conception of autonomous art.

Kant’s aesthetic will be important for understanding Adorno’s truth content in a few respects: Firstly, the fact that Kant devotes an independent critique to aesthetic judgments and resists reducing the beautiful to the good or the agreeable indicate that he reserves an autonomous space for art in his oeuvre.

Secondly, the objectivity of aesthetic judgments, which Kant discusses in the second moment of the judgment of the beautiful is also emphasized by Adorno in his discussion of truth content. Kant refrains from explicitly referring to the agreement on aesthetic judgments as constituting objectivity (a term he reserves for the validity of scientific and moral judgments). As we will see in the Adorno Chapter, Adorno wants to insist on the objectivity of truth content in a work of art in a way that is not satisfactorily answered by Kant’s conception of subjective universality, which is called “subjectively mediated objectivity” by Adorno. Further, Adorno has problems with the way Kant defines objectivity in general because of the primacy of the transcendental subject’s role in constituting objectivity. Adorno will mostly agree with Hegel’s criticism and interpretation of the way objectivity is understood in Kant’s philosophy.

Hegel's criticism will be elaborated in the next chapter. Most importantly, Hegel will criticize the idea that the universal validity of aesthetic judgments is subjectively grounded.

Lastly, Adorno appreciates Kant's conception of purposiveness without purpose, and refers back to it in several places in *Aesthetic Theory* when he is discussing the enigmaticalness of the work of art or truth content. As a matter of fact, "purposiveness without purpose" seems to be inherent in the notion of autonomy. We can easily see this connection if we remember that Adorno developed the notion of autonomous art as a reaction to the idea that art should serve a purpose in society.

CHAPTER III

HEGEL

Since Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* is full of references to Kant and Hegel, where he often puts them in dialogue with one another over key issues such as objectivity, form and content in aesthetics, we now turn to Hegel's aesthetic theory. As with Kant, to understand Hegel's aesthetics, we need to present some background knowledge on his philosophy in general. For this reason, this chapter is divided into four sections: The Concept, Concrete Universal, Geist and Aesthetic Theory. The understanding of his dialectic, concrete universal (relationship between singular-particular-universal), Geist (Spirit) will be the main points, which give the background knowledge of his *Aesthetics*.

The individual-particular and universal, and his philosophy in general which are essential points in Hegel's aesthetic, appear as three moments of the Concept in Hegel's logic. Although the detailed explanation of *The Science of Logic* is not the main aim and concern of this dissertation, in section 3.1, I present very rough overview of Hegel's logic and this inevitably includes Hegel's understanding of dialectic. I also try to explain this notion. Then in section 3.2, I explore the relation between the universal, particular and the individual in more detail in light of Hegel's notion of the concrete universal. In section 3.3, his famous notion of Geist is presented. Finally, in section 3.4, I focus on his aesthetic theory.

3.1. The Concept

3.1.1. Being-Nothing-Becoming

Hegel opens the chapter "The Doctrine of Being" by raising the question of how to determine the beginning point of philosophy. He refrains from focusing on something determinate (such as "water", "substance") as the beginning principle of philosophy

and asserts that the beginning principle should not be something subjective. Here, by ‘subjective’, he means “an accidental way of introducing the exposition”.⁷² He believes that “nous”, “idea”, or “substance”, which are all asserted as a beginning principle of philosophy, are either concerned with facts or content, “rather than objective determination”. As an “objective determination” Hegel is looking for something like “ground”⁷³

Hegel says, “the beginning must then be *absolute* or, what means the same here, must be an abstract beginning; and so, there is *nothing* that it may *presuppose*, must not be mediated by anything or have a ground...”⁷⁴ He believes that the beginning point of logic should be unmediated since if it is mediated by something, which is other than being, it is determined by the other and it is no longer a pure knowledge.

Mediation refers to the relationship with something (other than being); it thus inevitably requires and involves an ‘other’. However, while Hegel thinks that the beginning should not be grounded, determined and explained by something external, as the discussion below will make clear, the “pure being” as the beginning principle will inevitably lead to mediation and otherness. The way in which this tension is resolved in Hegel’s *Logic*, will involve showing that ‘the other’ and mediation (concepts that appear to involve external entities) are in fact contained within being itself. As Hegel claims, “knowledge recollects itself into itself out of immediate being and this is possible only through mediation”.⁷⁵ With this in mind, Hegel is able to assert that “A beginning is logical in that it is to be made in the element of a free, self-contained thought, in pure knowledge...”.⁷⁶ In other words, all that follows and is discussed in the *Logic* is already contained in the notion of “pure being.”

So, Hegel uses “pure being” as a beginning. This pure being is “simply an immediacy,” and it does not have “determination with respect to an other” and does not have any

⁷² Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.45.

⁷³ Hegel, p.45.

⁷⁴ Hegel, p.48.

⁷⁵ Hegel, p.337.

⁷⁶ Hegel, p.46.

content.⁷⁷ However, when we consider immediate and pure being, we see that there is no further determination related to this pure being and we cannot go beyond the immediacy of it. Therefore, meditation on pure being takes us to “Nothing”. Hegel states that Nothing is also very similar with Being. Since it is not possible for us to think about Nothing, meditation on Nothing takes us back to Being. He says; “being is being, and nothing is nothing, only held distinct from each other; in their truth, however, in their unity, they have vanished as such determinations and are now something else”.⁷⁸

So, while *Logic* begins with the pure being, which is immediate, as Being passes over into Nothing, and Nothing passes over into Being, something new becomes apparent: Becoming, which can be seen in the passages from Being to Nothing and vice versa as “*coming-to-be* and *ceasing to-be*”.⁷⁹ Yet, the moments of Becoming, which are Being and Nothing, do not lose their differences and distinctions in their relation. In other words, Hegel emphasizes that Becoming is the “unseparatedness of Being and Nothing”, but this does not refer to a unity which is abstracted from each, but instead to a constant movement and flow. Further, it is a determinate unity, in which “being and nothing equally are”. The important point in all this discussion of Becoming as “the vanishing of being into nothing, and of nothing into being” is that, in a sense, it can be said that Becoming is the proper beginning principle.⁸⁰

In other words, the beginning of Hegel’s philosophy is characterized from the outset by dialectical movement. Thus, the movement of being-nothing-becoming denotes the dialectic understanding of Hegel.

⁷⁷ Hegel, p.48.

⁷⁸ Hegel, p.82.

⁷⁹ Hegel, p.80.

⁸⁰ Hegel, p.81.

3.1.2. The Movement of Being: Dialectic

Hegel uses the term “Aufhebung” (sublation) to articulate the nature of the movement of this Becoming. Aufhebung” means “raising up”, “abolition”, and “preserving”⁸¹ and it denotes a movement towards the unity of the Concept. This process or progress can be better understood/explained by the terms “being in itself,” “being for itself” and “being in and for itself”.

Hegel explains the difference between “being in itself” and “being for itself” in the *Lectures on History of Philosophy*. According to him, “being in itself” can be explained as a kind of potentiality, “capacity” or “power”.⁸² The second principle “being for itself” is “actuality” and “self-reference”.⁸³ It can be said that being-in-itself becomes for itself, when it begins to actualize itself, and the for-itself represents the moment of self-reflection. “Being in itself” attains its actuality by means of mediation against the “other” (there is hence another category: “for-another”) and it returns to itself by sublation of others. This movement is the dialectic movement/process. As a result of this dialectic movement and reflection process, “being in itself” turns into “being in and for itself”. Since being-in-itself becomes “being in and for itself” by way of mediating itself with and overcoming other, “being in and for itself” has within itself both itself and the others. In other words, “being in itself and for itself” means that it contains both its own potentiality/actuality and the differences from others.

Hegel says; “the goal of knowledge is the truth, what being *is in and for itself*...”⁸⁴ and because of that reason, being as a first division and beginning point, should not remain in its immediacy and “in itself”.

Hegel summarizes this movements as;

When this movement is represented as a pathway of knowledge, this beginning with Being and the subsequent advance which sublates Being and

⁸¹ Inwood, *A Hegel Dictionary*, p.283.

⁸² Hegel, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy: Greek Philosophy to Plato*, p.20.

⁸³ Hegel, p.21.

⁸⁴ Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.337.

arrives at Essence as mediated term appear to be an activity of cognition external to being and indifferent to its nature.⁸⁵

The important point to note here is that, while the transition between concepts such as “being” and “essence” seem to be performed by a cognition/mind; Hegel emphasizes that “this course is the movement of being itself. That it is being’s nature to recollect itself, and that it becomes essence by virtue of this interiorizing, this has been displayed in being itself”. Standing outside the subject-matter under analysis, Hegel asserts that “it is the movement of being in itself.”⁸⁶

In order to understand what Hegel means by saying that this is “the movement of being itself” and not “an activity of cognition”, it may be useful to look at the differences between the dialectic method of Hegel and others. For example, in the Socratic dialogues, two thinkers/individuals share and exchange their ideas about specific notions/issues. These discussions are made for the aim of seeking the truth about that specific subject under discussion. As distinct from the monologue, which does not give the opportunity to think the other side, the Socratic dialogue and dialectic method try to go beyond the mere examples and explanations, specifically given by one of the individuals in the dialogue. With the chance of questions, contradictions and refutations, two individuals understand each other’s ideas and explanations. In the dialogue, two sides in the conversation do not stand at totally different positions, but in the Socratic dialogue, we see two characteristics in the dialogue, which are consensus and contradictions.⁸⁷

The Hegelian dialectic is different from the Socratic dialectic. The dialectic method in Hegel does not remain in just understanding and refuting the other side/claim; nor does it remain at the level of argumentation alone. In detail, the Hegelian dialectic is a method, which includes contradictions, but this dialectic leads to some kind of unity, which includes the opposites and differences. In other words, in this dialectic understanding, contradictions are not pointed out for the aim of rejection of the counter side in dialectic, but for development towards a more comprehensive and adequate

⁸⁵ Hegel, p.337.

⁸⁶ Hegel, p.337.

⁸⁷R.P. Singh, “From Dialogue to Dialectic: Socrates, Kant, Hegel, Marx.”, p.262.

model of understanding. To sum up, dialectic develops from contradictions and it moves towards unity. The movement of thought in Hegel brings opposite sides together, and these opposite sides are not only the theses and antitheses of arguments, they are categories of Being.

Since “pure being” should be mediated by something other than (something abstracted from) itself⁸⁸ in the second division, Essence is introduced as the transition of being, which “stands between *being* and *concept*”.⁸⁹ Essence posits itself in three determinations; reflection, appearance and actuality respectively. Through the reflection and movement towards the other, essence becomes neither in itself nor for itself, it becomes for another.

In order to understand the characteristics of Essence, we can look at the three grades of it in detail. The first grade is reflection. Hegel defines reflection as “the movement from nothing to nothing and thereby back to itself”.⁹⁰ In other words, it remains “in itself its determinations”.⁹¹ Hegel points out that essence means/is reflection, and this means that essence is the “movement of becoming and transition that remains within itself.” wherein that which is distinguished is determined simply and solely as the negative in itself, as shine”.⁹²

Hegel compares his notion of reflection with the reflective judgments in Kant. As we have seen in the Kant chapter, reflective judgment is a judgment in which the particular finds and constitutes its own universality. Similarly, reflection in Hegel is “a matter of rising above the immediate to the universal”.⁹³ Hegel criticizes Kant’s account of reflective judgment in so far as this judgment treats the immediate particular entity as an external alien entity upon which a formal operation will be performed. However,

⁸⁸ Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.337.

⁸⁹ Hegel, p.339.

⁹⁰ Hegel, p.346.

⁹¹ Hegel, p.339.

⁹² Hegel, p.345.

⁹³ Hegel, p.350.

he also says that “the concept of absolute reflection, too, is implicit”⁹⁴ in Kant because the immediate entity “has the form of a being which is in-and-for-itself”; it appears to be self-contained, indifferent, absolute and free.⁹⁵

Likewise, reflection in Hegel refers to the internal movement of essence, but it must also appear. So, appearance is the second grade of essence. Appearance is the manifestation or exteriority of the “in itself”. In other words, this is concrete existence, which is reflected in the other or external world.

The third grade of essence is actuality. It is the unity of “what is inner” and “what is outer”. Hegel says; “Existence is immediate unity of being and reflection, and hence appearance; it comes from the ground and goes to ground. The actual is the positedness of that unity, the relationship that has become identical with itself...”⁹⁶

The third and the most important division is the Concept. Hegel declares it to be “the unity of being and essence”. Essence was “the first negation of being”; the concept is “the second negation, or the negation of this negation”. By virtue of this negation of negation, there is a return to being. But having gone through this process, this being is now understood as infinite mediation and negation as it was foreseen at the end of section 3.1.1.⁹⁷

At the beginning of the “Doctrine of the Concept” chapter in the *Encyclopedia of Logic*, Hegel introduces that the concept is unity and totality, which harbor each of its inseparable moments within it.⁹⁸ The concept does not equal being or essence, and being and essence also do not equal what they are before the concept.

Hegel points out that the understanding of the concept seems to be absolute idealism at first sight, but the concept refers to the principle of whole life and it is not a

⁹⁴ Hegel, p.350.

⁹⁵ Hegel, p.351.

⁹⁶ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, p.213.

⁹⁷ Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.526.

⁹⁸ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, p.236.

transcendental universality, but concrete universality. The understanding of concrete universality will be explained in the next section in detail.

The doctrine of the Concept has three subdivisions, which are subjective/formal concept, objective concepts, and the Idea, which is the togetherness and unity of the subject and object.

Having presented a broad outline of the *Logic* as the most systematic presentation of his ideas, in the next section, I will discuss Concrete Universality in more detail, since the unity of the universal and particular in the concrete universal is essential to an understanding of “truth content” in art.

3.2. Concrete Universal

In the *Philosophy of Right*, Hegel speaks of concrete universality and its three moments, which are universality, particularity and individuality. He says, “...absolute universality is not to be thought of either as the universality of reflection, [...] as the abstract universality and self-identity”, but rather he emphasizes that the universal is “concrete, self-contained and self-referring universality”.⁹⁹ In the *Science of Logic*, he gives another definition of concrete universality: “...concrete universality [...] contains the two moments, the objective universal or the genus and the *singularized universal*. Here we have, therefore, the universal that is *itself* and continues through *its opposite*, and is a universal only in *unity* with the latter.”¹⁰⁰

As can be seen from these quotations, universality in Hegel does not refer abstract rule or universality, which is apart from the particulars and singulars. Hegel is aware that when we use and speak of the Concept, we inevitably think of abstract universalities in our mind. He states that for example, when we speak about the ““concept” of color, or of a plant or of an animal”, these concepts are supposed to emerge from ignoring and neglecting the particularities of various animals, plants or colors. However, for

⁹⁹ Hegel, *Philosophy of Right*, p.44.

¹⁰⁰ Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.586.

Hegel, the universal is “what particularizes (specifies) itself, remaining at home with itself in its other, in unclouded clarity.”¹⁰¹

So, what Hegel means by “concrete universality” involves a deep criticism of the abstract and formal understanding of the universal. Thus, as a beginning of the explanation of this relationship of the universal, particular and singular, we can say that Hegel’s understanding of particularity and universality is different from traditional approaches such as those of Kant and Plato. Although it may seem as if there is a hierarchical relationship between the singular, particular and the universal, which would allow us to think of the universal independently of the individual and particular, Hegel insists that the universal can only be understood through the relation between the particular and the universal. For example, in Plato this relationship is explained as one of ‘exemplification’, a notion which has become highly problematic, both for Plato scholars and in terms of its influence on the history of philosophy through its adoption by later philosophers.

On the other hand, as we have seen in the Kant chapter, the understanding of universality remains abstract in Kant’s philosophy as well. Although universality, especially in his aesthetic, is based on subjects and subjectivity, the subjects and subjectivity are not considered as particulars and singulars in his philosophy; rather they are metaphysical/transcendental subjects. Unlike Kant who claims that universality is grounded on a (transcendental) subjectivity, Hegel does not see universality as something which can be founded on a transcendental understanding; instead he articulates it as the immanent movement of the concept through the particulars. Thus, concrete universality is more dynamic and holistic, encompassing the dialectic relationship among the differences in particulars.

To understand concrete universality and the relationship between the singular and universal in Hegel’s philosophy better, each moment should be explained in detail.

¹⁰¹ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, p.247.

3.2.1. Universal

Hegel accepts that the explanation of universality is hard since it is the simplest of determinations while explanations should depend on some specifications and determinations. When one tries to explain universality, it can lose its simplicity and the explanation can alter it, instead of explaining it. However, the simplicity in the universal is negativity in itself and therefore contains the differences. Hegel says; “the universal is [...] a simple that is at the same time all the richer in itself, for it is the concept.”¹⁰²

For Hegel, when universal concepts are obtained by abstraction from particulars, this gives us only the abstract universal—i.e., a one-sided conception, which will also become dead if we try to hold on to it in its one-sided moment. Thus, all these explanations about the rejection of abstract-transcendental universality leads to the understanding of concrete universality in Hegel.

3.2.2. Particular

The other moment is the particular concept. Hegel declares that the determinateness of the concept is its particularity and the particular contains the universal.

The particulars as particulars are different from each other, and there may appear to be a disunity between them when they are not considered in terms of their mediation with the universal. For example, in my daily life, I experience myself as a particular subject, with particular desires and goals, which may be at odds with those of others, and I confront and deal with particular objects which do not immediately manifest a unity.

However, in Hegel’s understanding of universality as concrete universality, the particular is not detached from the universal. In other words, Hegel believes that underlying the differentiated appearance is the unity of the universal.

¹⁰² Hegel, *The Science of Logic*, p.530.

The particular and universal are not separable from each other, and the particular always includes the universal and it is also included by it. This mutual relation takes us to the third moment.

3.2.3. Singular

The last moment is singularity. Singularity is the solid and concrete basis of our judgment and experience. In other words, singularity is a *one* or *this*. What is essential for singularity is that the universal and the particular both present themselves in singularity as having completed their mediation with each other. Hegel accepts that when people think about the concept of something such as concept of color or plant, they immediately understand the abstract or transcendental universality, which are apart from the particulars in their mind. (The Encyclopedia of the logic) In contrast to this hierarchical relationship between the particular and universal, the relationship is more holistic and dynamic in Hegel. As Julie E. Maybee says; “the Singularity is defined by universal, [...] the universal is defined by Singularity”¹⁰³ because without singularity, the universal would be empty, abstract or undetermined. For example, a cat is understood for what it is only under the universal concept of cat, but the concept of cat cannot be understood without relating it to a particular cat on the windowsill or in the garden.¹⁰⁴

In that respect, singularity appears to represent more than one single concrete thing. For instance, when the singular or the individual tries to seek his/her own right in front of the state or government, it also seems to represent “the rights of being citizen” in that state. Similarly, the singular paintings; such as Rembrandt's *Night Watch* or Correggio's *Holy Night* appear to indicate more than its singularity and singular experiences. It seems to belong/represent universality/universal meaning. (This relationship between the singular, particular and universal will be clarified further in the section on Geist.)

¹⁰³ Julie E. Maybee, *Picturing Hegel: An Illustrated Guide to Hegel's Encyclopaedia Logic*, p.346.

¹⁰⁴ Julie E. Maybee, p.346.

We can understand the relationship by looking at the expression of Hegel in “Encyclopedia of Logic”. Hegel says; “taken abstractly, universality, particularity, and singularity are the same as identity, distinction, and ground.” Universal is “what is identical with itself” and the particular is “what is distinct or the determinacy”. Finally, the singular contains “the genus and species within itself and is itself substantial”.¹⁰⁵

This understanding of the mediation between the particular and the universal leads us to the concept of the concrete universal. Through internalizing their active relationship with other people (or the “other” and “opposite” in any relationship), someone can gain an understanding of the concrete universal.

3.3. Geist

Geist is another central point for understanding Hegel’s philosophy in general and it is translated as “Spirit”. In the *Encyclopedia*, Hegel explains that there are three divisions of Spirit, which are subjective spirit, objective spirit and absolute spirit. Subjective spirit includes Anthropology and Phenomenology. The objective spirit is the actualization of the subject in the world. It deals with morality and ethical life. In the widest sense, it is mainly about the practical spirit or Philosophy of Right. Finally, absolute spirit contains both subjective and objective spirit. It is kind of reconciliation of subjective and objective Spirit so that the Spirit finds its truth and recognizes itself. In that respect, the *Phenomenology of Spirit* can be read as a quite non-Orthodox theory of truth, where truth is understood as a matter of isomorphy not between a proposition and the world, but between a subject and object. Absolute Spirit has three moments; Art, Religion and Philosophy.

Geist seems to actualize and realize itself towards Absolute Spirit. However, this does not mean that there is a linear or hierarchical relationship, which starts from the subjective spirit and ends with the absolute spirit. In order to have a general idea of what the spirit is, we can look at Solomon’s reading of it: “What clearly emerges from Hegel’s writing is that “Geist” refers to some sort of general consciousness, a single

¹⁰⁵ Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, p.242.

“mind” common to all men”.¹⁰⁶The general consciousness and single mind do not refer to a metaphysical entity. On the contrary, it points out that ‘Geist’ denotes a fluid entity that emerges in a historical context through the interactions of particular subjects, their labor through nature, their struggle for recognition, and the social and political institutions that they erect. It is the unity of differences of particulars and it includes the contradictions between particulars as well as the togetherness of the particular and the universal. So, the whole movement of Spirit can be understood as the “realization/recognition of one’s identity as universal Spirit”.¹⁰⁷

In the light of the *Phenomenology* of Hegel, the self does not refer to the individual self anymore. It is the “general self” and it is “common to us”.¹⁰⁸In other words, ‘self’ does not refer primarily to the individual feelings, senses, memories or experiences of the person. Its definition or what it is not fixed, but emerges and develops in the context of a whole series of interactions with other human beings and nature so that it eventually refers to a “shared conception of ourselves as everything, an absolute identity with each other and the world.”¹⁰⁹This shows/indicates that the relationship between the self and the other selves/the world can only be understood/explained by realizing the dialectical relationship between them. More importantly, it shows the strong relationship between the self, nature and history. So, it can be said that the self creates/realizes itself with the dialectical relationship in nature and history.

Solomon points out that the individual self is a “collective body”, which is also connected to and interacts with world as “collective property.” The land we have worked on, the animals we have tamed, the machines and products, which we have produced, and the stars, which are our subjects in science indicate/show Spirit or “our collective self”.¹¹⁰ As with the concrete universal in section 3.2 the Spirit is not the totality of these individuals or particulars. On the contrary, in this “collective property”, the particulars do not lose their characters under the unity. (Spirit)

¹⁰⁶Solomon, “Concept of Geist.”, p.642.

¹⁰⁷ Solomon, p.642.

¹⁰⁸ Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel*, p.201.

¹⁰⁹ Solomon, p.201.

¹¹⁰ Solomon, p.203.

In short, nature is the medium and history the process through which the Spirit actualizes itself. In this process, the self/individual recognizes itself as belonging to the universal Spirit.

In this dialectical relationship with nature and history, the self returns to itself from the other /external world. This movement of recognition can be read as a story of “objectively mediated subjectivity”. “Objectively mediated subjectivity” means that in the dialectic movement of self, the subject/the self turns from the other or objective world to itself. This point will also be important for Adorno when he criticizes the aesthetic understandings of Kant and Hegel. Especially when he is trying to make sense of the objectivity involved in a notion of truth content of a work of art. In other words, it seems that its content is mediated by not only itself, but also others.

3.4. Aesthetic Theory

A complete understanding of Hegel’s aesthetics would require an analysis of his *Aesthetics*. However, within the limits of this research, the purpose of which is to illustrate the historical connections between Kant, Hegel and Adorno, only the most important and relevant points will be highlighted.

3.4.1. Common Ideas of Art

In order to have a general idea of what the work of art is for Hegel, we can look at the section “Common Ideas of Art”¹¹¹ Firstly, Hegel indicates that the work of art is not a natural product. It is only brought about by human activity, and this activity involves man’s apprehension and senses, which means that this human activity is particular activity. Hegel gives an importance to the explanation and understanding of the “particular activity” since if it was not the particular activity of human being, the work of art would be based on some general procedures and abstract universality. So, the insistence on the particular human activity includes the criticism and rejection of the (abstract) universal and theoretical understanding; this particular activity of human,

¹¹¹ Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetic: Lectures on Fine Art*, p.25.

when she/he creates the work of art, should be the distinct, specific activity of the artist.

112

Hegel emphasizes that rules for the work of art can only contain vague generalities such as the general descriptions, which can be age, sex and gender differences of the characters in the novel.¹¹³ However, the work of art/the production cannot be defined within these limits; therefore, it should also include the particular spiritual activity of the artists.

The other important point in the claim that the work of art is the product of the human activity is its relation to the external world. The value of a work of art in itself has no movement and life, but there is contained in it (for example, in a piece of wood that is carved or in the words and letters of a poem) an inner value (i.e., the *structure* of the wood or the *idea* behind the words) which can be expressed and re-animated only through a relation with the external world that it is expressed in and in which other individuals can perceive it.¹¹⁴

However, connection to the external world is also not enough to make the work of art into a product of fine art. What is important is that the work of art is produced and originated from Spirit. Thus, the notion of Spirit in Hegel's *Phenomenology* is also crucial to answer the questions of "what is in itself in art?" and "what is art's relation to the external world?" Spirit is like an explanation of the inner value of the work of art and it helps to separate the work of art from other non-artistic things.

We have seen, firstly, the peculiarities of the work of art as a product of human activity. The second important characteristic of the work of art is that the work of art is produced with the human's senses and within a sensuous sphere.¹¹⁵ This second characteristic can be considered together with the first characteristic of the work of art, which is particular human activity. However, human's feeling and senses that find expression in a work of art and/or evoke feelings in other subjects should not remain

¹¹² Hegel, p.26.

¹¹³ Hegel, p.26.

¹¹⁴ Hegel, p.29.

¹¹⁵ Hegel, p.23.

at the subjective level. Hegel claims that the aim of the work of art is not just to arouse a purely subjective feeling, but to find the specific sense of beauty. Hegel points out that in the purely subjective feeling or emotional state of the subject in relation to the work of art, the objective content of the work of art vanishes. He continues “Consequently, the investigation of the feeling which art evokes, or is supposed to evoke, does not get beyond vagueness; it is a study which precisely abstracts from the content proper and its concrete essence and concept”.¹¹⁶

Hegel begins this part by considering “the imitation of nature” as a suggested aim of art. However, if the imitation of nature were the aim of art, it would render art dependent on only what it is in the external world, since imitation amounts to directly copying the natural form.¹¹⁷ Hegel claims that if we take the imitation of the work of art as an end of art, there is no need to ask about “the character of what is supposed to be imitated”. He continues, the only concern for the work of art is whether the imitation is correct or not. So, imitation or copying the natural form does not give an end/aim for the work of art. He also points out that objective beauty disappears if the imitation of the work of art is taken into consideration. The emphasis on objective beauty will also be important to understand the work of art as a representation of Spirit. The third point is that the work of art is an end in itself. This part is a crucial step to/part of understanding Adorno’s criticism of Hegel since Adorno rejects the assignment of a universal aim to art.

After rejecting the idea of the aim of an artwork as an imitation of nature, Hegel tries to find the aim of art in its power in affecting our feeling, inclinations and passions. Mere/pure imitation of the work of art does not touch the human spirit, feeling and senses. Other aims such as creating the work of art to attain fame or honor, or to provide instruction are also mentioned and quickly dismissed as not concerning the nature of the work of art.¹¹⁸

¹¹⁶ Hegel, p.33.

¹¹⁷ Hegel, p.41.

¹¹⁸ Hegel, p.55.

3.4.2. Content

According to Hegel the aim of the artwork seems to come from the content of the work of art. Hegel questions what this content might be, and considers the suggestion "...that the task and aim of art is to bring home to our sense, our feeling, and our inspiration everything which has a place in the human spirit."¹¹⁹

According to Hegel, the content of a specific/individual work of art represents more than its particular existence. For example, the painting does not appear as a representation of the objects and scenes, which are framed. It has to exceed its particular representation in a certain time and place. This is what Hegel calls Spirit.

For example, the Greek tragedy *Antigone* is a unique work of art, representing a conflict between the characters in a particular story taking place in a particular culture. But the content expressed in the play is not merely about the individual characters in the tragedy. The conflict between them shows the conflict between two rights, which are the right of consciousness (obeying the state rules) and the right of unconsciousness (acting according to respect). So, with the dialectical relationship between them, the characters seem to realize/represent themselves as part of the universal truth/Spirit. So, we can say that although this tragedy together with its characters and events is an individual and unique tragedy, it is also the Spirit, which represent the claim of truth, while preserving its individuality. The specific content of the individual work of art realizes-actualizes itself in dialectic movement/relationship with other.

The most important point in his aesthetic is that the only aim of the work of art is revealing the truth in the form of artistic configurations. Hegel says "...we said that beauty is Idea, so beauty and truth are in one way the same".¹²⁰ So, the Idea should show itself in the external world, in existence. For him, truth cannot demonstrate itself by remaining only for itself. In order to be truth, it should be for both itself and another. Art can only bring its reality and conception through appearance.

Hegel summarizes his understanding of beauty by saying "For beauty, is no such abstraction of the Understanding but the inherently concrete absolute Concept and,

¹¹⁹ Hegel, p.46.

¹²⁰ Hegel, p.111.

more specifically, the absolute Idea in its appearance in a way adequate to itself”.¹²¹ Thus, we can say that the (concrete) appearance of the work of art and the absolute Idea coincide with each other. In other words, Spirit is bound up with the particular, finite and concrete existence of the work of art, but is not limited to it; it is the universal and absolute spirit. So, the true work of art expresses the moment where the universal and particular becomes manifest. This point will be clearer in next section.

3.4.3. Romantic Art

Hegel describes the emergence of a beautiful work of art that is “adequate to the Concept” by looking at the history of art, and identifying three stages in it, which are symbolism, classicism and romanticism.

In *Aesthetics: Lectures on Fine Art*, Hegel compares the symbolic, classical and romantic art. He begins by discussing the symbolic form of art. He states that symbolic form of art is “the beginning of art.” and it is not yet named and accepted as art. The symbols, such as lion, bull or horn, which present strength are used as symbols to “represent God”.¹²² They are immediate and ambiguous symbols. In other words, the immediate expression of nature makes us go beyond their immediate meaning and search for wider and deeper meaning than they represent.

Hegel mentions the old-Persian, Indian and Egyptian shapes/productions as examples of the symbolic form of art; he specifically gives an example from Zoroaster. For example, in the religion of Zoroaster, what is the Divine and Absolute is represented as light in nature. Sun, stars or fire are the images or symbols of the good itself for the people. However, this identicalness between the good and light does not show that there is an expression of Spirit in this semblance. The symbolism in the work of art has a veiled meaning and this meaning of the content refers to abstract ideas. So, we can say that the relationship between the meaning and the symbol/image, used in the work of art is not explicit/clear.¹²³In Section III “The Romantic Form of Art”, he says,

¹²¹ Hegel, p.46.

¹²² Hegel, p.305-306.

¹²³ Hegel, p.427.

“At the stage of beginning of art the urge of imagination consisted in striving out of nature into spirit”.¹²⁴ However, this striving is only investigation and inquiry of spirit, not a representation of it.

Hegel emphasizes that in order to achieve perfect fulfillment of the relationship between the spiritual content and its external/corporeal manifestation in the work of art, we have to look at the Classical form of art. This is the second period, where we can see the true expression of Spirit. Hegel emphasizes that in the classical form of art, what is important is “self-concentration”, “coming to self”, and “being self-aware”.¹²⁵ In order to achieve this self-realization, the spirit must “withdraw into itself from nature” and/or “overcome nature”. Contrary to the symbolic form of art, which uses immediate configurations/representations of natural objects for the “expression of Absolute”, in Classical form of art, gods are represented in individual/concrete bodily shape. This does not mean that nature or natural elements are totally taken away from the individual work of art, but “a nature already itself permeated by spiritual meanings.”¹²⁶

Hegel gives an example from the understanding of art in Greek mythology. In the light of the relationship between religion and the work of art, produced within the context of religious ideas, the content of works of art representing Greek gods is not nature. Instead of nature, which seems to be external to the human spirit, the content of the work of art is human spirit and existence. In other words, the artist/creator realizes himself of herself within the work of art, which he/she produces with the free spirit. Hegel says, “...what he produces is the most beautiful manifestation of himself”.¹²⁷ This expression also shows the relation between individual (unique) existence of the work of art and universal Spirit (truth).

Although classic art achieves the unification of form and content, and has true content of art, Hegel claims that “there is something higher than the beautiful appearance of

¹²⁴ Hegel, p.517.

¹²⁵ Hegel, p.465.

¹²⁶ Hegel, p.443.

¹²⁷ Hegel, p.479.

spirit”.¹²⁸This “something higher” appears in the romantic form of art, which is the third period Hegel discusses.

Hegel claims that in the romantic form of art, the spirit turns to itself from external/sensuous existence and he says; “by this elevation of the spirit to itself the spirit wins in itself its objectivity...”.¹²⁹ In other words, in romantic art, the spirit finds itself/its objectivity not in the external and sensuous world. It senses and knows its truth only by returning to itself from the external/sensuous world. This explanation of Hegel can be thought together with his claims on the difference between classical form of art and romantic form of art. When Hegel compares romantic and classical form of art, he points out that Greek sculpture does not show the “movement and activity of spirit which has retired into itself out of its corporeal reality and made its way to inner self-awareness.”¹³⁰ So, we can say that with the movement of spirit, the work of art gains its objectivity by turning back to itself from externality.

According to Hegel, contrary to Gods, which are represented in symbolic and classical form of art, God of romantic art emerges as “self-knowing” and “inwardly subjective”.¹³¹

What is important in romantic art is that the truth of the Spirit or true representation of the Spirit shows itself not in the material or corporeal world, but subject and subjectivity. When we return to the subject in the explanation of the priority of objective and subjective elements, Hegel defends the priority of the subjectivity, i.e. romantic art, since the true spirit actualizes itself within the subject/subjective experience.

For example, in William Turner’s *Fisherman at Sea* and *The Slave Ship* paintings, the representation of nature in these paintings is not the mere imitation of it. Waves, storm and sun are presented in a way that we can immediately see the feeling and reflection of the subject. (W. Turner). However, they appear to represent more than the subjective

¹²⁸ Hegel, p.517.

¹²⁹ Hegel, p.518.

¹³⁰ Hegel, p.520.

¹³¹ Hegel, p.521.

feelings of the artist. This is the movement of Spirit, which turns to itself from external/corporeal nature by virtue of the dialectic movement of it.

3.5. In Place of a Conclusion: The Criticism of Kant/Objectivity

An important point in *Aesthetics* is that the “beautiful as such” cannot be grasped by a transcendental understanding.¹³² If it remains only for thought and concept, it is not conceivable and understandable. Even though Kant also did not think that the beautiful could be subsumed under a concept, Hegel’s understanding of beauty is significantly different from Kant’s. Kant sought for the reason behind the universal agreement on what is beautiful in the fact that all human beings have the same faculties, and beauty gives pleasure because it facilitates the interplay of the faculties of sensibility and the understanding (e.g., when contemplating “purposiveness without purpose”).

But while Kant explains the nature of such reflective judgments through transcendental faculties, for Hegel such reflective moments indicate the immanent moment of the concept whereby there is a “rising above the immediate to the universal”.¹³³

In short, as mentioned before, judgments of beauty are subjectively grounded for Kant. For Hegel, on the other hand, the ground of beauty is objective. As we have seen in section 3.3, art for Hegel denotes one of the three moments of absolute spirit. He sees the beautiful as the expression or the representation of truth.

Hegel says that temporality and finitude can be grasped and received only under the absolute Concept, which means specifically the Idea. However, the appearance of beauty is not a mere imitation of the Concept or Idea. It is not to be reduced to or inferred from the form of the Concept or Idea, but it is the whole itself. In this respect, Hegel’s understanding of art also differs from the Platonic understanding, the main difference lying in the fact that for Hegel, the universal is immanent among the particulars.

¹³² Hegel, p.91.

¹³³ Hegel, p.350.

CHAPTER IV

ADORNO

As we have stated in the introduction chapter, Adorno's conception of autonomous art should be evaluated in light of his discussion of the truth content of the art work and this discussion involves the form-content debate, the subject-object relationship, and the understanding of historical subject in the work of art. In developing his ideas on these points, in many parts in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno mentions the aesthetic understanding of Hegel and Kant. Thus, the Kant and Hegel chapters are important for a complete understanding of Adorno's understanding of truth content and autonomy of the work of art.

Adorno begins *Aesthetic Theory* with the sentence "It is self evident that nothing concerning art is self-evident anymore, not its inner life, not its relation to world, not even its right to exist".¹³⁴ This sentence seems to introduce a new point of view for the explanation of the work of art. With regard to the beginning sentence of *Aesthetic Theory*, Danto says; "Something can be a work of art but something quite like it not be one, since nothing that meets the eye reveals the difference." He continues that this does not show/mean that deciding whether something is a work of art or not is arbitrary. However traditional criteria can no longer be applicable to the work of art.¹³⁵

In light of the interpretation of Danto, we can infer that the beginning sentence of *Aesthetic Theory* does not give a direct answer to or methodology for answering the question of what art is, but it seems to follow a new path for the explanation of characteristics of work of art. *Aesthetic Theory* gives a new and different way of looking toward the aesthetic and work of art, and it never claims that there is no criteria or determination when someone considers about whether this is art or not. Adorno's

¹³⁴ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.1.

¹³⁵ Arthur Coleman Danto, *The Abuse of Beauty: Aesthetics and the Concept of Art*, p.17.

way of looking towards the definition of art is stated in his own sentence at the very beginning of *Aesthetic Theory*. He says, “The definition of art is at every point indicated by what art once was, but it is legitimated only by what art became with regard to what it wants to, and perhaps can, become”.¹³⁶ This sentence shows that the work of art is not understood within the limits of mere definitions and descriptions, which try to explain whether something is art or not. On the contrary, in order to define the work of art, one should look at its historicity and its movement in history. On this issue, Adorno says “Art can be understood only by its law of movement, not according to any set of invariant”.¹³⁷ The expression “its law of movement” might not be clear at first sight, but it seems to designate that the work of art does not depend on any invariants or unchangeable rules, which are externally imposed to the work of art. On the contrary, it has its own explanations within itself in the most general sense. This point will become clearer by the end of the thesis.

Adorno continues with the explanation that art is always in relation with what is other and say, “It (art) exists only in relation to its other; it is the process that transpires with its other”.¹³⁸ All of these explanations establish Adorno’s main understanding towards the (autonomy of) work of art, but they need to be explained in detail to understand the autonomy of the work of art. In the following chapters, the important terms, which surround his understanding of autonomous work of art, will be explained to understand his position in aesthetic better.

4.1. Enigmaticalness and Emergence of Truth Content

The understanding of the autonomy of the work of art is not separable from the concept of truth content in Adorno, and thus a detailed explanation of what Adorno means by ‘truth content’ will give us also an understanding of what he means by the ‘autonomy of the work of art’.

¹³⁶Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.3.

¹³⁷ Adorno, p.3.

¹³⁸ Adorno, p.3.

The concept of 'truth content' first appears in the "Situation" section of *Aesthetic Theory*, where Adorno criticizes the "Isms" in the history of art. Adorno states that the artistic movements/isms "by no means shackled the individual productive forces", but although he grants that they are not schools which defend traditional or institutional authority, they are nevertheless potentially schools which defend an objective authority. Under this objective authority of the "Isms", like German expressionism and French surrealism, "the quality of individual artist can be distinguished"; however, Adorno also observes that those who deviate from the particular characteristics of the school tend to receive less attention.¹³⁹ He gives the example of Pissarro among the impressionists as a painter who has been underrated for this reason. Thus, for him, "ism"s construct universal and objective construction-schema or authorities for the work of art, and therefore do not fit into the schema of absolute individuation".¹⁴⁰

So, Adorno believes that the truth content of the work of art, produced in the light of these artistic movements (Isms), does not come to light/cannot show itself. He says; "the truth-content of many artistic movements does not necessarily culminate in great artwork."¹⁴¹ This discussion is the first place in this book where Adorno uses the term "truth content" in relation to the work of art, but it is obvious that he does not try to explain it in detail in this chapter. Even so, it gives us a general idea about "truth content".

Where Adorno explains "truth content" in detail is in the "Enigmaticalness, Truth Content and Metaphysic" section of *Aesthetic Theory*. The subject of "Enigma" in *Aesthetic Theory* is a comprehensive subject, which seems to deserve more explanation and research. It can be a subject of another discussion by itself. However, apart from the importance of the term 'enigmaticalness' in Adorno, this part appears to be an introduction for the understanding of the emergence of truth content.

Enigma seems to evoke something hopelessly obscure and mysterious in the work of art. However, Adorno does not use 'enigma' either as a negative (problematic term) or a positive term, but rather he emphasizes that it is "aesthetically significant in the strict

¹³⁹ Adorno, p.24.

¹⁴⁰ Adorno, p.25.

¹⁴¹ Adorno, p.25.

sense of a task posed by the immanent compositions of works” and he continues; artworks are enigmas in the general sense.¹⁴² He says; “All artworks-and art altogether-are enigmas; since antiquity this has been an irritation to theory of art”.¹⁴³

Adorno says; “Artwork falls helplessly mute before the question “What’s it for?” and before that reproach that they are actually pointless.” At this point, Adorno tries to make an analogy between rainbows and artworks and says; “If one seeks to get a closer look at a rainbow, it disappears”.¹⁴⁴

Adorno says, “as in enigmas, the answer is both hidden and demanded by the structure”.¹⁴⁵ It can be said that understanding the form of the work of art seems to be the easiest way to understand and solve the enigma of the work of art. Adorno specifically dwells on music as he states that music is “completely enigmatic” and “totally evident.”¹⁴⁶ In order to understand the enigma of the music, he says only its form can be “deciphered”. Music seems to be understood by the people who decipher its form and replay it. At this point, the (purposiveness of the) structure the work of art seems to be presented as a possible answer to the enigma.¹⁴⁷

But Adorno claims that although the work of art seems to present purpose, it has no purpose beyond its “own arrangement”; “works are purposeful in themselves, without having any positive purpose beyond their own arrangement...”¹⁴⁸ While the artwork’s arrangement has a purposive appearance, its enigmatic nature dissuades us from any attempt to all too readily ascribe a purpose or meaning to it. This tension guards the autonomy of the work of art.

Adorno’s focus on the form, which seems to keep, reserve, harbour the enigma, in the work of art appears very similar to the Kantian understanding of the judgment of the

¹⁴² Adorno, p.121.

¹⁴³ Adorno, p.120.

¹⁴⁴ Adorno, p.122.

¹⁴⁵ Adorno, p.124.

¹⁴⁶ Adorno, p.122.

¹⁴⁷ Adorno, p.124.

¹⁴⁸ Adorno, p.124.

beautiful. Adorno says that Kant's "magnificently paradoxical formula", that artworks are purposive without purpose "precludes calling art's meaning its purpose, despite meaning's affinity to immanent teleology."¹⁴⁹

The inconclusive relation between the purposiveness of form and the enigma it conceals, and reveals is further articulated in Adorno's discussion of the mimetic comportment in/ of the work of art. For example, when the musician replays a famous piece from the history of music; such as Beethoven's 9th symphony, or an actor reenacts Hamlet, he or she seems to understand or solve the enigma in the work of art by replaying and creating it--by "tracing" its form. However, understanding the work of art by reenacting or replaying it does not mean that the enigma in the work of art is solved. On the contrary, it creates the enigma again.

Examples can also be given from the side of the audience and listener. Experiencing the work of art, such as listening to Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* or seeing Turner's *Moonlight A Study At Millbank*, is not enough to give the solution for the enigma.

Andrea Sakoparnig also points out the enigma of the work of art in Adorno and gives examples in order to clarify the relationship between understanding a work of art and the solution of enigma in them. Sakoparnig declares that when a musician reenacts or replays the musical work, he does not understand what he plays.¹⁵⁰ and in this situation, she continues, "the musician is, so to speak, on the side of the enigma. The very moment the immanent reenactment ceases, the enigma shows up again and is all the more obscure".¹⁵¹ This sentence shows that the artist replays or reenacts the work of art only by understanding the form/structure of the work of art and this inevitably leads to the enigma again. Adorno says; "Understanding is itself a problematic category in the face of art's enigmaticalness".¹⁵² because although the artist seems to understand the work of art while replaying it, each mimetic comportment in the process of replaying/reenacting creates the enigma again. Moreover, Adorno points out that the work of art itself is already created mimetically and replaying/reenacting creates

¹⁴⁹ Adorno, p.152.

¹⁵⁰ Sakoparnig, "Enigmaticalness as a Fundamental Category in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory.", p.163.

¹⁵¹ Sakoparnig, p.164.

¹⁵² Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.121.

another mimetic comportment. He says, “What is essentially mimetic awaits mimetic comportment”.¹⁵³ This mimetic comportment is just the imitation of the work of art. So, it seems that the solution of the enigma gets into a vicious circle.

In addition, he says that when we try to understand the form of the work of art, which appears to present some kind of aim or purpose, this is not a purpose that can be understood in a larger metaphysical (theological or other) or social context. Since the compartmentalization of social life into specialized autonomous fields after the emergence of capitalism and loss of the “refuge of fading theology”, there remains no unified worldview within which the meaning and purpose of the artwork can be located. Thus it “becomes ever harder for artworks to cohere as a nexus of meaning”.

¹⁵⁴

In this context, Adorno again finds an affinity with Kant who, according to Adorno, refrains from calling art’s meaning its purpose, “despite meaning’s affinity to immanent teleology”.¹⁵⁵ (Here, Adorno draws on the tension between a certain understanding of meaning as something given by its purpose and a more general sense of meaning.) Adorno also finds in Kant’s explanation that artworks “are separated from empirical reality and serve no aim that is useful for self-preservation and life” support for his views on the autonomy of the work of art.¹⁵⁶

About the close relationship between purposiveness of the work of art and the enigma, Adorno says; “Art thus became an enigma; if it is no longer exists for the purpose that it infused with meaning, then what is art? He continues his claim by asserting the work of art “achieves its meaning” in its “emphatic absence of meaning”.¹⁵⁷ So, the work of art seems to constitute/reveal the meaning through the absence of the meaning.

That is to say, trying to find purpose for the work of art or trying to imitate them to understand the enigma in the work of art are not the solutions for the enigma. So, we

¹⁵³ Adorno, p.125.

¹⁵⁴ Adorno, p.152-153.

¹⁵⁵ Adorno, p.152.

¹⁵⁶ Adorno, p.152.

¹⁵⁷ Adorno, p.127.

reach the conclusion that the solution of the enigma should come from each work itself. The puzzle metaphor in *Aesthetic Theory* can be helpful to describe the immanent solution of the enigma in the artwork. Adorno points out that the enigmaticalness of the work of art is like a puzzle, which contains the solution in itself.¹⁵⁸ For Adorno, what is hidden in this puzzle is both visible and hidden. It means that the solution and explanation of the enigma in the work of art is always the work of art itself.

Thus, trying to suggest a solution for the enigma within the work of art itself indicates one of the most important concepts in Adorno's aesthetic, which is truth content. Adorno says; "Ultimately, artworks are enigmatic in terms not of their composition but of their truth content".¹⁵⁹ and continues with saying "the truth content of artworks is the objective solution of the enigma posed by each and every one".¹⁶⁰

In this sense, a new question arises, which is what we need to search for the answer to. From this point onwards, Adorno's question turns to "Is the work of art true? instead of what is [specific] artwork about?"¹⁶¹

Truth content seems to emerge from the solution of the enigmaticalness of the work of art. It is the answer (to the question "what is it, if it is not a purpose?") which comes from the work of art itself. However, the "trueness" of the work of art is still an ambiguous term and it needs to be analyzed in detail.

4.2. Truth content

While Adorno says that every authentic work of art suggests its own solution for the enigmaticalness of the work of art, this should not be taken to mean that the meaning or truth content of the work of art can be found in a vacuum without an understanding of history. Adorno asserts that enigmaticalness and its solution is bound up with

¹⁵⁸ Adorno, p.121.

¹⁵⁹ Adorno, p.127.

¹⁶⁰ Adorno, p.127-128.

¹⁶¹ Adorno, p.127.

history. “Truth content is not external to history but rather its crystallization in the works”.¹⁶²

Therefore, firstly, it should be asked whether the truth content can be found in the purpose for which an artwork was initially created. On the one hand, Adorno does not deny that artworks have been created with a purpose in relation to certain functions that they may have served within a certain social and historical context. On the other, he argues that discovering this purpose/function does not suffice to solve the enigmaticalness of the work of art. The truth content is not separable from history and it is always related with society, but Adorno claims that artworks appear to have their meaning (truth content) when they no longer serve the purpose for which they were created. Adorno says; “every artwork responds by wresting itself free from the discursive form of answer”.¹⁶³

In Chapter II, we have seen that Hegel defends the objective content (the representation of Spirit) in the work of art. Adorno’s conception of truth content and the objectivity of it can be evaluated in a way that is similar to Hegel’s understanding of the objective content of the work of art.

4.2.1. Form and Content

When we mention the truth content of the work of art and the objectivity of it, whether this truth content belongs to form or content remains uncertain. The debates on form and content seem to treat the two as dichotomous. In a dichotomous understanding/view of form and content; for example, the style, paint technique, selected colors of *Starry Night*, which is one of the most important and well-known painting of Van Gogh are elaborated as differently from the content or what it wants to tell. However, when we analyze each concept differently, we will see that they are not separable from each other.

¹⁶² Adorno, p.133.

¹⁶³ Adorno, p.127.

4.2.1.1. Form

In the “Coherence and Meaning” chapter in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno first gives an importance to the form of the artwork. He says, “Incontestably the quintessence of all elements of logicality, or, more broadly, coherence in artworks, is form”.¹⁶⁴ But what is form?

Adorno argues that form cannot be understood in terms of mathematical relations such as ratio and proportions. For example, the form of the work of art is not about the mathematical relationship. About the occurrence of mathematical relations in the work of art, Adorno says; “Such relations-whether explicitly invoked as principles during the Renaissance or latently coupled with mystical ideas, as perhaps occasionally in Bach- play a role as technical procedures, yet they are not form itself but rather its vehicle...”¹⁶⁵ He seems to defend that the technical procedures and mathematical relations can only function as “pre-forms” to enable the artist who has become liberated from traditional artistic norms to be able to begin to tackle “chaotic and undifferentiated material”.¹⁶⁶ Adorno gives an example from the twelve-tone technique in music. He believes that this twelve-tone technique, which preforms the material or composition “by establishment of numerical relations of permuted rows does not constitute the form, but it just gives the technique.” So, we see that the mathematical or logical explanations are more related with the techniques of the work of art, not the form of the work of art itself.

The form should also not be thought of like abstract rules and transcendental universalities; i.e., as if it comes from outside the material and is imposed on it. At this point, we can think of the “light” image in the religion of Zoroaster again. The “light” image in the artwork appears as a sign to represent the good and divine. So, the form (the image of “light”) denotes the rule and the universal understanding, which should be applied to the artwork.

¹⁶⁴ Adorno, p.140.

¹⁶⁵ Adorno, p.142.

¹⁶⁶ Adorno, p.142.

Typically, focusing on the concept of form on its own leads to a limited understanding of the work of art and it seems to confine its meaning and possibilities. Adorno emphasizes this point by giving examples from music and painting. He points out that when music is played according to temporal successions, it focuses on only one formal dimension. But if we consider the effect of polyphony or simultaneity on the form, we also realize that what is important is the different ways in which different formal dimensions interact and influence each other. This is a matter of organization, and Adorno questions whether the principle behind this organization can be accounted for in merely formalistic terms -i.e., by a consideration of form alone. As another example, proportions of space and surface are functions in painting, which give a form to the painting, and if we focus on such formal elements, we neglect other formal elements such as the composition of color, and more importantly how the spatial arrangement is affected by the formal arrangement of colors. More importantly, it remains to be questioned whether the effect of such interaction between color and spatial arrangement can be considered a formal feature alone or an expression of something else.¹⁶⁷

This kind of understanding of form in the work of art seems to not deal with the particular differences, meaning, interests and also movement in the work of art. However, for Adorno, aesthetic form is not a static concept and he emphasizes this by saying “aesthetic form is the objective organization within each artwork of what appears as bindingly eloquent.”¹⁶⁸ In other words, the aesthetic form of each artwork is unique to itself and determined by the artworks itself.

He says, “Aesthetic success is essentially measured by whether the formed object is able to awaken the content (inhalt) sedimented in the form. In general, then, the hermeneutics of artworks is the translation of their formal elements into content (inhalt)”.¹⁶⁹ In other words, even though Adorno seems to give importance to form and he seems to not focus on content, form itself is not enough to understand the work of art. We understand that the form and content are always in relation with each other.

¹⁶⁷ Adorno, p.143.

¹⁶⁸ Adorno, p.143.

¹⁶⁹ Adorno, p.139.

In this analysis or approach to the form and content debate, content becomes an important concept which has no less value than form in Adorno. Thus, for a proper understanding of truth content, we need to analyze the relation between form and content.

The analysis of this relation, in turn, requires an understanding of how the material factors into this relationship. Therefore, in the next section, the question of the content of an artwork will be taken up in relation to the material worked on.

4.2.1.2. Content and Material

The form is not determined or understood apart from the artist's relations with (the material of) the object. However, when form is understood in relation with the material and the artist, content is inevitably thought of in terms of the subjective aim of the artist working on the material. This understanding has the risk of leading to mere subjectivism in the process of production of the artwork, but for Adorno, form should not be explained only by the subjective aim and activity of the artist, either. The subjective interaction with the material cannot be thought apart from the form of the artwork, and the form of the work of art should be understood by also looking at the form's relation to the material as well as the relation between artist and the work of art.

The interaction between the material and the subject (artist) inevitably creates the form of the artwork and the material appears to be important element, because it places limits on what the subject can do. In Adorno's words "What can rightly be called form in artworks fulfills the desiderata of that on which subjective activity takes place just as much as it is the product of subjective activity".¹⁷⁰

The "choice of material" also does not depend solely on the free choice of the subject. The availability of the material and the limitations of its use are determined by history and society. Adorno says, "the choice of material, its use, and the limitations of that

¹⁷⁰ Adorno, p.142.

use, are an essential element of production”.¹⁷¹ In other words, the subject is not totally free to shape the material because the material should be considered within the limits of its historical background and relations. For example, until the 16th century, Western paintings could not explore/find out the oil paint, which gives the richness and vividness to the objects created in paintings. The painter had to use another material, such as tempera or mineral pigments in their paintings. So, the material used in painting was bound up with the determined/given material and conditions. Adorno points out that this material is not a natural product, but it is historical. In short, factors like the material that the artists choose and what s/he can do with it are historically determined.¹⁷²

We can arrive at an approximation of Adorno’s point here by considering the subject/object relation in the production of a work of art. Having the Hegel chapter in mind, we will note immediately that the subject and object are thoroughly mediated with one another throughout history so as to make it mandatory for us to be cautious about thinking of the content as merely an idea in the subject’s head or of the material independently of the ways in which it has ceased to be raw nature throughout years of social and historical transformations it has undergone.

It is true that the content of every work of art constitutes their form in itself, but this form, content and material togetherness should arise from a historical reality and process.

While Adorno is using a Hegelian perspective throughout these considerations, he accuses Hegel himself of operating with a crude understanding of the relation between the subject and the object. Adorno praises Kant in relation to the third moment of *The Analytic of the Beautiful*, while criticizing Hegel. He says that Kant’s idea of purposiveness without purpose is better at illustrating the unity between form and content than Hegel’s aesthetics because Hegel imposes the content from the outside (his dialectical proclamations notwithstanding) while Kant suggests that the material has its own form and “logic”.

¹⁷¹ Adorno, p.148.

¹⁷² Adorno, p.148.

Hegel sees the true artwork as the embodiment and expression of the Idea/Spirit, the essence of which is freedom. Since this freedom is conceived by Hegel as self-determining (receiving its content only from itself), this implies the one-sided insertion of content into the material through the forming of the material.

Adorno says that the dilemma/the problematic and hard side of aesthetics shows itself in the form-content debate because, content and form are not on separate sides, but their relationship is dynamic. As a summary of the whole debate between form and content, it can be said that the truth content of the art work is not shaped by any author or theorist. The content is determined from the work of art itself and in these determinations, every work of art constitutes its form within itself.

When Adorno focuses on the content, he emphasizes society and history, which have effect on the subjects and are also important for the relation of the subject to the object. However, Adorno does not see the work of art as merely a social product of society; for example, he rejects the idea of a found object as an artwork, which means that the subject's contribution is not included in the production of the work of art. The content is not static or determined externally ('external' meaning, the outside of the subject, experience of subject and the relations between subject and her/his work of art). This explanation about content in work of art seems to be very subjective grounded, but Adorno abstains from mere subjective basis for understanding of work of art.

These considerations on the material, which is shaped by the subject's activity, lead Adorno to denounce mere subjectivism. Adorno says, "In artworks, form is aesthetic essentially insofar as it is an objective determination".¹⁷³(This objective determination refers to the historical determination of the material.)

Thus, one of the most important points which emerges from this discussion is the *objectivity* of truth content, and Adorno's autonomous work of art should also be understood in terms of the objectivity of the truth content. Thus, in the next section, I turn to a discussion of the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity to understand what Adorno means when he claims that the truth content is objective.

¹⁷³ Adorno, p.142.

4.2.2. Subjectivity and Objectivity

In the beginning of “Subject-Object” part in *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno emphasizes that we should be aware of different usages of the terms ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’. These parts are also important for revisiting and discussing further the positions of Kant and Hegel on the issue of subjectivity and objectivity in aesthetics.

Firstly, Adorno elaborates the concepts of ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ in terms of the reactions of the viewer towards the work of art; in other words, in terms of whether the subject’s relation to the artwork is able to establish an objective (truth-) content. Adorno notes that this question involves another conceptual distinction between what he calls “*intentio recta*” and “*intentio obliqua*”. “Variously the controversy may focus on the conclusion drawn from subjective reactions to artworks, in contrast to the *intentio recta* toward them...”¹⁷⁴

Intentio obliqua refers to the intention/feeling of the subject towards to the object. Contrary to *intentio obliqua*, *Intentio recta* refers to how an object (itself) affects the subject regardless of the subject’s intention towards the object—i.e., what the work of art “does” to the subject. In this sense of the terms ‘subjective’ and ‘objective’, Adorno points out that Kant is on the side of the subjective reaction/intention of the subject to the artworks. However, in Kant’s thought, this *intentio obliqua* is not similar with the artist’s intentions or motivations; nor is it understood or defined by the Aristotelian understanding of “affects provoked in the viewer” such as fear or sympathy. The “subject/subjective” in Kantian philosophy does not indicate the individual or private senses, pleasures, liking or disliking; ‘the subjective’ refers to all subjects and it is common to all subjects. In other words, we can say that “the subjective” in Kant is transcendental.

As we have seen in the Kant chapter, the universal subjective reaction is determined by the a priori structuring of our minds. In that sense, we realize that the discussion on subjectivity and objectivity in terms of the attitudes of the subject (*intentio obliqua*) will also inevitably involve the epistemological views of the philosopher under discussion. However, Adorno states that “the subjective query is itself more aesthetic

¹⁷⁴ Adorno, p.163.

than is the epistemological *intento obliqua* because the objectivity of the artwork is mediated in a manner that is qualitatively different from the objectivity of knowledge, being mediated more specifically through the subject”.¹⁷⁵ This point will be elaborated when we discuss the third sense of subjectivity and objectivity below.

In addition, the inquiry into the subjectivity/objectivity of the artwork cannot be resolved by reasserting the transcendental nature of the subject only because the objectivity involved in art is not only theoretical (as it is on the part of the viewer) but also practical (on the part of the artist, who literally transforms objectivity).¹⁷⁶

This question of the practical involvement of the artist (as a ‘subjective’ element) in the production of the artwork takes us to the second sense of the terms ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’. Adorno points out that a second sense in which the subjectivity and objectivity of the work of art can be questioned is according to the primacy of the objective and subjective elements *within the work of art*.

Hegel’s understanding of objectivity can help clarify this point. In the first sense specified (i.e., in terms of the viewer’s reaction to the work of art), Hegel’s aesthetic understanding can also be understood as objective. In other words, for Hegel, the work of art is objective from the point of view of the viewer since it is the representation of truth/Spirit; the viewer’s interpretation and feelings about the specific work of art cannot be arbitrary. However, in the second sense, Hegel defends the priority of Subjectivity (given that the Subject is understood as Spirit, the spirit as Subject). For this reason, Hegel defends romantic art, since the true spirit actualizes itself within the subject/subjective experience. Hegel points out that in the romantic form of art, the work of art represents the truth/spirit through the subject’s relationship with the objects/external worlds. This relationship denotes that the spirit actualizes and represents itself and “wins its objectivity” by “positing external reality as an existence inadequate to itself.”¹⁷⁷ So, the subject and subjective activity of the work of art should

¹⁷⁵ Adorno, p.164.

¹⁷⁶ Adorno, p.164.

¹⁷⁷ Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetic: Lectures on Fine Art*, p.517.

be considered as crucial point/step for the emergence of the representation of the truth/spirit.

The third sense in which the terms ‘subjectivity’ and ‘objectivity’ are used is in reference to the (objectivity of) judgments of taste. Here, what is at issue has a decisively axiological dimension: the question of the relativity or objective validity of value judgments. On this issue, Adorno reminds that judgments of beautiful for Kant are universal, which is a universality ensured by the subjective ground of all human subjects responding to the artwork.

In this sense, the axiological position/attitude of Kant is similar to his epistemological attitude in the first part of the subjective-objective discussion.

In the *Critique of Judgment*, Kant says; “Hence a judgment of taste is not a cognitive judgment and so is not a logical judgment but an aesthetic one, which we mean a judgment whose determining basis cannot be other than subjective”.¹⁷⁸

When Kant points out that the judgment of taste is subjective/or has a subjective basis, he does not mean that judgment of taste can be reduced to mere subjective feelings of the viewer or artist. Keeping in mind the epistemological discussion in first part, the subject in Kant also does not refer to the particular, determined subject, but it represents all subjects. The subject in Kant expects similar liking or disliking from everyone. S/he does not find “any private condition” which underlies this liking.¹⁷⁹

What is important to keep in mind here, however, is that the judgment is valid for everyone, “but without having a universality based on concepts”.¹⁸⁰ If this universality arises from concepts, Kant claims that there would be no feeling of pleasure and displeasure, regarding the presentation of the objects. However, our aesthetic judgments are all about our feelings of pleasure or displeasures regarding to the object and every subject agrees on this claim. “... since a judgment of taste involves the

¹⁷⁸ Kant, *Critique of Judgment*, p.44.

¹⁷⁹ Kant, p.54.

¹⁸⁰ Kant, p.54.

consciousness that all interest is kept out of it, it must also involve a claim to being valid for everyone.”¹⁸¹

Subjective universality, which is not based on concepts, should also not be confused with mere subjectivism. It is impossible to talk about “mere subjectivity” in Kant. When Kantian philosophy is tried to be reduced to mere subjectivity, his intention of salvaging objectivity through the subject is overlooked. Thus, subjective universality denotes the objectivity of aesthetic judgments (among the subjects). This is what Adorno calls “subjectively mediated objectivity”. Adorno says, “Analogously with the critique of reason, Kant would like to ground aesthetic objectivity in the subject rather than to displace the former by the latter”.¹⁸² We can say that “subjectively mediated objectivity”, which Adorno says for Kant aesthetic, is directly subjective universality in Kant’s *Critique of Judgment*.

In other words, Kant tries to salvage the universality, which is transcendental, and in his aesthetic theory he tries to approach a notion of universality, which does not depend on Concepts, that is; subjective universality or subjectively mediated objectivity. Although Kant refrains from basing this universality on something metaphysical and relies on subjectively mediated objectivity instead, this understanding of universality of Kant is criticized by Adorno.

Adorno stated that the universal and particular are “densely intertwined” in every artwork. He continues that when Kant defines the beautiful as “that which pleases universally without requiring a concept”, he is also aware of the link between the particular and universal. However, for Adorno, this universality cannot be thought without “necessity.” He says; “...necessity; that something “pleases universally” is equivalent to the judgment that it must please each and every person, for otherwise it would be merely an empirical statement”.¹⁸³ However, when Kant emphasizes the subjective universality, which is not based on concepts, the nexus/relationship between universality and necessity seems to be diminished.

¹⁸¹ Kant, p.54.

¹⁸² Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.164.

¹⁸³ Adorno, p.165.

The truth of the work of art for Adorno is not an epistemological question, but mainly an axiological (aesthetic) question. This means that Adorno seems to focus on/give more importance to the objective content/objectivity of the work of art. For Adorno, when we predicate “being true” of the work of art, this judgment calls for more than a merely epistemological agreement; it’s an axiological claim about its objective “truth” as an autonomous work of art.

Thus, Adorno does not defend subjectivity or objectivity within the framework of the three previous approaches to the work of art of Kant and Hegel. With the knowledge of all of these three different focuses on the terms “subjective” and “objective” (the concepts of subjectivity and objectivity) at the beginning of the “Subject-Object” section of *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno emphasizes: “In the artwork the subject is neither the observer nor the creator nor absolute spirit, but rather spirit bound up with, preformed and mediated by the object”.¹⁸⁴

Although Kant’s way of engaging objectivity through the subject remains theoretical and idealistic for Adorno, the role of subject in his philosophy affects Adorno’s aesthetic understanding. On this issue, Ross Wilson says; “What is crucial in Adorno’s reception of Kant’s aesthetics is recognizing the significance of subjective aesthetic experience for any attempt to come to terms with aesthetic objects.”¹⁸⁵ It is true that Adorno is affected/nourished by Kant in terms of subjectivity/subject in the creating the work of art and judgment(expression) of work of art, but the concept of universality, although it is subjectively mediated objectivity, is always open to the criticism for Adorno, which we already mention in previous pages.

So, although Adorno is not directly opposed to Kant in terms of searching for objective concepts, Kant’s way of engaging in this search and his transcendental understanding are not the characteristics of truth content which Adorno emphasizes. At this point, Hegel’s criticism of Kant and Hegel’s understanding of “subject/subjectivity” can explain the missing point in Kant subjectively mediated objectivity.

¹⁸⁴ Adorno, p.166.

¹⁸⁵ Wilson, “Dialectical Aesthetics and the Kantian Rettung: On Adorno’s Aesthetic Theory.”, p.63.

In Draft Introduction of *Aesthetic Theory*, Adorno says; “Certainly Hegel’s critique of Kant holds good. Beauty that is to be more than symmetrically trimmed shrubbery is no mere formula reducible to subjective functions of intuition; rather, beauty’s fundament is to be sought in the object.”¹⁸⁶Hegel sees the beauty as the representation of the Spirit/Idea and the Spirit can only show its existence in the object/objectivity of the work of art.¹⁸⁷ Moreover, in *Aesthetic*, Hegel says that the beauty is the Idea, so beauty and truth are in one way the same.¹⁸⁸In addition, the objective representation of the Spirit, Hegel does not ignore the subject and subjective experience in art. However, this subject, unlike the transcendental subject of Kant, does not constitute objectivity one-sidedly (as if the subject is standing on one side of the bridge over an epistemological chasm between the subject and object), but in practice, in constant and dialectic interaction with the object. Subjectivity and objectivity are always in mediation and interaction with each other in Hegel. This point (the relation/mediation between subjectivity and objectivity) will also be important for Adorno’s dialectical understanding.

Adorno says that in Hegel the work of art is objectively mediated subjectivity: “For the subject is in itself objectively mediated; by virtue of its artistic figuration its own-latent-objective content emerges”.¹⁸⁹Instead of subjectively mediated objectivity in Kant, the work of art in Hegel is objectively mediated subjectivity.

According to Adorno this (objectively mediated subjectivity) makes the content of the work of art externally determined. In other words, the content of the work of art is particular representation of the Spirit. In dialectical relationship between subject and object, Spirit or subject seems to actualize itself in its movement from the external world to itself. We cannot mention the unique content/uniqueness of the work of art because it is, at the same time, the Spirit itself. This is a rather “totalitarian” way of looking at the content.

¹⁸⁶ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.352.

¹⁸⁷ Hegel, *Hegel’s Aesthetic: Lectures on Fine Art*, p.110.

¹⁸⁸ Hegel, p.111.

¹⁸⁹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.356.

While Hegel and Adorno seem to be on the same page in terms of claiming the truth of the work of art, the understanding of truth in Hegel is different than Adorno. According to Adorno, in Hegel's "objectively mediated subjectivity", the subject does not have a genuinely dialectic relationship with the material in the work of art. Hegel claims; "everything existent has truth only in so far as it is an existence of the Idea".¹⁹⁰ In Adorno's words, "It is precisely in the artwork that, in Hegel's terms, content and material must always already be subject".¹⁹¹ This remark seems to contain also a critique of historical materialism in so far as historical materialism is influenced by Hegel. Although Adorno speaks of the truth of the work of art, his understanding of truth is different from Hegel's. It seems that he does not use the word as a representation or existence of Spirit in the work of art.

As said before, Adorno emphasizes that the content of a work of art cannot be reduced to the motivations or intentions of the artist. When the judgment of taste begins by particulars and the subjectivity of them, as in Hegel's aesthetic; the work of art is deprived of the claim to truth. Further, it cannot subsume under the notion of an Absolute Spirit that gets represented by the art work either. Kant, on the other hand, conceives objectivity as something transcendental and latent. So, his judgment of aesthetic remains at the theoretical level which means that it does not touch the particular, society, history or nature.

It is obvious that Adorno's approach to the debate on subject-object is different from the approaches in three previous debates, which he mentions in the "Subject-Object"¹⁹² section in *Aesthetic Theory*. Adorno does not find the answer of his questions about the objectivity and subjectivity of truth content by looking at Kant and Hegel. Moreover, seeing the work of art as either subjective or objective does not give a full understanding of the truth content of the work of art. What is important in these processes is the dialectical relationship between the subject and object in the experience of the work of art.

¹⁹⁰ Hegel, *Hegel's Aesthetic: Lectures on Fine Art*, p.110.

¹⁹¹ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.356.

¹⁹² Adorno, p.163.

4.2.3. Negative Dialectic

At this point, we should explain in what sense Adorno's understanding of the subject is different from the understanding of the subject in Kant or Hegel. It seems that the accounts of the "subject" and "object" in Kant and Hegel remain too schematized. The subject, for Adorno, is no transcendental subject, as Kant emphasizes, nor prior to the object as in the subject of romanticism, which Hegel defends. In their conceptions, the particularity of the material and content of the work of art lose their value or meaning. When Adorno speaks about the subject and subjectivity, the "historical subject" he has in mind is a particular living subject. His concern in emphasizing history and the "historical subject" is not to subsume the particular subject under a totalizing schematic concept, but to identify, retain and if possible return to the particular individual in a moment of history what is lost in such schematization.

This historical subject shows and experiences itself through history. Therefore, the truth content of the work of art changes/varies with the time/history and with the historical subject. History is not something external to the work of art. On the contrary, history is immanent to the work of art.

The development of art throughout history is "the articulation of a historical subject". In the context of music, as an example, Max Paddison explains this as follows: "For Adorno, therefore, "progress" of the musical material, as the dialectic of expressive needs and technical procedures, the movement of "objective spirit", actually means progress in the articulation of "historical subject" as mediated in musical structures".

193

The understanding of the work of art and its truth is a process and this process is the experience of the work of art's relation to its material, intention and appearance. Adorno points out, "Truth content becomes historical by the objectivation of correct consciousness in the work".¹⁹⁴ Paddison claims that the historical subject for Adorno is the "most advanced consciousness of its period".¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Max Paddison, "Adorno's Aesthetics of Music.", p.117.

¹⁹⁴ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.191.

¹⁹⁵ Max Paddison, "Adorno's Aesthetics of Music.", p.119.

At this point, we should mention the dialectical understanding of Adorno, which is negative dialectic and different from the dialectic of Hegel. In *Negative Dialectic*, Adorno emphasizes the main difference between his dialectic and Hegelian dialectic. Adorno claims that dialectics is not a pure method or reality “in the naïve sense of the word”.¹⁹⁶ He thinks that the dialecticism of Hegel has an affirmative character, which means that the outcome of the dialectic is always positive. In *Negative Dialectics*, the example Adorno uses to explain the affirmative character of Hegelian dialectic is that “non-I” is always “I” and cannot be other than “I” at the end of the dialectic. This is innocently brought to light by terminology, when simple predicative sentences are called “affirmative.” Adorno says that “the act of synthesis” in (idealism) cannot be otherwise and continues: “The will to identity works in each synthesis.”¹⁹⁷ Adorno sees the affirmative character of predicative sentences as identity-thought in dialectic. He also declares that the affirmative character and identity thinking in dialectic is the “primal form of ideology”.¹⁹⁸ In Hegel, explaining and identifying everything with the Subject or Spirit is a kind of idealism.

In contrast to the understanding of identity in Hegelian dialectic, Adorno thinks that identity-thinking does not truly characterizes the object because the object exceeds the mere characterizations and definitions imposed on it.¹⁹⁹ Adorno defends that the different sides in a dialectical relationship should remain what they are. He says; “... dialectic aims at what is different. It is as philosophy’s self-criticism that the dialectical motion stays philosophical”.²⁰⁰ For Adorno, the dialectic does not need any standpoint and it directly refers to what is nonidentical.²⁰¹

When this negative understanding of dialectic is applied to the relationship between the subject and object in the production or creation of a work of art, it is hard to separate objectivity and subjectivity. They are related with each other and in order to see this

¹⁹⁶ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.144.

¹⁹⁷ Adorno, p.147-148.

¹⁹⁸ Adorno, p.148.

¹⁹⁹ Pinkard, “What Is the Negative Dialectic ? Adorno ’ s Reevaluation of Hegel.”, p.5.

²⁰⁰ Adorno, *Negative Dialectics*, p.153.

²⁰¹ Adorno, p.5.

dialectical relationship between object and subject, we can look at the part, where Adorno touches upon this concern, in *Minima Moralia*.

In *Minima Moralia*, Adorno states that determining what is objective or subjective is very hard and complex. For him, the notions and meanings of “subjective” and “objective” have changed and been reversed, breaking the schematization of “subjective” and “objective” in Kant and Hegel. He points out that what is objective is “the non-controversial aspect of things”, “their unquestioned impression” and “the façade made up of categorized data” However, he says that all of them are in fact subjective, not objective. Conversely, “the specific experience of a matter” and “anything that breaches that façade”, which are always considered as subjective, have become objective. In fact, this is precisely what Adorno means by “the truth content” in the artwork: “breaking that façade”. He points out that in our aesthetic judgments, it seems that we have subjective judgments when we deeply react to and try to understand the “immanent formal law” of the work of art. However, our subjective reactions and understanding are objective.²⁰²

4.3. “Fantasy” in the Work of Art and “Truth Content”

In addition to the dialectic relationship between subject and object in the creation and the experience of the work of art, Adorno defends that the work of art is always in relationship with what is other.

Adorno gives an example of this dialectic relationship between the existing and non-existing that is brought out through the act of artistic production. He says; “If everything in artworks, including what is most sublime, is bound up with what exists, which they oppose, fantasy cannot be mere capacity to escape the existing by positing the nonexisting as if it existed”.²⁰³ He continues, “Art transcends the non-existing through stating the existing.” When Adorno mentions the nonexisting figures in the work of art, he gives an example of the concept of fantasy in the artwork. He focuses on “compositional style of the Adagio of Schubert’s string quintet” and the “eddies of

²⁰² Adorno, *Minima Moralia*, p.69-70.

²⁰³ Adorno, *Aesthetic Theory*, p.173.

light in Turner's seascapes" in order to state that there is a specifically technological fantasy in these artworks and the fantasy is actualized through their being brought into existence (string quintet and painting) in history.²⁰⁴ It seems that there is a dialectical relationship between the existing and non-existing figure in the work of art.

At this point, Adorno's explanation on the relationship between musical and empirical time can be remembered. Musical and empirical time can be elaborated as the nonexistent and the existing discussed in the previous paragraph. According to Adorno, musical time and empirical time are different things. He points out that when we concentrate on listening to the music, temporal events or empirical time does not disturb the "musical continuum", which is musical time. He continues that if a musician "interrupts a passage to repeat it" or "to pick it up at an earlier point", musical time is not affected by this and it remains indifferent.²⁰⁵ Musical and empirical times remain on their own sides, but they are in also a dialectic relation or interaction with each other. In other words, although empirical time does not interrupt or disturb the musical time, musical time does not exist without the dialectical relationship with the empirical time. Musical time negates itself from the empirical time, but it inevitably includes the empirical time. (it is not a pure negation.)

This example also denotes other important point in the aesthetic of Adorno. He emphasizes that the content of the music/musical piece is not "external to musical time but essential to it, as time is essential to content; content is everything that transpires in time".²⁰⁶

Although the Subject produces/approaches the work of art within history, to which he/she belongs, this does not mean that the work of art is imprisoned in the determinate time of the history. The work of art should be able to say something more for the past and future because it also includes the history in it. For example, the painting *The Cliff Walk at Pourville* of Claude Monet does not just represent the scene from 19th century. It overcomes its time, reaches us and make us to feel the beauties of the scene. Adorno says; "Of course such variation takes place, and artworks of quality, for example, are

²⁰⁴ Adorno, p.173.

²⁰⁵ Adorno, p.137.

²⁰⁶ Adorno, p.147-148.

able to strip themselves of their outer layers in the course of history. In the process, however, truth content- quality- does not fall prey to historicism”.²⁰⁷

In this dialectical process, artworks are elaborated and understood as true or false because their experiences can be true or false. True and false experience of the work of art is related with the relationship between the work of art and the society because artwork and truth content are not considered apart from their relation to dynamics and changes in society. However, society is not an external factor which affects the work of art. In other words, we can say that these experiences (true or false) are not added externally to the artworks. Social determinations or factors should be taken into consideration for explaining truth content in work of art. The form-content and subjectivity-objectivity debate of the truth content of the work of art are not considered apart from the society, culture and history.

At this point, Adorno’s criticism of Brecht can explain Adorno’s way of looking at the relationship between society/social and the work of art. Inevitably, this relation also explains the role and place of history in the truth content of the work of art.

4.4. The Criticism of Brecht and “Autonomy”

The criticism of current social and political situations are the subjects of Brecht’s theatre. He uses these subjects in a didactic way and style to draw the attention of society and audiences. We can see the example of the didactic way/attitude in the dramatization of Gorky’s *The Mother* or *The Measures Taken*. In ‘Commitment’, Adorno points out that in *The Measures Taken*, which Brecht “glorifies the Party”, he also educates the audience to a new attitude.²⁰⁸

Brechtian theatre includes an aim to affect the audience and society. In this aim, however, Brecht does not directly take the social and political reality in his plays. It means that he deconstructs/changes the real situations and characters. He tries to simplify complicated sense and effect mechanism of fascism, the reason behind it,

²⁰⁷ Adorno, p.191.

²⁰⁸ Adorno, “Commitment.”, p.306.

mainly by making use of trivial characters and scenes. He says; “For the sake of political commitment, political reality is trivialized: which then reduces the political effect”.²⁰⁹ What is important for Brecht is this political effect on the audience. For example, in the Brecht’s comedy of the resistible rise of the great dictator Arturo Ui, trivial gangster organization which is cabbage trust is used for the conspiracy of wealthy and powerful. The powerful/complicated sense and effect of the fascism is tried to be given through trivial characters and scenes. However, deconstruction and changing reality oversimplify the political meaning, which Brecht intends to give his audience. This simplicity, for Adorno, turns out to be bad politics. It is true that audience begin to participate to the theatre, but political correctness begins to decrease.

Adorno also gives an example of Brecht’s “Mother Courage” to emphasize the relationship between bad politics and bad arts. Originally, Mother Courage is a character from Grimmelshausen’s novel. Brecht’s theatre *Mother Courage and Her Children* inspired by the Mother Courage in the original novel. However, Brecht simply equal the character from novel to his theatre and as a result of this simple equation, “false social model” and “dramatic implausibility” emerge.²¹⁰ Adorno says, “...simplistic equation of Thirty Years’ War with a modern war excludes precisely what is crucial for the behavior and fate of Mother Courage in Grimmelshausen’s original drama.” The society of Thirty Years’ War is not equal to modern times/capitalist society. The problem arises within the incompatibility between the situations and problems in Thirty Years’ War and the capitalist society. In other words, societies and the problems are different in these two periods. Adorno says,

Because the society of the Thirty Years’ War was not the functional capitalist society of modern times, we cannot even poetically stipulate a closed functional system in which the lives and deaths of private individuals directly reveal economic laws [...] Bad politics becomes bad art and vice versa.²¹¹

In addition to this deconstruction and changing of the real characters and situations, the play is always interrupted (by someone) in Brecht’s epic theatre. This is alienation effect which we have seen the general characteristics in the Introduction Chapter. This

²⁰⁹ Adorno, p.308.

²¹⁰ Adorno, p.310.

²¹¹ Adorno, p.310.

deconstruction itself constitute a new understanding of form in Brecht's theatre. Walter Benjamin explains the interruption in Brecht's theatre by saying;

A very crude example: a family row. The mother is just about to pick up a pillow o hurl at he daughter, the father is opening a window to call a policeman. At this moment a stranger appears at the door. [...] In other words: the stranger is suddenly confronted with certain conditions: rumped bedclothes, open window, a devastated interior.²¹²

In this example, the interruption of the events by the stranger or (the distance between stranger and the events) awaken the audience's interest. This is the form (alienation effect) of Brechtian theatre and Adorno finds something valuable in this understanding of Brechtian form because form turns out to be autonomous. Further, the form or alienation effect in the theatre emerges as a result of the dialectical relationship between form and content. In other words, the alienation effect is already contained in the play. (The form is not added externally.) However, the autonomy of the form (alienation effect) in Brechtian theatre turns out to be used for the aim/purpose (didactic theatre) and it loses its autonomy.

Adorno always emphasizes that the experience in an artwork is an internal experience and the truth content of artworks always "participates in the untruth which is external to it". Just as the subject and object become reversed, truth and untruth have also become reversed throughout ideological misconceptions and processes of socialization and production.

The autonomy in a work of art for Adorno is related with its truth content. Harding points out that the aesthetic autonomy in Adorno occurs with the inevitable movement of history and Adorno generally uses autonomy to defend art against all reifications, fetishism and transcendental understanding.²¹³ (which we have seen his criticism in the introduction chapter) Moreover, the work of art does not have aims for defending classes or rights of some specific groups. This propagandist approach, which is also mentioned in Introduction Chapter and 'Commitment', should not be an intention of the autonomous work of art, but the political content and approaches inevitably are in the autonomous work of art without any intention because a true art work "mirrors"

²¹² Benjamin, *Understanding Brecht*, p.5.

²¹³ Harding, "Historical Dialectics and the Autonomy of Art in Adorno's Aesthetic Theory.", p.184.

the society in which it is produced. To put it more simply, Adorno seems to think that the Hegelian /dialectic conception of history is too optimistic (and schematic), that reconciliation is not really taking place or will not take place in as simplistic a manner as the didactic artists presume. Thus, a truly progressive work of art may be one that resists being taken up by the *Zeitgeist* (or the presumed *Zeitgeist* dictated by a theoretical external Content/Spirit). Through this resistance against a dialectic reconciliation, its autonomous and seemingly apolitical existence may be more honestly mirroring the true alienated state of society and the artist.

Adorno gives an example from Picasso's *Guernica* painting in order to highlight the relationship between autonomous work of art and society-history. He points out that when an officer of the Nazi occupation saw *Guernica*, he asked: "Did you do that?" and Picasso answered; "No you did." Adorno says, "Autonomous works of art, like this painting, firmly negate empirical reality, destroy the destroyer, that which merely exists and by merely existing endlessly reiterates guilt".²¹⁴ Autonomous work of art appears to be free from all economic and political determinations and situations, but it includes what is political and social in itself. At this point, Adorno emphasizes that he agrees with Kant about that the work of art does not have an end, but "it is an end".²¹⁵ He continues that the autonomous work of art does not depend on the culture industry "popularization and adaptation to the market", but it inevitably criticizes them.

At the end of 'Commitment', Adorno summarizes his point by saying; "Nevertheless, an emphasis on autonomous works is itself sociopolitical in nature".²¹⁶ This autonomy represents its own truth; the autonomous work of art is not shaped by external aims and purposes. Its truth content determines itself; nevertheless, the work of art cannot close its eyes to the society and history since it is shaped dialectically in a certain socio-historical environment. Thus, Adorno's conception of autonomous work of art is neither in the form or the content of the artwork alone. There is no superiority relationship between form and content. Form is shaped by content internally and this

²¹⁴ Adorno, "Commitment.", p.313.

²¹⁵ Adorno, p.313.

²¹⁶ Adorno, p.318.

truth content is not imposed on the work of art from the outside, but work of art always searches its truth by looking at its own dynamics and relations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

This thesis tried to explain and interpret Adorno's conception of "autonomous work of art", which he uses especially within his debates with Benjamin and Brecht, by means of his conception of "truth content". For this reason, the thesis also involves a comprehensive discussion of Adorno's conception of "truth content". However, Adorno does not discuss his understanding of "autonomous work of art" and "truth content" only within the debates in the Frankfurt School. He articulates these terms in his book *Aesthetic Theory* by analyzing Kant and Hegel's philosophies within a more general context.

In the introduction chapter of this thesis, my analysis began with a presentation of the debates between Adorno, Benjamin and Brecht on "committed art" and "autonomous art" and the general background of the Frankfurt School to understand the emergence of the notion of "autonomous art" in Adorno's writings.

In Chapter II, I focused on Kant's understanding of aesthetics and the beautiful, which affect the understanding of "autonomy" in Adorno. To understand Kant's aesthetic understanding better, I tried to articulate his philosophy in general by analyzing the relevant and important points in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. In chapter III, I presented Hegel's philosophy and I tried to articulate his understanding of art and aesthetic. In the last chapter, I turned back to Adorno's *Aesthetic Theory* and analyzed the notion of truth content. I specifically focused on the discussion of enigmaticalness of the work of art, which is essential for understanding the emergence of truth content, and then I continued with the detailed examination of the notion of truth content.

Adorno uses the conception of "autonomous work of art" against Benjamin's and Brecht's understandings of art (specifically "committed art"). To understand this contemporary debate between them better, I tried to present the general background and the formation of the Frankfurt School. After presenting the background of the

Frankfurt School, I mainly focused on critical theory since critical theory is the Frankfurt School's method of analysis (or another name for it). To explain this approach, I followed Horkheimer's distinction between traditional theory and critical theory. Unlike traditional theory, critical theory does not neglect to take the social and historical processes into account when theorizing. In other words, critical theory focuses on the historical character of the individual (perceiving organ) and the object perceived. Then, I searched for the reasons behind the emergence of critical theory. It is directly related with the "Marxian tradition of ideology critique." The rise of capitalism and emergence of the new modes of productions create a big economic and social gap between classes. So, the economic power of the ruling class turns out to be a social, political and religious power in society. In other words, the ruling class creates its own social and cultural dominion. This changing pattern of culture gives rise to "mass" or "popular" culture, which Adorno and Horkheimer later call "the culture industry".

Mass or popular culture simply refers to standardized production, created under the ownership/monopoly of the ruling class. In culture industry, all production becomes similar to each other. Although the individuals seem to have the right to choose what they want, they are enchained by the culture industry. Adorno defends that the work of art loses its autonomy under the culture industry. At this point, in order to understand this claim better, I looked at the understanding of art of Benjamin and Brecht.

Benjamin believes that although the understanding of art changes during the age of mechanical reproduction, the outcome of this change is not necessarily negative. Mechanical reproduction diminishes the aura or authenticity of the work of art, but the political tendency of the work of art emerges as a result of this destruction. For him, the work of art becomes accessible for everyone and the purpose of it can thus be transformed into a political purpose. Benjamin strongly believes that the artist should express his/her political tendency in the work of art and his/her aim should be changing the attitudes of the audience. Because of that reason, he feels sympathetic to Brecht, especially Brechtian epic theatre, which has an educational role to create new ways of responding for the audience. Specifically, the alienation effect of Brechtian theatre is important to attract the attention of the audience. The aim of the alienation effect is to

remind the people that they are in the theatre and watching a play. This is important for the message of the theatre because the alienation effect reminds the audience of the real political situation in society.

Adorno strongly criticizes the political tendency of the work of art, which is defended by Benjamin and Brecht. In “Commitment”, he uses the term “autonomy of the work of art” against Benjamin and Brecht. In the introduction chapter I merely tried to summarize the main points of Adorno’s criticism against them, because I discussed it in more detail at the end of chapter IV. Adorno believes that Brecht simplifies the political truth in order to reach and affect the audience. For Adorno, this leads to “bad politics and bad art”, which is elaborated in detail in Chapter IV.

Within the debates between Adorno and Benjamin, the term “autonomy” has the risk of being directly understood as “art for art’s sake” (elitism in art). However, autonomy for Adorno does not mean a detachment from society in such a straightforward sense. It indicates certain sociopolitical dynamics. In order to clarify Adorno’s conception of autonomy, the need for a close reading of *Aesthetic Theory* and the historical relationship between Kant, Hegel and Adorno arises. So, I tried to analyze both Kant and Hegel’s philosophies and their understanding of aesthetics before examining *Aesthetic Theory*.

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant focuses on the structure of the human mind and theoretical knowledge. In this *Critique*, Kant seems to be concerned with showing the limits of Reason. In the *Critique of Practical Reason*, he dwells on moral judgments, specifically what ought to exist. It is often pointed that there is a gap between the two *Critiques*, and Kant’s *Critique of Judgment* or his aesthetic theory can be read/seen as an attempt to bridge this gap. Before analyzing the *Critique of Judgment* and Kant’s judgment of beautiful, I focused on the *Critique of Pure Reason*, since it gives the basic and main points of Kant’s philosophy in general.

The first *Critique* is also important to see the relationship between the subject and object in terms of the subject’s capacity of knowing the object. Kant focuses on the two main sources of knowledge, which are sensibility and understanding. He claims that intuition is possible only if the object is given to us. The object is given to us through sensibility and subsumed under the categories of the Understanding. So, through the Understanding, intuitions become thoughts. Kant states that all

appearances and phenomena are given to us *a posteriori*, but their forms are in our mind *a priori* (space and time) as distinguished from the experience. In addition, in this *Critique*, Kant searches for the possibility of synthetic a priori knowledge. As a response to Hume, who states that in order to observe causality, we need to empirically experience it, Kant solves the problem of Hume's inductive skepticism by saying that there must be an 'a priori origin' for this causality and goes on to argue that the certainty of scientific knowledge is based on the transcendental categories of the Understanding. Thus, the synthetic a priori shows that the subject has an active role in the process of knowing the object. This point is also important for Kant's aesthetic understanding. After highlighting these points, I focused on the *Critique of Judgment*.

Before articulating Kant's judgment of beautiful, I focused on his distinction between determinate and reflective judgments, which appear to "dilute" the distinction between the Faculties of Sensibility and the Understanding. Determinate judgments mean that the particular is subsumed under the universal. However, in reflective judgments, the particular searches for its own universal law. In reflective judgments, the faculty of sensibility and the understanding are brought into play with each other and because of that reason, the *Critique of Judgment* (reflective judgment) can be seen as pointing to possibilities for overcoming the strict compartmentalization of the faculties of Reason in Kant's philosophy. Moreover, reflective judgment is crucial for understanding Kant's subjective universality in his aesthetics.

In the judgment of the beautiful, what is important is how our judgments are subjective and universal at the same time. In order to understand this point and his aesthetics better, I specifically focused on the first three moments of the four moments of the beautiful, which seem to affect Adorno's conception of autonomous work of art. In disinterestedness (the first moment), Kant points out that we should be devoid of all interest when we judge something to be beautiful or not. He compares the liking of the beautiful, the good and the agreeable and he says that liking for the good and the agreeable are always related with interest. Liking the beautiful does not involve any inclination or interest, like Adorno's conception of autonomous art. So, when we find something beautiful, we do not need the determinate concept of it. With this claim (the first moment), I tried to show the close relationship between Kant's first moment and Adorno's understanding of autonomy.

The second moment is subjective universality. Kant believes that when someone finds something beautiful, he/she expects everyone to agree with this claim. However, this is different from what he calls agreeableness, or it is not merely a general agreement. Yet this subjective universality is not based on universal concepts, either, but it is related with reflective judgment, which searches for its own universal law. The subjective universality is elaborated by Adorno as “subjectively mediated objectivity” in *Aesthetic Theory*. Although Adorno criticizes the understanding of the transcendental subject in Kant, he defends the objectivity of Kant’s aesthetic understanding.

The third moment is purposiveness without purpose. This moment is also important for understanding Kant’s aesthetic judgments, which are not based on determinate concepts, and Adorno’s autonomous work of art. For Kant, purposiveness of form in a beautiful object does not mean that there is any purpose or specific function of the object, but the form of the aesthetic object seems to invoke some purposiveness in our mind. The purposiveness without purpose is also important for Adorno’s discussion of the enigmaticalness of the work of art and truth content.

After highlighting the important points in Kant’s aesthetic, which have influenced Adorno when he uses the term “autonomous” in relation to the work of art, I focused on Hegel’s philosophy in general and his aesthetics.

Before presenting Hegel’s aesthetic theory, I mainly focused on his understanding of dialectic, which requires background information on his logic, the individual, particular and universal and his conception of *Geist*.

In order to explain Hegel’s dialectic understanding, I closely examined the meditation on Being, Nothing and Becoming. Hegel uses the concept of “pure being”, which does not have any determination with respect to other, as a beginning for philosophy. However, Hegel states that meditation on Being inevitably leads to “Nothing” since we cannot go beyond the immediacy of being when we think of immediate, pure being. So, Being passes over into Nothing, and Nothing passes over into Being, and Becoming appears as a new category, which includes/harbors Being and Nothing. In Becoming, Being and Nothing do not lose their differences and relations, but they constitute a determinate unity. This movement of being-nothing-becoming mainly shows Hegel’s understanding of dialectic.

After focusing on the dialectic understanding in the beginning of Hegel's *Science of Logic*, I presented his dialectic by focusing on the dialectic relationship between Being-Essence-Concept. For Hegel, Being (in itself) is the power, capacity or potentiality and it actualizes itself only by mediation against the "other". (for-another) Being returns to itself from the other by sublation ("Aufhebung") of the others and it becomes "being in itself and for itself". Essence (actualization of Being) appears to be the mediated term between Being and Concept. Hegel emphasizes that this movement is the movement of Being itself. In order to understand "the movement of being itself" better, I compared the method of Hegelian dialectic and others (specifically Socratic dialectic method). As distinct from the Socratic dialogue, which just presents the contrary sides and tries to find the consensus between contradictory positions, Hegel's dialectic method does not remain at just understanding and refuting the other side in the conversation. In other words, it is a method, which includes the contradictions of counter sides. However, this contradiction is not stated just for refuting the other sides, but it moves towards a more comprehensive unity. In the light of this comparison between Hegelian dialectic and Socratic dialectic, I turned back to the relation between Being-Essence and Concept. So, the pure being should be mediated by something other than itself and the Essence (second division) is introduced by Hegel. I examined the Essence by stating its three grades; reflection, appearance and actuality respectively.

The Concept, which is the most important division, appears as a unity of Being and Essence. It is the unity and totality, but it does not refer to transcendental universality. On the contrary, it is concrete universality, which I explained in detail in section 3.2.

Concrete universality appears as rejection/criticism of the abstract and formal understanding of the universal. On the contrary to Kantian understanding of universality, which remains abstract, Hegel formulates concrete universality as more dynamic and holistic. In other words, concrete universality refers to the dialectical relationship between the differences in particulars. In order to analyze concrete universality better, I examined what Hegel understands by the singular, particular and universal in detail. What is important for the relationship between the singular, particular and universal is that the universal and particular represent themselves in the singularity (*one* or *this*). Without the singular, the universal remains abstract and indeterminate. So, there is always a mediation between the singular, the particular and

the universal, and the singular appears to be the concrete representation of the universal. This is the most important point/conclusion, which is inferred from Section 3.2 (Concrete universality) for Hegel's aesthetic.

Geist (Spirit) is arguably the most important notion in Hegel's philosophy. Hegel states that there are three subdivisions of Spirit, which are objective spirit, subjective spirit and absolute spirit. Absolute spirit appears as a kind of reconciliation between objective and subjective spirit and it has three moments, which are Art, Religion and Philosophy. *Geist* is the unity, which includes the differences of particulars. However, it is not the totality of individuals and particulars. In light of Solomon's reading of Hegel, I tried to show that in this conception of Geist, the self does not refer to a particular subject's senses and feelings anymore, but it emerges in the context of the subject's relationship with nature and history. The important point in the understanding of Geist is that the self actualizes and realizes itself as belonging to the universal spirit. It can be said that the relationship between self and other selves can be understood by understanding/realizing the dialectical relationship between them. Actually, this is the actualization/recognition of the self, which returns to itself from the external world/other. This is what Adorno later calls "objectively mediated subjectivity" in relation to Hegel's aesthetics.

After presenting Hegel's philosophy in general, I focused on his aesthetic theory. I tried to show the common ideas of art, which he presents in his *Aesthetic* book, in order to develop a general idea of Hegel's aesthetics. Hegel believes that the work of art is the particular human activity and this work of art should be expressed in the external world. The most important point in his aesthetic is that the work of art originates from the Spirit. The Spirit is a kind of answer or explanation for the inner value of the work of art.

Hegel strongly believes that the understanding of objective beauty is important for the work of art. Objective beauty is directly related with the work of art as a representation of Spirit. This also shows that the work of art is an end in itself. He believes that mere imitation of nature or producing the work of art for fame or honor do not touch the human spirit. He wants to find the aim of the work of art in its power to affect our feelings through the representation of Spirit.

Hegel states that the individual work of art represents more than its particular existence. At this point, I gave an example from the Greek tragedy *Antigone* to highlight that the characters in *Antigone* represent themselves as a part of the universal truth or Spirit. In other words, for Hegel, the Idea shows itself in the external world. So, the work of art brings this reality/appearance of Spirit in the external world. This is very similar to his understanding of concrete universality, in which individual appears as a representation of the universal.

Hegel specifically focuses on the romantic form of art to show that the Spirit wins/actualizes itself and its objectivity in the external world. I specifically compared the symbolic, classic and romantic forms of art, which Hegel explained in his *Aesthetic* book in detail. So, I tried to show that the work of art represents more than the subjective feelings and emotions of the artist by examples from the history of art (such as *Antigone* and William Turner's paintings.) At the end of this section, I tried to show that the understanding of art and judgment of beauty in Kant and Hegel are different. Although the judgments of beauty are subjectively grounded in Kant, Hegel's understanding of art and his criticism of beauty are objective since he sees the beautiful as representation of truth and Spirit.

In the last chapter (Adorno), I turned back to Adorno's conception of autonomous work of art. I began the chapter by saying that Adorno's understanding of art/work of art is not understood within the limits of mere explanation, definitions or description. It should be understood within its relationship with history and society. As I have stated the strong relationship between the concept of autonomous work of art and the concept of truth content in the introduction chapter, I directly examined the concept of truth content in following chapters. I briefly explained where truth content first appears in *Aesthetic Theory* and then I focused on the enigmaticalness of the work of art in order to show how his conception of truth content emerges. Enigma appears as a mysterious concept in the work of art. Adorno discussed the ways/solutions for solving the enigma of the work of art. Although understanding the form (structure) of the work of art, which indicates a purpose/aim of the work of art, and trying to create/replay the work of art by mimetic comportment, which refers to imitation of the work of art, seem to solve the enigma in the work of art, they do not solve the enigma, but create it again. At this point, Adorno believes that the solution of the enigma should come from each

work of art itself. His approximation to the solution of the enigma is reminiscent of “purposiveness without purpose” in Kant’s aesthetic because Adorno also believes that the work of art is not created for any specific aim or purpose. This explanation refers to his understanding/conception of truth content. He states that truth content is the objective solution of the enigma. However, his explanation of truth content through the enigmaticalness of the work of art does not seem to be enough for a complete understanding of truth content. In order to examine the truth content better, I analyzed the concepts of form, content, material, subjectivity and objectivity in detail.

Although Adorno seems to give an importance to the form of the work of art, he does not see the form apart from its relationship with the content and material because he believes that every work of art constitutes its form in itself. This means that the form is not thought apart from the subjective aim and feelings of the artist who works on a certain material. However, Adorno refrains from falling into mere subjectivism in his account of the work of art, since the whole process of its production is determined by history and society. In parallel, the content of the work of art is not static and determined externally or arbitrarily. So, Adorno states that the relationship between form and content is dynamic and determined by the dialectical relationship between them.

The most important point that emerges from the form and content debate is the objectivity of truth content. To make better sense of exactly in what sense a work of art has an objective truth content for Adorno, in section 4.2.2, I presented his approaches to the understanding of subjectivity and objectivity in *Aesthetic Theory* and tried to show his criticisms of Kant and Hegel on the question of the subjectivity and objectivity of the work of art.

After analyzing the subjectivity and objectivity of the work of art, I stated that although Adorno does not directly oppose Kant in terms of searching for an objective concept, he directly criticizes Kant’s way of engaging in this search (Kant’s transcendental understanding.). Adorno also criticizes Hegel since he states that the objectively mediated subjectivity reveals the content to be in fact externally determined. To explain Adorno’s criticism of Hegel better I tried to explain Adorno’s understanding of negative dialectic, which is different from the Hegelian dialectic. Unlike Hegel, Adorno does not see an affirmative character in dialectic, which, according to Adorno,

results in a form of ideology. Adorno's aim here is that he wants to break the schematization of the "subjective" and "objective" understandings in Hegel and Kant.

In order to further elaborate Adorno's understanding of negative dialectic, I focused on his discussion on the dialectical relationship between the non-existent and existent figures in the work of art through his understanding of fantasy.

In the last section (4.4) of this chapter, I turned back to the debate between "autonomous work of art" and "committed art", which was discussed in the introduction chapter through Brecht and Benjamin. I presented Adorno's criticism of Brecht (epic, didactic theatre of Brecht). Adorno strongly criticizes Brecht in terms of his attempt to simplify the politic content in order to reach every type of audience and the alienation affect, which turns out be used for the political aim/purpose. However, Adorno believes that the autonomy in art represents its own truth (and the truth and untruth of the society it exists in) without looking for external aim and purposes. So, defending the autonomy of art is not a defense of art for art's sake or pure detachment from social or political situations.

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APPENDICES

A. TURKISH SUMMARY/TÜRKÇE ÖZET

Bu tezde Theodor Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışını Estetik Teori kitabı çerçevesinde ele almaya çalıştım. Sanatın ve sanat eserinin otonomluğu, Adorno'nun içeriğin gerçekliği kavramından bağımsız düşünülemediği için içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının detaylı analizi, Adorno'nun sanatın otonomluğundan ne kastetmek istediğini detaylı bir biçimde açıklayacaktır.

Sanatın otonom olduğu iddiası ilk kez kendini Frankfurt Okulu'ndaki estetik ve sanat tartışmalarında gösterir. Bu nedenle, ilk önce Adorno, Benjamin ve Brecht arasındaki temel tartışmaya bakarak bu tartışmada Adorno'nun savunduğu otonom sanat anlayışı ve içeriğin gerçekliği kavramını Estetik Teori kitabı ve daha detaylı olarak Adorno'nun Kant ve Hegel ile olan tarihsel ilişkisi ışığında incelemeye çalıştım.

Kapitalizmin yükselişi ile beraber değişen toplum, kültür ve sanat anlayışı, Frankfurt Okulu'nun temel eleştirisi konularından birini oluşturur. Frankfurt Okulu'nun eleştirel yöntemi Kritik Teori olarak adlandırılır. Matematiksel ve sembolik açıklamalara ve formel-çıkarımsal akıl yürütme yöntemlerine bağlı olan geleneksel teorinin aksine kritik teori, özneyi ve öznenin tarihselliğini, toplumsal durum ve dinamiklerini önemseyen bir yöntem olarak benimser. Bu bir bakıma, değişen ekonomik, sosyal, kültürel yapıyla oluşan ve belli bir sınıfın hakimiyeti altında belirlenen ve şekillenen ideoloji anlayışının eleştirisidir. Bir başka deyişle, yönetici sınıfı (burjuva sınıfı) kendi egemenliği altında sosyal ve kültürel bir alan/yaşam tarzı oluştururken, her alandaki üretim şekil ve ilişkilerini belirlemekte ve bir bakıma bireyin/öznenin yaşam tarzı ve alanını belirlemektedir. Birey kendini bu yaşam alanında istediğini seçmekte özgür olarak görse de aslında özgür değildir; aksine ona sunulanlar içinde özgürlüğünü ve biricikliğini kaybetmiştir. Popüler kültür/Kitle kültürü topluma birbirine benzer ürünler ve fikirler sunar. Bu benzerliğin/aynılığın çatısı altında sanat, medya veya eğlence endüstrisi de aynı ürünler ve fikirler etrafında şekillenecek ve tek seslilik

benimsenecektir. Adorno, sanatın otonomluğunun kültür endüstrisinde (Horkheimer ve Adorno'nun popüler kültür yerine kullandıkları terim) kendini gösteremeyeceğini savunur. Adorno'nun bu iddiası Benjamin ve Brecht'in savunduğu politik içerikli ve amaçlı sanat anlayışı üzerinden daha net anlaşılacaktır.

Benjamin'e göre, teknik araçlarla yeniden üretme ve çoğaltma çağı (kapitalizmin sonucu) her zaman olumsuz bir gelişme olarak anlaşılacak zorunda değildir. Yeniden üretimle beraber sanatın özgünlük veya otantikliği (şimdi ve buradalık) kaybolursa dahi, her kesime ulaşmaya başlayan sanat eseri politik olana yönelmeye ve politik amaç taşımaya başlayacaktır. Bu yönüyle Benjamin, kendisini Brecht'e ve Brecht'in didaktik tiyatrosuna yakın bulur. Brecht tiyatrosu, izleyiciyi politik anlamda bir hareket içine sokma ve onu etkileme amacındadır. İzleyen herkesin tiyatroyu içeriğini ve amacını anlaması maksadıyla Brecht, içeriği olabildiğince basite indirger ve yabancılaşma efektini kullanır. Yabancılaşma efekti, izleyicinin izlediğinin bir tiyatro oyunu olduğunu farkına varmasını sağlayan her türlü efekttir. Devam eden bir sahnenin bir anda bir şarkıyla veya bir söz ile kesilmesi ya da oyuncunun bir anda izleyiciye soru sorarak onunla diyaloga geçmesi, yabancılaşma efektine verilecek örneklerden sadece birkaçıdır.

Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışı, 'Commitment' metninde Benjamin ve Brecht eleştirisi üzerinden sunulmaya çalışılır. Bu metinde Adorno sanat eserinin politik bir mesaj iletmeye amacıyla yaratılmaması gerektiğini savunur. Özellikle sanat eserindeki biçim ve içerik birliği tartışmalarında Adorno, Brecht'in yabancılaşma efektini otonom bir form geliştirmesi açısından olumsuz da eğitici bir amaç taşıması sebebiyle eleştirecektir. Aynı şekilde Benjamin'in sanat eserinin devrimsel/devrimci bir içerik ve nitelik taşıması gerektiği inancı da yine Adorno tarafından katı bir şekilde eleştirilecektir.

Adorno'nun Benjamin ve Brecht'i bu yönden eleştirmesi, kendisinin otonom sanat anlayışını toplumdaki ve tarihten bağımsız elitist bir sanat anlayışına dayandırdığı şeklinde yorumlanabilir. Commitment'in sonunda Adorno, otonom sanat eserinin kaçınılmaz bir şekilde sosyo-politik olanı içerdiğini söylese de bu metin kendisinin otonom sanat anlayışını yeterince anlamak ve değerlendirmek için yeterli olmayacaktır. Bu nedenle ilerleyen bölümlerde Adorno'nun Estetik Teori kitabını detaylı bir biçimde inceleyerek Kant ve Hegel felsefeleri ve özellikleri estetikleri

üzerinden içeriğin gerçekliği kavramını üç filozof arasındaki tarihsel ilişkiler bağlamında değerlendirerek tartışmaya çalıştım.

İkinci bölümde (Kant bölümü), Kant'ın Yargı Yetisi'nin Eleştirisi'nin (özellikle estetik anlayışının) Adorno'nun otonomi anlayışını etkileyen yönlerini analiz etmeden önce, Saf Aklın Eleştirisi'ndeki bazı temel kavramları Kant'ın estetiğini daha iyi anlamak adına sundum. Yargı Yetisi'nin Eleştirisi (Üçüncü Kritik), Saf Aklın Eleştirisi (Birinci Kritik) ve Pratik Aklın Eleştirisi (Üçüncü Kritik) arasındaki uyumsuzluğu kapatan veya çözüm arayan Kritik olarak da okunabilir. İlk Kritik'te Kant, aklın sınırları çerçevesinde bir bilme eyleminden/durumundan bahseder. Bu Kritik'te akıl fenomenal dünyanın sınırları içerisinde hareket eder. İkinci Kritik'te ise Kant, ahlaki moral yasalarının mümkünlüğü üzerinde durarak istenç olarak karşımıza çıkan aklın fenomenal dünyanın sınırları dışarısında hareket edebileceğini vurgular. İlk Kritik'teki önemli terim ve kavramlar diğer Kritik'lerin (özellikle üçüncü Kritik'in) anlaşılması için önemli olduğundan bu bölüm Kant'ın temel felsefesini anlamak ile başlayacaktır.

İlk Kritik'te bilgi ve bilme esnasındaki özne ve nesne ilişkisi le alınır. Kant bilginin iki kaynağı olarak Sensibilite/Duyarlılık (Sensibility) ve Anlama (Understanding) yetilerini öne sürer. Kant'a göre, nesne özneye sensibilite yoluyla iletilir ve bu nesne öznedeki anlama yetisinin kategorileri altında toplanır. Burada önemli olan bir başka nokta ise *a priori* ve *a posteriori* arasındaki farktır. Kant, bütün görüngülerin (fenomenlerin) *a posteriori* olarak; yani gözlem ve deneyim yoluyla özneye verildiğini savunurken, verilen nesnelerin formunun öznelde (akılda) *a priori* (zaman ve mekan formunda) olarak bulunduğunu savunur. Bu noktada Kant'ın yaptığı bir başka ayırım ise sentetik ve analitik yargılar arasındaki ayırımdır. Kant' göre analitik yargılarda, yüklem özne tarafından hali hazırda içerilmiştir ve yüklem, bilgimizi genişletmez. Analitik yargıların aksine sentetik yargılarda özne yüklemi içermez. Yani eylem, özneye yeni bir bilgi ve özellik ekler. Kant'a göre tüm analitik yargılar *a priori*, tüm *a posteriori* yargılar ise sentetiktir. Kant için burada asıl önemli olan sentetik *a priori* bilginin mümkünatıdır. Kant'ın sentetik *a priori* anlayışını Hume'un nedenselliği üzerinden anlatmaya çalıştım. Kant'a göre zorunlu nedensellik sadece deneyimden çıkmaz. Kant'a göre nedensellik ilişkisinin kavramı zihnimizde *a priori* olarak vardır. Sentetik *a priori*'de üzerinde durulması gereken en önemli nokta, öznenin bilme

esnasında aktif role sahip olmasıdır. Bu anlayış, Kant'ın estetiğini anlamada da önemli rol oynayacaktır.

Kant'ın diğer bir önemli ayrımı ise reflektif yargılar(reflective) ile belirleyici yargılar(determinative) arasındaki farktır. Belirleyici yargılarda tekil olan evrensel olan tarafından belirlenirken, reflektif yargılarda tekil kendi evrenselini bulmaya çalışır. Bir başka deyişle, reflektif yargılarda Sensibilite/Duyarlılık yetisi ile Anlama yetisi birbirleriyle etkileşime girer. Bu ayrım yukarıda bahsedilen birinci ve ikinci Kritik arasındaki ayrımı hafifletmeye yönelik bir hamle olarak okunabilir. Reflektif yargılar da Kant'ın estetiğinde de önemli bir yere sahiptir.

Kant'ın genel felsefesini Saf Aklın Eleştirisi'ndeki önemli kavramlarla açıklamaya çalıştıktan sonra, Kant'ın estetik anlayışını incelemeye çalıştım. Kant'ın estetik kuramındaki en önemli konulardan biri, estetik yargılarımızın aynı anda nasıl öznel(sübjektif) ve evrensel(objektif) olabileceği konusudur. Bu konuyu daha iyi anlamak adına, Yargı Yetisinin Eleştirisi'ndeki Güzel'in dört momentinden ilk üçüne odaklandım.

İlk momentte Kant, güzeli yargılarken bütün ilgi, alaka ve eğilimlerden uzak bir biçimde yargıda oluyor oluşumuzu vurgular. Bunu daha detaylı açıklamak için, güzeli iyi ve hoş giden ile karşılaştırır. İyi ve hoş giden her zaman ona yönelik bir ilgi içerirken, güzel olan tüm ilgilerden bağımsız olan bir yargılama içerir. İkinci moment, yargının öznel evrenselliğidir. (Subjective universality). Bu özelliğe göre, özne, güzel bulduğu bir sanat eseri ya da nesnenin herkes tarafından güzel olarak bulunmasını ve herkesin bu estetik yargıya katılmasını bekler. Ancak bu evrensel yargılar kavramlara bağlı yargılar değildirler. Aksine bu öznel evrensellik yukarıda bahsi geçen kendi evrenselini arayan ve kuran reflektif yargılar ile doğrudan ilgilidir. Öznel evrensellik daha sonra Adorno tarafından da “öznellik dolaymlanan nesnellik” olarak değerlendirilecektir. Üçüncü moment ise sanat eserinin herhangi bir amaç taşımadan ereksel oluşudur. (Ereksiz ereksellik) Kant'a göre sanat eseri/estetik belirli bir amaç taşımadığı ya da biz bu amacı bilemediğimiz halde estetik nesnenin formu özneye bir amaç taşıyormuş gibi görünür. Bu nokta, Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışı için oldukça önemli olacaktır.

Kant'ın Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışını etkileyen önemli kısımları özetlemek gerekirse; Kant'ın güzeli iyi ve hoş gideninden ayrışması ve sanat eserine özellikle bir

amaç atfetmeyişi Kant estetiğinin otonom bir sanat anlayışına zemin hazırladığının göstergesidir. Buna ek olarak, öznel evrensellik anlayışı, sanat eserinin nesnel bir zeminde değerlendirilmesi ve yargılanması gerektiğine işaret eder. Bu nokta da daha sonra Adorno'nun içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının nesnel olarak değerlendirilmesi ile ilgili olacaktır.

Kant estetiğinin Adorno için önemli olacak olan noktalarına değindikten sonra üçüncü bölüm olan Hegel felsefesi ve estetiğine odaklandım. Bu bölümde de önceki bölümde izlediğim yolu takip ederek Hegel estetiğinin Adorno için önemli olan yanlarını incelemeye çalıştım. Hegel estetiğini kavramamıza yarayacak olan ve Hegel'in Mantık'ını dikkatle incelemeyi gerektiren diyalektik, tekil-tikel-evrensel ilişkisi ve Tin(Geist) kavramlarını inceleyerek daha sonra Hegel estetiğine geçtim.

Hegel'in diyalektik anlayışını açıklamak için ilk önce Varlık, Hiçlik ve Oluş arasındaki dolayımılamayı incelemeye çalıştım. Hegel saf/arı varlık kavramını, içinde hiçbir tanım ve belirlenim barındırmayan ve kendinden başka bir şeyle belirlenemeyen şey olarak tanımlar. Ancak bu saf/arı varlık kaçınılmaz olarak Hiçlik'e yol açar çünkü saf varlığı düşündüğümüzde onun dolaysızlığının ötesine gidemediğimizi farkedebiliriz. Yani, Varlık ve Hiçlik birbirlerini aşarak kendilerini ötekinde tanımlı bulurlar. Bu da yeni bir konsept olan Oluş'u (Becoming) açığa çıkarır. Varlık ve Hiçlik, oluşta kendi özlerini kaybetmeyerek bir birlik oluştururlar. Bu hareket, Hegel'in diyalektik anlayışını örnekler/gösterir. Genel anlamda diyalektik ilişkiyi gösterdikten sonra Varlık-Öz-Kavram arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiye odaklandım. Hegel'e göre Varlık (kendinde varlık) potansiyel olarak tanımlanır ve kendini ancak diğer olanla dolayımında gerçekleştirir/yaşama geçirir. Bir başka deyişle, Varlık kendine diğer olandan "olumsuzlama/reddetme" (sublation) yoluyla döner. Bu hareket sonucunda, varlık hem kendinde hem de kendi için olan olarak tanımlanmış olur.

Öz (Varlığın kendini gerçekleştirmiş hali) Varlık ve Kavram arasında dolaylı olan (ortada olan) olarak karşımıza çıkar. Hegel aslında tüm bu hareketlerin, Varlık'ın kendi hareketleri olduğunu vurgular. Yani tüm bu diyalektik ilişki aslında Varlık'ın kendisinde tezahür eder. Bu noktayı daha iyi anlamak adına Hegel diyalektiği ile diğer diyalektik anlayışları (özellikle Sokratik diyalektiği) karşılaştırdım. Sokratik diyalektik, yalnızca karşı argümanları sunan ve bu karşı argümanlar arasında bir uzlaşma aramaya çalışan bir yöntemdir. Hegel diyalektiği ise, karşı argümanları onları

reddetmek veya çürütmek adına sunmaz. Hegel'in diyalektik anlayışı daha bütüncül, kapsayıcı, kuşatıcı bir birliğe işaret eder.

Hegel'in diyalektik anlayışının farklılığını sunduktan sonra, Varlık-Öz-Konsept arasındaki ilişkiye geri dönerek Öz'ü Varlık'ın kendini kendinden başka olanla dolayımaması sonucu ortaya çıkan olarak anlattım ve Öz'ün yansıma, görünüm ve gerçeklik (aktüalite) aşamalarını sundum. Kavram ise Varlık ve Hiçlik'in birliği ve bütünlüğü olarak karşımıza çıkar fakat bu birlik aşkınsal veya metafizik bir Kavram yerine, somut bir evrenselliğe işaret eder.

Kant'ın aşkınsal evrenselliğinin tersine, Hegel'in somut evrenselliği daha dinamik ve bütüncül bir anlayışı ifade eder. Başka bir deyişle, somut evrensellik tekil olanların farklılıkları arasındaki diyalektik ilişkiyi ifade eder. Bu kısmı daha iyi anlamak adına, Hegel'in tikel, tekil ve evrensel olan ile ne kastettiğini ayrı ayrı incelemeye çalıştım. Bu incelemede önemli olan, evrensel ve tikel olanın kendini tekil olanda sunması ve gerçekleştirmesidir. Tikel olmadan, evrensel olan soyut ve aşkın kalacaktır. Kısacası, tikel, tekil ve evrensel olan arasında her zaman bir dolayım ve diyalektik ilişki vardır ve tekil kendini evrensel olanın somut bir temsili olarak duyurur. Bu ilişki, Hegel estetiği açısından da oldukça önemlidir.

Hegel'in somut evrensel ile ne kastettiğini anlattıktan sonra Hegel felsefesinin en önemli kavramlarından biri olan Tin kavramını incelemeye çalıştım. Hegel Tin'i öznel, nesnel ve mutlak tin olarak üçe ayırır ve mutlak tini, öznel ve nesnel tin arasındaki uzlaşım olarak görür. Mutlak tinin Sanat, Din ve Felsefe olmak üzere üç ayrı momenti vardır. Tin, tekillerin farklılıklarını/değişkenliklerini içeren bir birlik olarak karşımıza çıkar. Bu birlik, tikel ve tekil olanın toplamından ziyade bir aradalığa işaret eder. Tin kavramını Solomon'un Hegel'i okuyuşuyla biraz daha detaylı bir şekilde açıklamaya çalıştım. Tin anlayışında/kavramında, birey belirli bir öznenin hisleri ve duygularına işaret etmekten ziyade, öznenin doğa ve tarihle kurduğu ilişkide kendini gösterir. Tini anlamadaki en önemli nokta, bireyin/öznenin kendini evrensel bir tine ait olarak duyurmasıdır. Bir başka deyişle, birey evrensel tinin bir görünümüdür. Birey ancak diğer bireylerle (veya doğa ve tarihle) olan diyalektik ilişki ile anlaşılabilir. Bu hareket, bireyin kendisine dış dünyadan/ötekiden dönüşü ve kendini bu sayede gerçekleştirme hareketidir. Adorno bu harekete daha sonra "nesnellikle dolayımlanan öznellik" diyecektir.

Hegel'deki diyalektik anlayışı, somut evrenselliği ve Tin'i sunduktan sonra, Hegel estetiğinin bu tez çerçevesi içerisinde önemli olan noktalarını sunmaya çalıştım. Hegel, sanat ve sanat yapıtı hakkındaki düşüncelerini genel bir çerçevede sunmak adına Estetik kitabında sanatın genel özelliklerinden bahseder. Hegel'e göre, sanat yapıtı bireyin/öznenin biricik/özel bir aktivitesidir. Özne bu özel sanat yapıtını dış dünyada gösteriyor ve sunuyor olmalıdır. Sanat yapıtının en önemli özelliklerinden biri ise onun Tin'in aktivitesi oluşudur. Tin, sanat yapıtının iç ve asıl değerinin açıklamasına ilişkin bir cevap niteliğinde de değerlendirilebilir.

Hegel, sanat eserini nesnel güzellik anlayışıyla değerlendirir/temellendirir. Bu nesnellik anlayışı, sanat eserinin yukarıda da bahsi geçen Tin'in tikel görünümü olarak ortaya çıkışıyla ilgilidir. Tin'in görünümü/sunumu olan sanat eseri aynı zamanda sanat eserinin kendinde değerine işaret etmektedir. Hegel'e göre doğanın taklidini yapmak ya da sadece ün ve şöhret için sanat yapmak insan tinine dokunan sanat eserleri üretmez/üretemezler. Sanatın amacı, sanat eserinin öznenin duygularını ve hislerini ancak ve ancak Tin'in tikel görünümü/sunuşuyla ortaya çıkartmak olmalıdır. Bu da sanat eserinin tüm amaçlar ve eğilimlerden uzak, kendi değerine ve önemine işaret eder.

Hegel'e göre sanat eseri kendi tikel görünümünden/yaratılışından çok daha fazlasına işaret etmektedir. Bu iddia, sanat eserinin evrensel bir doğrunun yani Tin'in görünümü olduğu iddiası ile beraber değerlendirilmelidir. En önemli Yunan trajedilerden biri olan Antigone'den örnek vererek bu noktayı daha anlaşılır kılmaya çalıştım. Trajedideki karakterler, karakter özelliklerinin yanı sıra evrensel bir doğruyu/Tin'i temsil eden karakterler olarak karşımıza çıkarlar. Karakterler arasındaki çatışma aslında iki doğruya/hakikata işaret eder: devlet kurallarına uyararak hareket etmek (bilinçli) ve saygıya/vicdana göre hareket etmek (bilinçsiz). Karakterler, kendi tekilliklerini koruyarak ve onlardan ödün vermeyerek, evrensel doğrunun/Tin'in biricik görünümü olarak karşımıza çıkarlar.

Hegel bu noktada Romantizmi Tin'in kendini en iyi ve üst düzeyde gerçekleştirdiği/sunduğu ve nesnellliğini dış dünyada kazandığı sanat anlayışı olduğunu savunur. Bu iddianın daha iyi anlaşılması için, Hegel'in Estetik kitabında sunduğu sıra ile Sembolizm, Klasisizm ve Romantizm karşılaştırmasını sunmaya çalıştım. Hegel, sembolik sanat anlayışını sanatın başlangıcı olarak görür. Tanrının

sanat eserinde açığa çıkışı/sunuluşu üzerinden tartıştığı yerde en doğrudan ve en dolayimsız objelerin tanrı anlayışını resmetmek için kullanıldığını savunur. Klasisizmde ise, Tin dış dünyada kendini gerçekleştirmiştir. Tanrı, insan bedeninde gösterilmeye ve sunulmaya çalışılmıştır. (Yunan tanrısı). Doğadaki elementlerin sanat eserine yansması tam olarak kalkmasa da doğa bir şekilde kendini tinin sunuşunda gösterir. Klasisizm bir şekilde biçim ve içeriğin uyuşması anlamına gelir ama yine de Hegel'e göre tinin hareketi Klasisizmde tam olarak açığa çıkmaz. (Yunan heykelinin tinin hareketini ve eylemini tam olarak göstermeyişi) Hegel yine de romantizmin tinin en üst görünümü olarak görür çünkü Tin, dış dünyada/dışsallıktan kendine dönmüş ve kendi nesnellliğini kazanmıştır. Romantizmde Tanrı, daha öznel tezahürlerde kendini gösterir. Bir başka deyişle, öznenin hislerinin ve duygularının salt bir öznelliğe bağlı kalmayarak (yine de nesnel olarak-tinin görünümü) kendini göstermesidir.

Üçüncü bölümün sonunda Kant ve Hegel estetiklerinin farkını özetlemeye çalıştım. Kant'taki güzellik yargısı öznenen başlayıp evrensel doğru giden (evrenselini arayan) bir düzlemdeyken, Hegel'in güzellik yargısı anlayışı ve kritiği, güzel olan tinin tikel görünümü olduğu için, öznel bir içerik veya değerlendirmenin ötesinde bir nesnellik/gerçeklik barındırıyor olarak anlaşılacaktır.

Tezimin son bölümünde asıl konum olan Adorno'nun otonom sanat ve sanat eseri anlayışına geri döndüm. Bu bölümün başında, Adorno'nun sanat ve sanat eseri anlayışının belirli tanımlar ve çerçeveler içinde açıklanamayacağını, sanatın ancak ve ancak toplum ve tarih ile olan ilişkisinde anlaşılabileceğini belirttim. Giriş bölümünde de belirttiğim gibi, otonom sanat eseri ve içeriğin gerçekliği arasındaki yakın ilişkiden ötürü, bu bölüm içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının incelenmesiyle ilerledi. İçeriğin gerçekliği ilk defa Estetik Kuram kitabında Adorno'nun sanat eserinin gizeminden bahsettiği bölümde ortaya çıkar. Adorno, sanat eserindeki gizemin çözümü ve cevabı üzerine düşündüğü bölümde, sanat eserinin biçiminin anlaşılmasının sanat eserinin gizemini çözebilme ihtimali üzerinde tartışır/yoğunlaşır. Sanat eserinin formunun anlaşılması, onun yeniden üretilmesi ve yaratılmasını mümkün kılar. Sanat eserinin yeniden üretilmesi mimetik tavır/davranış ile olanaklıdır ancak sanat eserinin kendisi hali hazırda mimetik tavırla üretilmekte ve/ya yaratılmaktadır. Sonuç olarak, sanat eserinin formunun anlaşılması ve onun yeniden üretilmeye çalışılması, sanat eserinin gizemini çözmek yerine o gizemi tekrar yaratır.

Adorno sanat eserinin gizeminin çözümünün her sanat eserinin kendi içinden geleceğini savunur. (Truth content) Adorno'nun bu yaklaşımı Kant'ın sanat eserinin ereksiz erekselliği ile yakından ilgilidir çünkü Adorno da sanat eserinin herhangi bir amaç doğrultusunda yaratılmadığını/üretildiğini savunur. Bu kısım aynı zamanda Adorno'nun içeriğin gerçekliği kavramı nesnel bir zeminde değerlendirileceğinin de bir işaretidir. Bu bölümün devamında, içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının daha net bir biçimde anlaşılması için biçim, içerik, materyal, öznellik ve nesnellik kavramlarını incelemeye çalıştım.

Adorno sanat eserinde ilk önce biçime önem veriyor gibi görünse de onun biçim anlayışı içerik ve materyal anlayışlarından/konseptlerinden ayrı düşünülemez çünkü Adorno sanat eserinin biçiminin ancak içerik ile oluşabileceğini ve şekilleneceğini savunur. Başka bir deyişle; biçim, sanat eserini üreten ve materyal üzerinde çalışan sanatçının öznel hissiyatları ve amaçlarından ayrı düşünülemez. Buna rağmen Adorno, sanat eseri üretiminde salt bir öznellik vurgusundan kaçınır. Onun asıl vurgulamak istediği, sanat eserinin tüm yaratım ve oluşum sürecinin tarihten ve toplumdaki bağımsız olarak değerlendirilemeyeceği görüşüdür. Kısacası, Adorno'da biçim ve içerik dinamik bir ilişki içerisinde birbirleriyle olan diyalektik olarak belirlenir.

Biçim ve içerik konusundaki en önemli nokta ise doğru içeriğin (truth content'in) nesnel oluşudur. Bu noktayı daha iyi anlamak adına, Kant'ın ve Hegel'in öznel ve nesnel olandan ne anladıklarını sunmaya çalışarak, Adorno'nun sunulan bu şematik öznel ve nesnel tanımlarının dışında ve ötesinde bir öznellik-nesnellik anlayışının olduğunu göstermeye çalıştım. Adorno, Kant'ın sanat eserinin nesnelliğini öznellik üzerinden kurduğunu, Kant'taki özne anlayışı aşkınsal olduğu için metafizik ve soyut bulur. Hegel'i ise, öznenin sanat eserinin içeriğini yaratmasını Tin'in dolayımı olarak gördüğü için eleştirir: sanat eserinin içeriğinin kendi içinden değil de dışarıdan (yani arkaplanda varsayılan evrensel bir Tin anlayışıyla) belirlendiğini düşünür. Bu noktada, Adorno'nun Hegel ile olan ilişkisini daha iyi anlamak adına Adorno'nun negatif diyalektik anlayışı ile Hegel diyalektiğini karşılaştırdım. Hegel'in tersine Adorno, diyalektiklikle ille de olumsuzlayıcı bir son görmez. (İdeoloji eleştirisi) Adorno'ya göre, diyalektik, bir birlik veya bütünlük anlayışı getirmek zorunda değildir. Adorno'nun negatif diyalektik anlayışı Kant ve Hegel tarafından sunulan şematik öznel ve nesnel

anlayışının Adorno için kabul edilemez olduğunu gösteren bir bölüm olarak sunulmuştur.

Negatif diyalektik anlayışını başka bir düzlemde de tartışmak adına, sanat eserinde var olan ve var olmayan figürlerin birbiriyle olan ilişkisini Adorno'nun "fantezi" kavramı ile açıklamaya çalıştım. Adorno'ya göre sanat eseri, varolmayanı varolan ile sunmayı ve açıklamayı fantezi yoluyla yapar ve varolan ve varolmayan arasında her zaman diyalektik bir ilişki vardır. Örneğin, William Turner'ın resimlerinde deniz üstündeki ı ışık girdapları/hortumlarında görünürde somut olarak varolmayanın (Turner'ın öznel hissiyatı) varolan (ışık, girdap) ile gösterilmeye çalışılması gözümüze çarpar.

Adorno, belirli bir zaman diliminde yaratılan sanat eserinin, o zamanın sınırlarını aşan bir özellikte olarak aslında geçmiş ve geleceğini de barındırdığını savunur. Claude Monet'in Pourville'de Kayalıklarda Yürüyüş isimli tablosu 19. yüzyılı aşarak bizlere ulaşır ve bizlerin o sahnenin güzelliğini hissetmemizi sağlar. Burada önemli olan, sanat eserinin tarih ve toplumla ilişki içinde yaratılsa bile "tarihselcilik" anlayışına düşmemesi ve bu anlayışla üretilmemesidir.

Bu bölümün son kısmında ise, giriş bölümünde sunduğum Adorno, Benjamin ve Brecht arasındaki tartışmaya geri dönerek Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışını ve sanatta içeriğin gerçekliği kavramlarını daha anlaşılır kılmaya çalıştım. Bu bölüm, Adorno'nun Brecht'in didaktik tiyatrosunu eleştirisiyle başlar. Adorno'ya göre Brecht'in politik etkiyi ve inanırılığını arttırmak adına sanat eserinin (tiyatronun) içeriğini basitleştirmeye çalışması hem kötü bir politikaya hem de kötü bir sanat anlayışına dönüşmektedir. Adorno Brecht'in Cesaret Ana ve Çocukları oyunundaki ana karakterinin orijinal romandan (Grimmelshausen romanı) alınan bir karakter olmasını/esinlenmesini eleştirir. Bu karakterin oyunda kullanılması otuz yıl savaşları dönemi ile kapitalizm dönemini bir şekilde eşitler ve bu da yanlış bir sosyal model oluşturur.

Bir başka eleştiri de Brecht'in oyunlarında sıkça kullandığı yabancılaşma efektine gelir. Adorno'ya göre Brecht'in yabancılaşma efekti, oyuna dışarıdan eklenen bir biçim(form) olmaktan ziyade, daha çok içerikle diyalektik bir ilişkiden beslenen ve içerikten beslenen bir biçimdir. Ancak izleyiciyi eğitme amacıyla sergilenen oyunlardaki bu yabancılaşma efekti, amacı itibarıyla otonom bir sanat eserinin karakterini sergileyemeyecektir.

Özetlemek gerekirse, Adorno'nun otonom sanat anlayışı içeriğin gerçekliği anlayışıyla iç içedir. İçeriğin gerçekliği, sanat eserinin kendinden/kendiliğinden gelen bir anlayıştır. İçeriğin gerçekliği yalnızca biçim ya da içerik, öznellik ya da nesnellikte değildir. Otonom sanat anlayışı ya da içeriğin gerçekliği, hepsinin birbiriyle diyalektik ilişkide olduğu, her sanat eserinin amacının kendi içinde saklı olduğu anlamına gelmektedir. Brecht ve Benjamin'in savunduğu propagandist yaklaşımlar içeren ve politik amaç taşıyan sanat eserleri otonom ve gerçek olmaktan uzaktır. Bütün bunlardan uzak olan otonom sanat eseri ise her ne kadar bir amaçla üretilmemiş olsa da içinde sosyo-politik olanı ve onun kritiğini taşır. Giriş bölümünde bahsettiğim otonom sanat eserinin politik içerik ve amaçlı sanat eserinin karşısında dursa da aslında salt elitist ve sanat için sanat anlayışına bağlı kalmadığı tezi de içeriğin gerçekliği kavramının tarihsel analizi ile daha anlaşılır olmuştur.

Otonom sanat eseri kendi doğrusunu kendi bulan ve sunan sanat eseridir. Bu sanat eseri içeriğini kendi belirlemesine rağmen topluma ve tarihe gözlerini kapatamaz. Otonom sanat ve sanat eseri kendi doğrusunu/doğru içeriğini her zaman kendi dinamiklerinde ve toplum ve tarih ile diyalektik ilişkisinde bulacaktır.

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