

CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND OF TRUTH CONTENT OF ART IN
GADAMER'S *TRUTH AND METHOD*

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ABSTRACT

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The following dissertation is an endeavor to put forward the conceptual background of Gadamer's assertion in *Truth and Method* that art has a truth value. This conceptual background includes many important concepts which are indispensable in understanding the assertion that art has a truth value. Second chapter is mainly concerned with *Bildung* and *sensus communis*. *Bildung* describes the nature of knowledge which flourishes in the character of the person and which changes that person by penetrating the personality of him. *Sensus communis* describes the relationship of truth with the power of persuasion and the power of making right choices in social life. Taste, on the other hand, not only accompanies us when we are fulfilling our most basic needs in life and also shows itself in all of our moral decisions. In that sense, a developed taste is very effective in directing us to the truth. The third chapter offers an analysis of Gadamer's critique of Kant's aesthetics revolving around the concepts of judgment, taste, genius and *Erlebnis*. For Gadamer, Kant has subjectivized aesthetics. This subjectivization has two sides. Firstly, Kant argues that the experience of beauty does not give us any knowledge about the beautiful object. That is to say, Kant insists that aesthetic experience does not contain any

cognitive element, because he believes that the only source of truth and knowledge is science. Secondly subjectivization means that Kant reduced art and beauty only to the experience of it; he talks only about experience of beauty, not about work of art itself at all. The forth chapter introduces the ontology of the work of art which is elaborated mainly on concepts of play, representation, mimesis, total mediation, contemporaneity. When inquiring into the mode of being of play, Gadamer defends that the subject of the play is play itself and in the same way in the experience of art the subject is not the subjectivity of the person who experiences it but the work of art. In the last chapter history of hermeneutics is elaborated in order to find the proper place of Gadamer's constituting concepts in the general frame of hermeneutics.

Keywords: Gadamer, Kant, *Bildung*, *Sensus communis*, Judgment, Taste, Genius, *Erlebnis*, art, play, hermeneutics.

ÖZ

GADAMER'İN *HAKİKAT VE YÖNTEM*İNDE SANATIN DOĞRULUK İÇERİĞİNİN KAVRAMSAL ARKA PLANI

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Bu tez Gadamer'in *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'de ortaya koyduğu sanatın doğruluk değeri taşıdığı iddiasının kavramsal arka planını ortaya koymayı amaçlar. Bu kavramsal arka plan sanatın bir doğruluk değeri olduğu iddiasını anlamak için ele alınması zorunlu olan pek çok önemli kavramı içerir. İkinci bölüm *Bildung* (kendini-yetiştirme, eğitim, kültür) ve *sensus communis* (ortak duyu, sağduyu) kavramları üzerinedir. *Bildung* bilginin insanın kişiliğinde yeşeren ve yine insanın kişiliğine nüfuz ederek onu değiştiren doğasını betimler. *Sensus communis* bilginin toplumsal alanda ikna etme ve doğru seçimleri yapabilme gücüyle ilişkisini anlatır. Beğeni ise yalnızca yaşamımızın en temel ihtiyaçlarını giderirken bize eşlik etmekle kalmaz, tüm ahlaki kararlarımızda kendini gösterir. Bu anlamda gelişmiş bir beğeni bizi doğru olana yönlendirmekte son derece etkindir. Üçüncü bölüm yargı, beğeni, deha ve *Erlebnis* (yaşanmış deneyim) kavramları etrafında tartışılan Gadamer'in Kant estetiği eleştirisinin bir incelemesini sunar. Gadamer'e göre Kant estetiği öznellemiştir. Bu öznelleştirme temelde iki yönlüdür. Birincisi Kant'a göre güzelin deneyimi bize o nesne hakkında hiçbir bilgi vermez. Yani Kant estetik deneyimin hiçbir bilişsel unsur içermediği konusunda ısrar eder. Çünkü insanların tek bilgi kaynağını bilim olarak görür. İkinci olarak, Kant sanat eseri hakkında değil, yalnızca onun

deneyimi hakkında konuşarak sanat eserini onun deneyimine indirger. Sanat eserin varoluşu üzerine soru sormaz çünkü estetik deneyim bize deneyimlenen nesneye dair konuşma hakkı vermez, tek söylenebilecek nesnenin benim haz hissimi doğurmasıdır. Dördüncü bölüm oyun, temsil, *mimesis*, bütüncül dolayım ve eşzamanlılık kavramları ile temellendirilen sanat eserin ontolojisini tanıtır. Gadamer oyunun oluş kipini incelerken oyunun öznesinin yine oyun olduğunu savunur, aynı şekilde sanat deneyiminde de özne deneyimleyen kişinin öznelliği değil, sanat eserin kendisidir. Son bölümde ise Gadamer'in kurucu kavramlarını hermeneutiğin genel çerçevesine uygun bir şekilde yerleştirebilmek için hermeneutik tarihini incelenmiştir.

Keywords: Gadamer, Kant, *Bildung*, *Sensus communis*, Yargı, Beğeni, Deha, *Erlebnis*, sanat, oyun, hermeneutik.

*To My Husband Soner and
our little son Arda*

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The following dissertation is an endeavor to put forward the conceptual background of Gadamer's assertion in *Truth and Method* that art has a truth value. This conceptual background includes many important concepts which are indispensable in understanding the assertion that art has a truth value. The difficulty of this task comes from the fact that *Truth and Method* is full of references to many philosophers and philosophical and aesthetic movements from history of philosophy. However this difficulty is a result of the hermeneutic writing style of Gadamer. He performs a detailed reading and interpretation of philosophers, enters into a dialogue with them and even constructs dialogues between them, rejects some of their ideas but accepts some others. Sometimes it becomes possible to confuse what Gadamer is defending, rejecting, criticizing, interpreting or just explaining. There are some parts in which Gadamer mentions no idea of his own; he just presents ideas of other philosophers, just like in a book of history of philosophy. This dissertation aims to find a way in this hermeneutical puzzle by doing justice to its underlying historical, aesthetic and philosophical concepts.

Gadamer firstly investigates the concept of *Bildung* (self-cultivation, education, culture) and *sensus communis* (common sense). Then comes an analysis of Gadamer's critique of Kant's aesthetics revolving around the concepts of judgment, taste, genius and *Erlebnis* (lived experience). Following his critique of Kant Gadamer introduces the ontology of the work of art which is elaborated mainly on concepts of play, representation, *mimesis*, total mediation and contemporaneity. After all of these, history of hermeneutics is elaborated which will be helpful in finding the proper place of Gadamer's constituting concepts in the general frame of hermeneutics.

The expected result of this dissertation is to find the structural basis of Gadamer's argument concerning the truth content of art so that it would be possible to answer the labeling of Gadamer's ideas as relativist according to one reading or conservative according to another. The aim of this dissertation is to eliminate such labels directly following the Gadamer's unique way of presenting his ideas. Relativism and conservatism are such wrong labels for Gadamer that by just picking up a concept analyzed here will immediately be able to show that these labels are totally wrong. For example *Bildung* is such a concept that it is impossible to harmonize it with conservatism, since *Bildung* is an ideal of the person who is able to change, educate and cultivate himself according to what he has learned and also who is open as much as possible to what is other or alien to himself so that he can return to himself with what he has learned from his experience of the Other and change himself. On the other hand, against relativism, Gadamer's critique of the concept of *Erlebnis* contains a critique of the overemphasis upon the subjective experience and its ignorance of the truth that goes beyond individual and his experience. The importance of these concepts is easily seen from this example.

I think that it has generally been ignored from where Gadamer started from and where he has gone. *Truth and Method* did not start with neither language nor tradition and nor prejudice. He started with *Bildung* and *sensus communis*. The concepts of language, tradition and prejudice are not directly discussed until the middle of the second part. That is to say, Gadamer constructs a very important foundation before the discussion of language, tradition and prejudice. In the present dissertation I will not enter into the discussion about language, tradition and prejudice but I will try to show that these central concepts cannot be understood or they would be understood in a wrong way without taking into account the preceding concepts and ideas presented in *Truth and Method*.

It must be made clear that Gadamer is not against advancement of science following methodological procedures, but he is against its domination over and exclusion of many other forms of understanding which is active in arts and

humanities. Domination of objectivism has a accompanying movement of subjectivism either as a protest against idea of objectivity or as a tendency to accept objectivity only in natural science and defend subjectivism in all other fields than science. Any form of subjectivism is untenable for Gadamer since he is openly in search for and defender of the truth that is beyond and more comprehensive than the limits of self-consciousness. What this truth is a complicated question and requires more broad investigation, however in the present dissertation I will argue that Gadamer's idea of truth has its seeds in the first two parts of *Truth and Method*. It is certainly not a kind of objective truth but also not a subjectively changing opinion. Gadamer's truth is more like a "living truth" that has an eye on human being, society, philosophy and science. Truth is a happening that is flexible enough to change according to the dynamics of life but it is also philosophical enough in that it is affected by what is ideal, what is beyond this world, what pertains to the world of ideas. The basic tension of human beings, according to Gadamer, is being between the world of ideas and the world of senses. But this dualism can only be overcome by recognizing the field of "in-between," which is exemplified as the ontology of play. Modern scientific conception of knowledge is too narrow to give us the insights that are available to us in art, history and philosophy. Legitimizing such insights as truths or as knowledge requires modifying the dominant understanding of knowledge constructed on the model of Cartesian subject-object distinction and its postulation of knowing-subject. In that picture truth is a possession of the subject and understanding is an activity of possessing the truth. However Gadamer gives an alternative notion of truth and understanding in which understanding is what happens to us and truth is something communicated in that happening; it is not possessed. This overview of Gadamerian truth shows us that Gadamer is not basically concerned with scientific truth but with the phenomenon of understanding in all aspects of our life. Truth does not appear in an isolated sphere of subjectivity or in a relationship constructed with the object. It flourishes in every step of our interaction with the world, with the Other, with society and even with ourselves. This is what Gadamer means by the in-

betweenness and dialogical character of understanding and truth. Gadamer does not argue that he puts forward an original theory of understanding and truth; on the contrary, he tries to show that these insights can be found in the history of philosophy. Because of that he continuously performs a hermeneutical reading of Plato, Aristotle, Hegel, Dilthey, Husserl, Heidegger and many other philosophers and uses their ideas as a guide, though always in a critical tone.

Epistemology, which is a field of philosophy developed in the modern era, remains always inadequate in dealing with the issue of truth. Epistemology lacks the ontological view that is necessary for understanding in which kind of relation we stand with the world. Epistemology is more method oriented in that it inquires the ways in which we can obtain knowledge. In other words, epistemology accepts in advance that knowledge and truth is something that is distinct from us. However the question of truth must not be formulated as how we can get truth but as what is our position with regard to truth; since truth is not an object or a proposition about an object, but an event or a happening. So the ontological question seems to be more proper than the epistemological one. The event of truth takes us in itself. What we want to know is something in which we constitute a part, an actor or an agent of it.

The phenomenon of art requires first of all an ontological inquiry. The general complaint about Gadamer's ontology of artwork is that he did not develop a relationship of this ontology with his general theory of hermeneutical experience. In his "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey" Gadamer himself admits regarding the *Truth and Method* that "what I needed to do was to go back to my concept of game once again and place it within an ontological perspective that had been broadened by the universal element of linguisticity."¹ Nevertheless this does not mean that we cannot establish the connections. In the discussions about *Bildung*, *sensus communis* and taste, we find numerous references to aesthetic element found in human sciences, law and morality. In

¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," in *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*, Lewis Edwin Hahn (ed.), (Chicago and LaSalle: Open Court Press, 1997), p. 41.

discussing literary arts, the element of language is also taken into consideration. All literary and non-literary arts and humanities are unified in the element of meaning contained in all of them. Gadamer's criticism of aesthetic consciousness and historical consciousness shows that he is defending the unity of all our experiences as the experience of life in all its speculative contents. Philosophy, art and history are in the context of life and we do not jump out of life in doing philosophy, in experiencing art or in searching history. In all aspects of life including art and history understanding is at work.

What do we learn from the fact that art has a truth value if it is accepted as valid? Does accepting the truth claim of art change anything in our life and in science at all? Is it really an important claim? Do today's people of science have anything to learn from the great works of art? All these questions are at the heart of the concepts that are investigated in the present dissertation. Since Gadamer clearly shows that truth is not dead but a living happening; truth is not waiting to be discovered propositions about objects. Truth becomes truth only it permeates to the character of the person and flourishes around his personality through time. It is the eternal journey of human being including the scientists. Having the ideal of *Bildung* in heart and mind, education in *sensus communis* and developing taste are indispensable elements of this journey and this kind journey would be impossible in the absence of cognition provided by artworks.

CHAPTER II

HUMANIST CONCEPTS BEHIND HUMAN SCIENCES

2.1 *Bildung*

Bildung is one of the most important concepts proposed by Gadamer in replying to the questions concerning how to legitimize human sciences and their studies and how to deal with the epistemological problems that these sciences confront. Gadamer used the concept of *Bildung* as a starting point in his investigation of the relation between human sciences and the concepts of tact and aesthetics; he also used it against the idea of method in these sciences. In searching for the basis of human sciences the concept we must examine firstly, according to Gadamer, is the concept of *Bildung*, which is used by the medieval mystics, but developed by the Humanist tradition. *Bildung* has been translated into English as culture, education or self-cultivation; however it needs much wider explanation in order to be understood. The root of the concept is *Bild*, which is generally translated as ‘image.’ The addition “-ung” at the end indicates “either ... an act, a process or an occurrence” or any of their consequences.² So *Bildung* can literally have two meanings when it is taken only as a word; firstly it means “an act, a process or an occurrence, by which somebody or something becomes an image” and secondly it denotes “the image that emerges at the end of, or as the result of, an act, a process or an occurrence.”³ In “ancient mystical tradition,” this concept means the following: God has created man in the image of himself; but since God and humans are not identical beings, this image can only be found in

² Swen Eric Nordenbo, “*Bildung* and the Thinking of *Bildung*,” *Journal of Philosophy of Education*, Vol. 36, No.3, 2002, p. 341.

³ Nordenbo, p. 341.

humans as a secret force; human beings must expose, educate and develop this image.⁴

When the concept started to be used by Humanism, it was taken out of its religious context and placed in a more social, psychological and aesthetic one. Gadamer has taken the concept of *Bildung* as the most important concept of the 17th century and argued that human sciences have taken its shape in the atmosphere conditioned by the idea of *Bildung*. However, as time passed, this concept was defeated by the idea of method and this defeat caused the breaking of the deep ties that human sciences set with aesthetics by the help of the concept of *Bildung*. According to Gadamer, the constructive role of the concept of *Bildung* has been forgotten and this is one of the reasons for the emergence of the epistemological problems in human sciences, since *Bildung* is one of the required concepts necessary to base the kind of knowledge acquired in human sciences. *Bildung* is generally thought of as synonymous with education or culture but Gadamer opposes this equation and tries to explain the difference between culture and *Bildung* by a quotation from Wilhelm von Humboldt: “but when in our language we say *Bildung*, we mean something both higher and more inward, namely the disposition of mind which, from the knowledge and the feeling of the total intellectual and moral endeavor, flows harmoniously into sensibility and character.”⁵ This harmonious flowing mind is a product or reflection of a gained culture, education and self-cultivation. This process cannot be explained only by “being cultured” because what is under consideration is a character education and personal development. Since *Bildung* has not been used in religious context anymore, this ideal of *Bildung* cannot be a development towards the extraction of the image of God inherent in human soul.

⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, trans. Joel Weinsheimer and Donald G. Marshall, (London: Continuum, 2004), p. 10.

⁵ Quoted from Wilhelm von Humboldt’s *Gesammelte Schriften*, Akademie ed., VII, part 1, 30, by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, p. 9.

In a humanist context the qualities that *Bildung* aims can be summarized as “self-possession, self-mastery, autonomy of a kind”.⁶ This aim is not at all the accumulation of knowledge tried to be measured by tests and exams aimed by the education system of today. Knowledge accumulation is an aim which can be arrived without affecting human personality. However the qualities aimed by *Bildung* can only be achieved through alienation. The following quotation from Humboldt clearly shows that alienation is an unavoidable part of human improvement and the process of *Bildung*.

What do we demand of a nation, of an age, of entire mankind, if it is to occasion respect and admiration? We demand that Bildung, wisdom, and virtue, as powerfully and universally propagated as possible, should prevail under its aegis, that it augment its inner worth to such an extent that the concept of humanity, if taken from its example alone, would be of a rich and worthy substance. ... Although all these demands are limited to man’s inner being, his nature drives him to reach beyond himself to the external objects, and here it is crucial that he should not lose himself in this alienation, but rather reflect back into his inner being the clarifying light and the comforting warmth of everything that he undertakes outside himself.⁷

In order to understand why arriving at the qualities like self-possession, self-mastery and autonomy requires alienation we need to turn to Hegel. The concept of *Bildung* plays an important role in Hegel’s philosophical system. In Hegel’s philosophy human beings’ intellectual and rational sides are very important. In *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Hegel presents human beings as having two aspects: the first aspect is “*individuality*,” which stands for individual’s natural being, and the second one is “*universal essence*,” which stands for individual’s rationality.⁸ Accordingly, harmonization of these two aspects, for Hegel, is the individual’s own task. Rationality continuously takes

⁶ Paul Standish, “Preface” to *Educating Humanity: Bildung in Postmodernity*, (eds.) Klaus Peter Mortensen and Sven Erik Nordenbo Lars Lovlie (Cornwall: Blackwell, 2003), p. vii.

⁷ Wilhelm von Humboldt, “Theory of Bildung,” trans. Gillian Horton-Krüger, in *Teaching as a Reflective Practice: The German Didaktik Tradition*, Ian Westbury, Stefan Hopmann and Kurt Riquarts (eds.) (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2000), pp. 59.

⁸ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophical Propaedeutic* (Oxford, [Oxfordshire]: Basil Blackwell, 1986), § 41.

human beings away from what is natural and immediate; that is, from the world presented by bare sense perceptions. According to Hegel, humans have gained their humanity from the moment this has been taken away. However neither before nor after this moment humans have not any educator or teacher. Human beings had to shape, to teach and to cultivate themselves. This is the very process of *Bildung*, nevertheless as centuries have passed, human beings have been a part of a huge tradition from which they can and must take help in this process of cultivation and with which, throughout their life, they meet only a little. On this basis, in Hegelian terms, we can define *Bildung* as individual's continuous effort to develop capability of setting up a relationship with what is universal and getting free of his particularity. A brilliant passage from *Lectures On the Philosophy of World History* clarifies what *Bildung* represents for Hegel:

[T]he word 'culture' [*Bildung*] ... is a formal category, and is always construed in terms of universal properties. A cultured man is one who knows how to impress the stamp of universality upon all his actions, who has renounced his particularity, and who acts in accordance with universal principles. Culture is the form of our thinking; it owes its existence to man's ability to control himself, and to the fact that he does not merely follow his desires and inclinations but subjects himself to a discipline. He thereby grants his object a position of independence, and habitually adopts a theoretical attitude. He is also in the habit of treating the various aspects of his object separately, of analysing the situation before him, of isolating individual aspects of it and abstracting from them, thereby directly conferring the imprint of universality upon them all. The cultured individual recognises the different facets of objects; all of them are present to him, and his fully developed powers of reflection have invested them with the form of universality. In his behavior, too, he takes them all into account. The uncultured individual, on the other hand, may grasp the main point and at the same time inadvertently do violence to half a dozen others. But the cultured man takes in all the different aspects, and thus acts in a concrete manner; he is accustomed to act in the light of universal perspectives and

ends. Culture can therefore be defined quite simply as the imposition of a universal quality upon a given content.⁹

Hegel here clearly puts forward the relationship between universal and particular embedded in *Bildung*. In *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, Hegel also separates two kinds of *Bildung*, practical and theoretical. What Hegel calls practical *Bildung* puts itself forward in labor and working. Gadamer explains Hegel's this emphasis as follows: "What he [Hegel] means is that in acquiring a 'capacity,' a skill, man gains the sense of himself."¹⁰ Everyone who does his work well "in all its aspects" can be said to have practical *Bildung*.¹¹ Gadamer comments that for Hegel human beings can rise themselves up to the universal by means of *Bildung*; in that sense *Bildung* appears as a practical "task".¹² This is such a task that it can only be achieved by making a concession from our particularity and by "being aware of all the details and aspects of the work" and also by shaping ourselves simultaneously with this work.¹³ On the other hand, theoretical *Bildung* can only be achieved by going what is beyond what we know and beyond our immediate experiences, towards what is alien, towards the other; and after that by "the return to oneself" again with all he has gained in the experience of the other.¹⁴ The point that we must pay attention to is the emphasis on historicity or, in other words, the idea of finding oneself in what is other to oneself.

In human sciences, the scientific knowledge presented under the name of objectivity, is actually a product of the fact that the concept of *Bildung* has been abandoned without being developed enough. For that reason, the understanding of science based on a method cannot answer the epistemological problems

⁹ Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Lectures On the Philosophy of World History*, trans. H. B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984) pp. 56-57.

¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 11.

¹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 12.

¹² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 11.

¹³ Hegel, *The Philosophical Propaedeutic*, § 43.

¹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 13.

appearing in human sciences. Because neither the idea of objectivity nor the idea of method does give us a clue about how we, as scientists, set up a relationship with society, with what is alien or what is familiar to us. Additionally, by reducing this relationship to subject-object relation, objectivity and method damage this real relation between humans. But, according to Gadamer, although the concept of *Bildung* presented by Hegel as mind's capacity to rise to the universal, provides us with a right starting point, it remains inadequate, since "Hegel sees *Bildung*" as an ideal that can be "reached only in the absolute knowledge of philosophy."¹⁵

We cannot find the necessary link between *Bildung* and humanities in Hegel. Concentrating on humanities and how they move or operate in *Bildung*, Gadamer describes "tact" as a key term for the issue. What makes humanities and social sciences science is "unlearnable and inimitable tact" or the ability to evaluate a situation with all its details and to behave according to this evaluation.¹⁶ We can define tact in daily life as knowing what to do or what to say in different times and places. By applying tact to human sciences, Gadamer defines it as follows: "By 'tact' we understand a special sensitivity and sensitive-ness to situations and how to behave in them, for which knowledge from general principles does not suffice."¹⁷ That is, human sciences are sciences of an area, in which there are no universal laws, no universal truths or unchanging principles, since such laws do not exist in social life and in human world. Then, we face the question of what human sciences can give us. After the age of Enlightenment, to talk about knowledge does not require an extra process of legitimation of the existence of principles, law, and unchanging truths. Trying to find undiscovered laws and principles has been accepted as a legitimate procedure of knowledge research. It has been a matter of fiery dispute how knowledge can be gained at the absence of laws and principles. Here, tact plays a very critical role, because the definition of tact does not only include the situations in which there are no

¹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 13.

¹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 13.

¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 14.

general principles but also the situations in which existing general principles remains inadequate in evaluating what is given. If we define scientist in the context of human sciences as the person who reproduces and represents reality in a right way, then we can define tact as the ability, the capability and the quality of developing a good understanding so that he can reproduce and represent a situation in the rightest way.

In order to understand this claim, it will be helpful to look at how Hermann von Helmholtz distinguished human sciences from the natural sciences. Helmholtz has named the method on which natural sciences has been constructed as “logical induction”. In this method, the aim is the construction of “universally valid laws” by the way of combining our observations with logical reasoning. In human sciences (or in Helmholtz’s and German tradition’s use *Geisteswissenschaften*; that is, sciences of *Geist*), however, the valid method is “aesthetic induction”.¹⁸ Aesthetic induction describes the process of setting up meaningful connections among the human phenomena in a meaningful whole. Since there are no universally valid laws for human and social world, the task of setting up these connections depends upon the devotion and ability of the scientist, upon the education he has, upon how and in which direction he has developed himself, etc. For example, there was no more data in the hands of Freud than his contemporaries, however he has related the data he has in a new meaningful whole in such a way that, this has been a turning point for the science of psychology. Aesthetic induction is the process in which the scientist evaluates the data by constructing meaningful relations between them in a scientific whole. This process is an aesthetic process because it depends not upon universal laws, a priori principles, or solely empirically collected data, but on the scientist’s talent of interpretation and evaluation. Helmholtz says that the place where we can find most striking examples of aesthetic induction is high-quality art works. Because in such art works, says Helmholtz, it surprises us to see how

¹⁸ Hermann von Helmholtz, *Science and Culture: Popular and Philosophical Essays*, David Cahan (ed.), (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1995), pp. 84-85.

the artist starting from the most little detail arrives at the truths about human being and society.

What is important here is Gadamer's answer to the question of how we will get knowledge at the absence of universal laws. By having recourse to the Humanist tradition and to the concept of *Bildung* to which this tradition attached importance, Gadamer tries to strengthen the following claim: today the production of scientific knowledge is almost identified with the idea of method; however method is only a tool in the process of production of knowledge, not an end in itself. A result is not accepted as scientific anymore if it is arrived without resorting to the agreed methods. To a certain degree, this insistence on method produced not a negative but a positive effect on natural sciences. Nevertheless, in human sciences the same is expected from the scientist; that is, logical induction, quantitative and statistical certainty, devotion to the method, etc. These procedures have lost their quality of being tools and have been made obligatory and indispensable conditions of scientificity. Human sciences can use quantitative data, even they can base their arguments on quantitative data; however, the study of human sciences are qualitative in that they constitute a whole and set meaningful relations among data, and these relations and constitutions change depending upon the scientist's ability, world-view, education, inclinations, etc. In that sense, the concept *Bildung* operates as a key because it includes an emphasis upon the character education and personal development, which does include the tension between universality and particularity of human beings, the indispensable alienation implied by human beings' search for knowledge, the aesthetic element involved in the production of knowledge, the ability to be open to the other and requirement of tactfulness in human sciences. *Bildung* is one of the important concepts that can help us to stand as scientists and as human beings against today's ideology in which anyone who does not produce meta for the market is marginalized. A person must shape himself by turning back to himself with what he has learned; that is, he must change himself with the knowledge he gains. Because human sciences do not need people who do not have the courage and ability to change

themselves but people who are open to change, transformation and development, who are not afraid of the alienation which is inescapable for understanding, learning and knowledge acquisition, who continue their studies with a responsibility of a scientist and a sensitivity of an artist. Without such an understanding, that is, unless a milieu of *Bildung* is settled, spread and starts to give fruits, the question of what makes human and social studies “science” will stay unanswered and human sciences will, like orphans, continue to seek protection in natural sciences. Consider the following passage from Dilthey, which shows that he was totally aware of the fact that the acquisition of knowledge in the field of human sciences is inevitably connected with the process of *Bildung*.

The organ of understanding which functions in human sciences is the whole man; great achievements in those sciences do not proceed from mere power of intelligence but from strength of personal life.¹⁹

Bildung represents just this idea of strength of personal life. All the considerations above actually embody a strong claim lying behind Gadamer’s emphasis upon *Bildung*. The claim could be summarized in one sentence: *Bildung* is the sole aim of human sciences. The whole value and also legitimacy of human sciences depends upon the constitution of *Bildung* as the ultimate goal or the “necessary ideal” that is to be achieved at all levels of scientific studies.²⁰ This is such an important claim that it constitutes a key in understanding the whole efforts in *Truth and Method*.

¹⁹ Wilhelm Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences: an attempt to lay a foundation for the study of society and history*, trans. Ramon J. Betanzos, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1988), p. 98.

²⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 13. Dermot Moran says the following regarding the status of *Bildung* for Gadamer: “... *Truth and Method* integrates Gadamer’s thinking on the philosophy of history, the history of hermeneutics and the experience of art into a single sustained argument about the nature of ‘*Bildung*’ ... Gadamer wants to appropriate the term ‘*Bildung*’ to stand for the kind of knowledge acquired in the human and moral sciences.” Dermot Moran, *Introduction to Phenomenology* (London: Routledge, 2000), p. 266-267.

2.2. *Sensus Communis*

Having established that *Bildung* is the unique ideal of all human and social sciences, it is necessary to link this ideal with the social dimension of man, since *Bildung* is not something that is achieved for the sake of an individual only. *Bildung* is the formation of the individual who is deeply related with the society in which he lives. As Gadamer said, one of the constituent moments of *Bildung* is to achieve transcendence; that is, to be able to go beyond ourselves and beyond what is immediately experientiable by us and at the end returning to ourselves. Going towards the other and returning to ourselves cause a change for us, so when we return we find ourselves already changed. Such a change can only be possible if we set up a kind of relationship with the other. Setting up a relationship requires a commonality between me and what I relate with. So, social relationships are constructed on the basis of commonalities. If we ask what the things that we have in common with the society are, we encounter with innumerable different entities, feelings, instincts, symbols, practices etc. The proper description of how such commonalities are shared by every member of society would be confessing that it is based on a sense carried by all human beings. So Gadamer links *Bildung* to the notion of “common sense” in order not to forget the indispensable social side of the personal development demanded from the social scientist.

Sensus communis (common sense) is one of the richest concepts analyzed by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, since it contains many references to rhetorical and humanist tradition. For Gadamer, it is necessary to look into the humanistic tradition, since this tradition will give us some important clues about the “human sciences’ mode of knowledge.”²¹ Gadamer starts with Giambattista Vico’s defense of humanism, which depends upon antiquity. One of the elements of the idea of common sense is, Gadamer says, “the contrast between the scholar and the wise man.”²² This contrast is a derivative of *sophia* and *phronesis* distinction.

²¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 17.

²² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 18.

While *sophia* represents theoretical knowledge, *phronesis* represents practical knowledge. Gadamer summarizes the history of this distinction as follows:

It was first elaborated by Aristotle, developed by the Peripatetics as a critique of the theoretical ideal of life, and in the Hellenistic period helped define the image of the wise man, especially after the Greek ideal of *Bildung* had been fused with the self-consciousness of the leading political class of Rome. Late Roman legal science also developed against the background of an art and practice of law that is closer to the practical ideal of *phronesis* than to the theoretical ideal of *sophia*.²³

In accordance with this development of the concept of common sense, what Vico opposes is the acceptance of reason as the “*regula veri*”; that is, as the rule of truth, and this was what Stoics did.²⁴ What Vico acclaims is firstly the Socratic wisdom which claims that the wise man knows that he knows nothing (this belongs to “old Academicians”) and secondly the art of arguing (this belongs to new Academicians). So Vico is not completely against modern science or ancient tradition, but tries to find a middle way. Vico, says Gadamer, “does not deny the merits of modern critical science but shows its limits.”²⁵ What modern science does not and cannot have by using the mathematical methods is “the wisdom of the ancients and their cultivation of *prudentia* and *eloquentia*.”²⁶ *The Oxford Dictionary* gives the definition of prudence as “ability to discern the most suitable, politic, or profitable course of action, esp. as regards conduct; practical wisdom, discretion. Wisdom; knowledge of or skill in a matter. Foresight, providence.”²⁷ So prudence is a complex ability that needs to be cultivated ethically, practically in social life. *Eloquentia* means roughly “talking well,” however Gadamer emphasizes that *eloquentia* “is not merely a rhetorical ideal. It also means saying the right thing—i.e., the truth—and is not

²³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 18.

²⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 18.

²⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 18.

²⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 18.

²⁷ “prudence,” *The Oxford English Dictionary*. 2nd ed. 1989. *OED Online*. Oxford University Press. 25 Apr. 2007 <<http://dictionary.oed.com/cgi/entry/50191224>>.

just the art of speaking—of saying something well.”²⁸ So talking well also requires a kind of knowing what is right and wrong. The ideal of ancient wisdom makes these two qualities parts of education and indispensable elements of culture. As the general aim of ancient education and wisdom, Gadamer detects “the training in the *sensus communis*.”²⁹ In *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, Vico argues that “advanced speculative criticism,” which stands for the modern science based on verification or validity of arguments, will hinder the development of common sense for young people.³⁰ So *sensus communis* must not be defined, as Aristotle did, as the “primary faculty of perception,”³¹ since this would make common sense only a general faculty that can be found in every human being. St. Thomas too, interprets the definition of common sense given in Aristotle’s *De Anima* as “the common root of outer senses; i.e., the faculty that combines them, that makes judgments about what is given, a capacity that is given to all men.”³² Nevertheless, Gadamer wants to emphasize the definition of common sense as “the sense that founds community,” a sense that can only be cultivated in practical and social life and is at the basis of society.³³ Vico offers a very important criticism of education system based on Cartesian philosophy. This criticism is mainly upon how Cartesian understanding narrows the idea of truth, how it excludes many other kinds of truths that we find in our social life and indeed equates them with falsity.

Philosophical criticism is the subject which we compel our youths to take up first. Now, such speculative criticism, the main purpose of which is to cleanse its fundamental truths not only of all falsity, but also of mere suspicion of error, places upon the same plane of falsity not only false thinking, but also those secondary verities and ideas which are based on

²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 17.

²⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 18-19.

³⁰ Giambattista Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, trans. Elio Gianturco, (New York: Cornell University Press, 1990), p. 13.

³¹ Aristotle. “On Memory and Reminiscence,” translated by J. I. Beare, *The Internet Classics Archive*, 1994-2000. <http://classics.mit.edu/Aristotle/memory.html> (accessed April 25, 2007).

³² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 20.

³³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 19.

probability alone, and commands us to clear our minds of them.³⁴

Cartesian education system may result in extreme intellectualism that is harmful for the development of common sense. So, training in the common sense is different from the training in modern science. Common sense is based on “the probable, the verisimilar.”³⁵ However for mathematical and empirical sciences, a proposition is either true or false. Verisimilarity is a very recent concept taken seriously for philosophy of science; however, Vico has long ago stressed the importance of probability and verisimilitude not only in practical life but also as operative in science. He says that “knowledge originates in truth and error in falsity, so common sense arises from perceptions based on verisimilitude.”³⁶ Conceptualizing *sensus communis* as a “general faculty in all men” reduces it to an epistemological category. On the contrary, common sense is a social sense open to development or decline. Having an eye on what is probable is necessary for the development of common sense or of *prudentia* and *eloquentia*, though Descartes’ method of doubt avoids it on the grounds of uncertainty.

According to Vico, what gives the human will its direction is not the abstract universality of reason but the concrete universality represented by the community of a group, a people, a nation, or the whole human race. Hence developing this communal sense is of decisive importance for living.³⁷

The rhetorical spirit can be felt here. Cartesian science tries to find universal truths; rhetoric, however, pursues a path of conviction, so is always concerned with people, with community, with how people think and feel. For that reason, we still need rhetoric and common sense in addition to the achievements and studies of critical science. But, says Gadamer, “what Vico means goes far beyond the defense of rhetorical persuasion.”³⁸ Here Gadamer

³⁴ Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, p. 13.

³⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 19.

³⁶ Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, p. 13.

³⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 19.

³⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 19.

passes to the Aristotelian *sophia* and *phronesis* distinction, since he accepts that the Aristotelian concept of *phronesis* is at the basis of Vico's concept of common sense. Aristotle's concept of *phronesis* is translated as prudence or practical wisdom. Aristotle defines *phronesis* as "to be able to deliberate nobly about what is good and beneficial for himself; not in particular respects, such as what conduces to health and physical strength, but about what conduces to living well as a whole."³⁹ Aristotle accepts *phronesis* as a kind of knowledge, which is primarily about "concrete situation." Knowledge of and about concrete situations, knowledge of what is to be done in immediate reality needs not only theory but also practice, experience and wisdom. *Phronesis* does not exclude theoretical knowledge, but completes it with practice. Theory cannot "grasp the 'circumstances' in their infinite variety"⁴⁰ since such a grasp is only possible on the basis of rich experience. In that sense, it must be admitted that theory is always limited for practical life affairs. Life is always social and therefore ethical; *phronesis* is the knowledge produced for social life by moral beings; i.e. by human beings. A person having 'practical wisdom' is able to 'sense' what is proper and what is improper, so he represents "a moral attitude".⁴¹ Therefore, Gadamer gives the definition of Vico's concept of *sensus communis* as follows:

For Vico, however, the *sensus communis* is the sense of what is right and of the common good that is to be found in all men; moreover, it is a sense that is acquired through living in the community and is determined by its structures and aims.⁴²

Vico's common sense, claims Gadamer, is not a Greek but an old Roman concept and it is evident why the concept of common sense is important for human sciences: Common sense shows that knowledge covers a wider space than the modern science tries to limit by its methods. "[A] conclusion based on

³⁹ Aristotle, *The Nichomachean Ethics*, translated by Roger Crisp (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), Book VI, Chapter 5, 1140a, p. 107.

⁴⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 19.

⁴¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 20.

⁴² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 20.

universals, a reasoned proof”⁴³ may satisfy the needs of natural and mathematical sciences, but human and social sciences deal with moral and historical beings and issues. The object of human and social sciences—*i.e.*, “the moral and historical existence of humanity”⁴⁴—does not allow them to study only on the basis of modern quantitative and empirical methods; these sciences need an extra strength embodied in the scientist’s personality and education. Gadamer tries to put forward that reason cannot be the only source of knowledge for social sciences, the society and history are “source[s] of truth totally different from theoretical reason.”⁴⁵ So production of knowledge regarding the human being, culture, society and history is a completely different process than the empirical, theoretical and logical reasoning. This does not mean that theoretical reasoning has no use in these sciences, but that it is not right to insist for human sciences to be on the same methodological grounds of empirical and mathematical sciences. It has been discussed in recent philosophy of science literature that even natural sciences need some interpretative element for progress in addition to strict methods. “[I]t has always been known that,” writes Gadamer, “the possibilities of rational proof and instruction do not fully exhaust the sphere of knowledge.”⁴⁶ Then, Gadamer mentions Shaftesbury as an influential philosopher whose idea of common sense would be helpful for hermeneutics. Shaftesbury describes what is understood from *sensus communis* with these words:

[S]ense of public weal and of the common interest, love of the community or society, natural affection, humanity, obligingness, or that sort of civility which rises from a just sense of the common rights of mankind, and the natural equality there is among those of the same species.⁴⁷

⁴³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 20.

⁴⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 20.

⁴⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 21.

⁴⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 21.

⁴⁷ Anthony Ashley Cooper, Third Earl of Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men, Manners, Opinions, Times* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 48.

According to Shaftesbury, the discussion about common sense has its roots in the Greek concept *koinonoemosune* [κοινωνημοσύνη] of Marcus Aurelius. The important point in the reference to the concept of *koinonoemosune* is the moral element present in the root of the concept of common sense, and Gadamer also wants to emphasize with this reference that common sense is not given to all men as a capacity. For example, let us consider the following explanation regarding *koinonoemosune* of Aurelius by Salmasius, which is narrated by Shaftesbury:

*[T]he moderate, the usual and respected mind of a man, which takes thought for the communal good in some way and does not refer everything to its own advantage, and also has regard of those with whom it is engaged, thinking modestly and reasonably about itself. But on the other hand, all the conceited and arrogant think that they are born only for themselves and their own benefits and, in favour of themselves, they disdain and neglect others. And these are those who can properly be said not to possess sensus communis.*⁴⁸

Koinonoemosune stand for the man having common sense. So to have common sense requires having a moral attitude and this attitude originates from “the heart, rather than the head.”⁴⁹ Gadamer also mentions the Scottish philosophy of common sense and its importance. He also gives Henri Bergson’s *le bon sens* as an example for a concept of common sense which is still connected with morality. Although *le bon sens* is translated into English as good sense, Gadamer accepts it as an example of the concept of common sense. What is important in Bergson’s speech “Good Sense and Classical Studies” is that it contains many essential points for explaining the concept.⁵⁰ First of all, *le bon sens* is presented by Bergson as a critique of new science based on abstraction and as a praise of the “inner energy” of the soul in a society. Bergson says that there are good or bad consequences of most of our actions and these

⁴⁸ Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men*, p. 48, n. 19 (Italics are from the original text).

⁴⁹ Shaftesbury, *Characteristics of Men*, p. 49.

⁵⁰ Henri Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” in *Key Writings* (New York: Continuum, 2002), pp. 345-353.

consequences do not only affect ourselves, but also affect our society in which we live:

Foreseeing these consequences, or rather having a presentiment of them; distinguishing the essential from the inessential or indifferent in matters of behaviour; choosing from the various possible courses of action the one which will produce the greatest amount of attainable rather than imaginable good: this is, it seems to me, the role of good sense. It is thus indeed a sense in its own way; but while the other senses place us in relation to things, good sense presides over our relations with persons.⁵¹

Complicated consequences of our actions make anticipation of every detail impossible. However, most of the time we have to act in one way or another immediately, without long speculations about what we would do. We observe that some people have greater ability in choosing the right way of acting in these cases, however some others do not have such ability and either choose the wrong action or stay inactive, though the situation requires action. For Bergson these situations are where common sense is operative: “The authority that we call upon in these cases, the one which dispels our hesitations and resolves the difficulty, is good sense. It does seem that good sense is in practical life what genius is in the arts and sciences.”⁵² Nevertheless, notes Bergson, there is a difference between genius and good sense in that genius can be described as a passive sense in need of waiting for its light to come, whereas good sense “requires a constant wakefulness, an ever-renewed adjustment to ever-new situations.”⁵³ So a person having *le bon sens* is a genius in practical affairs. It needs a continuous effort to develop and keep *le bon sens*, since it is a complicated task including adaptation, creativity, judgment and so not a gift given by birth or God. *Le bon sens*, Gadamer emphasizes, has clearly a “moral and political meaning” which is necessary for social life.⁵⁴

⁵¹ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 346.

⁵² Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 346.

⁵³ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 346.

⁵⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 24.

“Good Sense and Classical Studies” is a very important speech not only because it contributes to the idea of common sense but also because it shares with Vico and Gadamer the idea of truth contained in common sense which is different from the idea of truth defended by modern or Cartesian methodological science. For Bergson, science searches for universal truth valid for all times and for all people. Common sense, on the other hand, tries to find the “truth of the present hour.” Bergson defines the primary concern of common sense as “always renewing the task of being right.”⁵⁵ As we have said, Vico differentiated between knowledge and common sense by arguing that knowledge arises from truths whereas common sense from the probable or verisimilar. The matters about life, about human beings and society contain a different kind of truth, since in life, says Vico, “things which most of the time are true, are only very seldom false.”⁵⁶ In a similar way, Bergson emphasizes that the operation of science is basically different from the operation of good sense for the very reason that Vico asserted verisimilarity as standing between truth and falsity. Bergson’s differentiation between good sense and science has many aspects that are valuable for our present concern about common sense. Let us look at the details of his description of good sense and how he places good sense in between instinct and science.

Science moreover neglects no empirical fact, no consequence of its reasoning: it calculates the role of all the influences and takes the deduction of its principles to their end. Good sense chooses. It holds certain consequences to be practically negligible, and stops the development of a principle at the precise point that an excessively brutal logic would ruffle the delicacy of the real. A selection must be made between the facts and reasons which struggle, push and jostle with each other. In the end, good sense is more than instinct and less than science; it should be seen rather as a certain bent of the mind, a certain inclination of attention. We could almost say that good sense is attention itself, oriented in direction of life.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 347.

⁵⁶ Vico, *On the Study Methods of Our Time*, p. 13.

⁵⁷ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 347.

Good sense is more than instinct because it is in need of education in order to develop and in need of “the continuous effort of a persistent attention” so that it can accord itself to new situations. What gives good sense its direction is “the very principle of social life.” However, good sense is not reserved only for practical and social affairs, it also functions at the theoretical level.⁵⁸ Bergson emphasizes that both speculative matters and practical matters require good sense so that reason and practice do not contradict but combine. Because good sense is the unique sense which will direct us regarding when to apply rational principles and when to use our will sometimes against these principles. Bergson states that the “clear line of demarcation between intelligence and will, between morality and knowledge, between thought and action” are not actually such distinct attitudes.⁵⁹ Good sense “is a certain manner of doing things” which includes the use of reason and will at the same time.⁶⁰ By these remarks Bergson tries to show the importance of the education of good sense against an education based only on “a purely intellectual point of view.”⁶¹ It is very clear, then, Vico and Bergson have clearly a similar anxiety about the education system of their times.

Although, as we have seen, in England by Shaftesbury, in Italy by Vico and in France by Bergson the concept of common sense has kept its moral and political significance and meaning; the same is not true for the German tradition. Gadamer complains that human and social sciences developed “under the influence of the German philosophy of the age of Kant and Goethe.”⁶² This period of German philosophy took the concept of *sensus communis* and made it “a purely theoretical faculty.” This is the core of Gadamer’s criticism of the German tradition regarding the concept of *sensus communis*. He argues that Oetinger, a pietist philosopher, is the only exception in the German tradition.

⁵⁸ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 348.

⁵⁹ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 349.

⁶⁰ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 352.

⁶¹ Bergson, “Good Sense and Classical Studies,” p. 352.

⁶² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 24.

Since Oetinger was a theologian, it was natural that he was against the rationalism of the school, but the interesting point is that against rationalism he used mainly *sensus communis*. Oetinger is not an anti-science religious man, but a philosopher who tried to create a religious science which is in complete agreement with the Bible. What new science cannot see and understand in nature is that nature is a living and so changing entity. A science based only on measurements and quantities cannot explain the living nature. For that reason, Oetinger tries to establish a new method for science named as “generative method” or “phenomenological method.”⁶³ *Sensus communis* is at the center of this generative method. Common sense is our sense for the whole, for life in its entirety. Without common sense we are lost in data we collect: “microscopic subtlety when practiced to excess ... prevents the appreciation of truth in its totality.”⁶⁴ For Oetinger, common sense, says Gadamer, is the source of “living knowledge” where mathematical, empirical and deductive method cannot solve problems. Gadamer uses the following quotation from Oetinger as a definition of *sensus communis*:

The *sensus communis* is concerned only with things that all men see daily before them, things that hold an entire society together, things that are concerned as much with truths and statements as with the arrangements and patterns comprised in statements.⁶⁵

Oetinger implies that nature is a product of continuous divine creation. To understand it necessitates to understand this divine “arrangements and patterns” in it. However, science stays away from the soul of nature and is stuck in the quantitative, demonstrative methods. Gadamer applies to another

⁶³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 25. For phenomenological method of Oetinger and also for a short presentation of Oetinger’s view on science see George Becker’s “The Merton Thesis: Oetinger and German Pietism, a Significant Negative Case,” *Sociological Forum*, Vol. 7, No. 4. (Dec., 1992), pp. 641-660.

⁶⁴ Quoted from Friedrich Christoph Oetinger’s *Die Philosophie der Alten* II:5 by George Becker in “The Merton Thesis: Oetinger and German Pietism, a Significant Negative Case,” p. 647.

⁶⁵ Quoted from Friedrich Christoph Oetinger’s *Die Wahrheit des Sensus Communis, in den nach dem Grund-Text erklärten Sprüchen und Prediger Salomo oder das beste Haus- und Sittenbuch für Gelehrte und Ungelehrte* (Stuttgart: Steinkopf, 1861) by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, p. 24.

definition given by Oetinger: “the vivid and penetrating perception of objects evident to all human beings, from their immediate contact and intuition, which are absolutely simple.”⁶⁶ That is, common sense arises out of our ordinary perception, rather than out of scientific perception by means of instruments such as the microscope. We must be aware of the fact that these instruments when used excessively hinder us from seeing the process of life and change in nature. Oetinger was aware that learning and understanding rational truths and procedures has always been different from understanding social and human truths. Ratio is not sufficiently qualified in understanding and assimilating common truths. Something natural is necessary for this and instincts are appropriate for this task. “The communal sense is a complex of instincts,” says Gadamer; so common sense cannot be a purely rational category, it has strong connections with intuition and perception.

We have an understanding of truth starting with Descartes’ “knowing subject” and continuing with Kant’s transcendental subject. According to this understanding, truth can only be objective truth; that is, it must contain only the knowledge of object independent of subject. Such an understanding of truth excludes all other truth claims which we meet in society, in art, in humanities. Is there really a truth which constitutes an alternative to Cartesian, methodological and objectivist understanding of knowledge? For Gadamer we can find such an alternative in the humanistic concepts of *Bildung*, *sensus communis* and taste. Against objectivism *Bildung* describes the nature of knowledge which flourishes in the character of the person and which changes that person by penetrating the personality of him. *Sensus communis* describes the relationship of truth with the power of persuasion and the power of making right choices in social life. Taste, on the other hand, not only accompanies us when we are fulfilling our most basic needs in life and also shows itself in all of our moral decisions. In that sense, a developed taste is very effective in directing us to the truth. All these are truths which cannot be reached and understood by conceptual analysis, logical proofs

⁶⁶ Quoted from Friedrich Christoph Oetinger’s *Inquisitio in sensum communem et rationem* (1753; repr. Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt, 1964) by Gadamer in *Truth and Method*, p. 25.

and mathematical calculations. Taking artwork as an object of pleasure or only as an object would hinder us from seeing its truth content.

CHAPTER III

GADAMER'S CRITIQUE OF KANT'S AESTHETICS

3.1 Judgment and Taste

In the chapter on *sensus communis* I referred to Gadamer's elaboration of the history of this concept. For Gadamer, German philosophy after Kant could not understand the full meaning of the concept. In order to show how common sense has been misunderstood or misplaced by Kant, it is necessary to look how Kant theorized aesthetics. Kant's *Critique of Power of Judgment* is important in two respects: it set the basis of what a judgment is and it elaborated how we legitimate our judgments in different areas according to the type of judgment required for that area, and also the *Critique of Power of Judgment* can be seen as the beginning of modern aesthetics. "Aesthetics" as a separate inquiry and the concept "aesthetic consciousness" are products of the modern age. Art and beauty, before modern times, were not comprehended separately from daily life, though they were questioned by philosophy. Art was either a part of religious life or one of daily life practices. After and during the development of a new understanding of science and of modern states, art or "aesthetics" has become a field which can only be evaluated within itself, a field whose place in social life is determined by the "tastes" of individuals and which does not carry any truth value. Gadamer raises a critical attitude towards this development and finds Kant as the most important philosopher who paved the way for this development. Gadamer defends that the category of reflecting judgment that Kant put forward in *Critique of Power of Judgment* and his use of the concept of taste, resulted in the subjectivization of aesthetics by its being left out of the field of conceptual knowledge.

It is necessary here to clarify what differentiates Kant's theory of beauty from earlier theories of art and of beauty. Before Kant there were two orientations or methods towards the question of how we can understand the experience of beautiful: rationalist and empiricist methods. Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten and Georg Friedrich Meier are defenders of rationalism in understanding beauty. Baumgarten conceives judgments of taste as essentially cognitive, by arguing that such judgments are based on the perfection of the sensation. Perception of beauty is possible if we have perfected our senses for beauty. The rules or standards of perfection of our senses can be discovered as a result of aesthetics conceived as an independent science or as a rational discipline. So, for Baumgarten, the center of experience of beauty is experiencing subject and aesthetics deals with the perfection of the sense of beauty; i.e., with the rules of taste. Edmund Burke, Francis Hutcheson and David Hume, on the other hand, were the most important representatives of the empirical method in aesthetics. In the empiricist method the question tried to be answered was from which qualities of the objects our aesthetic pleasure took its roots. However, empiricists' emphasis on the qualities of the objects does not mean that they think that beauty is found in the properties of objects, on the contrary, for them beauty is a result of our response to some qualities. So, empirical psychology is the basis of aesthetics. Because there is no universal law that binds our responses according to an a priori principle, all aesthetical judgments, empiricists conclude, remain necessarily subjective in nature. These theories have much influence on Kant; nevertheless, Kant thought that both of these methods were wrong in some respects.⁶⁷ According to Kant, the basis of aesthetic judgments does not belong to the "aesthetic object" or qualities of that object, but to the pleasure which is caused by the representation of the object in the imagination of the subject. This pleasure is not immediately connected with the object; this pleasure is entirely related with the representation in the

⁶⁷ A discussion of empiricist and rationalist theories of beauty can be found in Donald W. Crawford's *Kant's Aesthetic Theory* (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1974) and in Werner S. Pluhar's "Introduction" to *Critique Of Judgement* by Immanuel Kant, trans. Werner S. Pluhar (Indianapolis, Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, 1987).

imagination of the subject. More specifically, aesthetic pleasure is a pleasure coming from pure representation of an object. If there is any concern or question about the existence of the object, the representation and also judgment stops to be pure. Aesthetic pleasure and the “determinant qualities” of the object are completely independent. Thus the question which must be asked about aesthetic judgments is the following: Is there a validity, necessity or universality of the judgments which are in the form of ‘this is beautiful’? Kant, in the *Critique of the Power of Judgment* tries to prove the validity of aesthetic judgments.

We must answer what a judgment is for Kant and how Kant separates different kinds of judgments. Judgment or the faculty of judgment, for Kant, is the act of determining an object or a quality of an object to be an instantiation of a universal, a concept or a rule. For example, whether an animal is a mammalian or a reptilian is a judgment. Kant names such kind of judgments as “determining” or “determinant” judgments.⁶⁸ The judgments that are used in natural and mathematical sciences are, according to Kant, the sole examples of determining judgments. Yet Kant introduces second kind of judgment, which is reflecting judgment. If there is no relevant concept or rule corresponding to the object, if the object drives us to seek such a universal but it is impossible to find such a universal, the judgments given in these situations fall under the category of reflecting judgment. Reflecting judgment is basically the evaluation of an object apart from its determining qualities, such as a painting’s measures, weight or size etc. Hence aesthetic judgments constitute a type of reflecting judgment. For, in aesthetic evaluation, such as in the evaluation of a painting, we have no available universal concept which is determining or comprehensive. The judgment that a painting is beautiful emerges as a result of not directly the object but of the relation between the subject and the object or as a result of the representation of the object in the subject’s imagination. For Kant, in order for us to arrive at an aesthetic judgment, representation of the object must create in us a sensation of pleasure or enjoyment. But this feeling of enjoyment can only be a

⁶⁸ Immanuel Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 67, Introduction, section IV.

pure judgment of taste when all concern or interest about the existence of the object is eliminated. When interest or personal concern interfere with the judgment, then the judgment of taste is not anymore pure and becomes a personal and sided judgment. Therefore, pure judgments of taste can only be given in a situation of absolute unconcern.

One of the assertions that Kant tries to legitimate in the *Critique of Power of Judgment* is that aesthetic judgments which do not contain any knowledge, are subjectively universal. A priority of aesthetic judgment is very important for Kant's theory because a priority guarantees that aesthetic judgments are not subjective, but the same a priority does not render aesthetic judgments cognitive. So, it is necessary to understand how a judgment can be a priori but not cognitive. Kant, who was aware of the fact that the validity of an aesthetic judgment cannot be proved depending on a universal principle, was compelled to construct a new area of universality beside empirical and logical universality. Since aesthetic judgments could not be universal on empirical grounds, Kant found an *a priori* ground to base that universality. But, according to Kant, for a judgment to be accepted as knowledge it must have two sides coincided with each other, that is, our experience must be in conformity with our concepts or our categories of understanding. Because there are no concepts available for our aesthetic judgments, these judgments are not even candidates of knowledge. Therefore, Kant tried to ground aesthetic judgments on the power of judgment which he constructed on the *a priori* area of universality outside the domain of knowledge. This *a priori* ground is the feeling of pleasure in the subjective consciousness created by objects. A person who gives a judgment of taste on beautiful, feels himself or herself in a total freedom and the cause of this enjoyment is not a personal or social situation but a sense of pleasure resulting from pure taste. So after dissociating himself wholly from the situation surrounding him and from his personal preferences, everybody must experience the same pleasure. This kind of judgments is pure judgment of taste and for this reason all pure judgments of taste depend on an *a priori* ground. This *a priori* ground is the "subjective purposiveness" contained in the judgments about

beauty. According to Kant's scheme presented in *The Critique of Pure Reason*, cognitive capacity of human beings is composed of two faculties, imagination and understanding. Imagination is our capacity to organize our sense perceptions into images. Understanding, however, supplies us with a conceptual framework into which we place images. When we judge that something is beautiful since it arouses in us a feeling of pleasure, argues Kant, the source of this pleasure is the harmonious and free play of imagination and understanding, which is directly caused by the form of beauty. If this is the case, aesthetic judgments contain an *a priori* element of subjective purposiveness which fulfills the function of uniting our two faculties of cognition, making them relate to each other harmoniously. Everyone has these two faculties of cognition and so everyone need to unite them harmoniously and as a consequence beautiful objects are potentially beautiful for everyone if they fulfill the subjective purposiveness of unity of our cognition.

A merely reflecting judgment about a given individual object, however, can be aesthetic if (before its comparison with others is seen), the power of judgment, which has no concept ready for the given intuition, holds the imagination (merely in the apprehension of the object) together with the understanding (in the presentation of a concept in general) and perceives a relation of the two faculties of cognition which constitutes the subjective, merely sensitive condition of the objective use of the power of judgment in general (namely the agreement of those two faculties with each other).⁶⁹

Since this process, according to Kant, does not involve any conceptual or logical factor, it does not help us in producing knowledge. The process of arriving at pure judgment of taste makes it possible for us to compare the judgments in the realm of aesthetics, or, in other words, for Kant, it shows us that critique is possible in the realm of aesthetics; for, Kant argues that aesthetic judgments are not merely "subjective responses". Aesthetic judgments do not change from person-to-person; on the contrary, they have universal validity. Nevertheless this universal validity is of a subjective kind, which means that this validity can only be used in the confines of subjectivity and of intersubjectivity.

⁶⁹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 26, the first draft of the introduction, section VIII.

This validity is the ground of the communicability of judgments of taste and so of the autonomy of aesthetics and the possibility of critique in aesthetics.

[I]f the aesthetic judgment carries such a claim [the claim of the judgment to universal validity and necessity] with it, then it also makes a claim that its determining ground must lie not merely in the feeling of pleasure and displeasure in itself alone, but at the same time in a rule of the higher faculty of cognition, in this case, namely, in the rule of the power of judgment, which is thus legislative with regard to the conditions of reflection *a priori*, and demonstrates autonomy; this autonomy is not, however (like that of the understanding, with regard to the theoretical laws of nature, or of reason, in the practical laws of freedom), valid objectively, i.e., through concepts of things or possible actions, but is merely subjectively valid, for the judgment from feeling, which, if it can make a claim to universal validity, demonstrates its origin grounded in *a priori* principles. Strictly speaking, one must call this legislation heautonomy, since the power of judgment does not give the law to nature nor to freedom, but solely to itself, and it is not a faculty for producing concepts of objects, but only for comparing present cases to others that have been given to it and thereby indicating the subjective conditions of the possibility of this combination *a priori*.⁷⁰

In his *Truth and Method*, in the section about Kant, Gadamer makes an examination of the history of the concept of taste and he tried to show, contrary to Kant's conclusions, that aesthetic experience has, to an important degree, a cognitive value. Gadamer says that Kant solved the main problem which was the problem of relativism in aesthetic judgments, but Gadamer adds that Kant paid a very high price. Kant's purpose was to give an answer to the views that try to make art only a tool for the sake of society. According to Gadamer, Kant's way of reaching his purpose sacrificed the truth contents that artworks want to deliver. If you strip artworks of their truth contents, then the problem of the function of art for society is automatically eliminated, and by this way Kant is also accepted as the father of the "autonomy of art". The result is the separation

⁷⁰ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, pp. 27-28, the first draft of the introduction, section VIII.

of moral realm from aesthetics and a change in the understanding of common sense as being only possible in aesthetics or in the realm of taste.

Gadamer, first of all, writes about Kant's moral philosophy and says that "the *sensus communis* plays no part in Kant—not even in the logical sense. What Kant treats in the transcendental doctrine of judgment—i.e., the doctrine of schematism and the principles—no longer has anything to do with the *sensus communis*."⁷¹ The reason for this is that Kant was against the moral theories which gave an important place to "moral feeling," such as in English moral philosophy. As we have seen, *sensus communis* is not a category of reason but it is a moral, practical and social sense. According to Kant, morality is a field of laws or of categorical imperative, so morality requires the same kind of judgment that operates "under the laws of pure practical reason," that is, determining judgment.⁷² Taken away from the field of morality, Kant places *sensus communis* in aesthetic judgments.

Thus from the whole range of what could be called a sense faculty of judgment, for Kant only the judgment of aesthetic taste is left. Here one may speak of a true sense of community. Doubtful though it may be whether one may speak of knowledge in connection with aesthetic taste, and certain though it is that aesthetic judgments are not made according to concepts, it is still the case that aesthetic taste necessarily implies universal agreement, even if it is sensory and not conceptual. Thus the true sense of community, says Kant, is *taste*.⁷³

Kant transferred the *sensus communis* from morality to aesthetics. We must certainly agree on our aesthetic judgments, and when we say 'taste', according to Kant, we are basically talking about this necessary agreement among all human beings coming from the subjectively *a priori* character of our aesthetic judgments. So, concludes Gadamer, "There is no longer any systematic place for the concept's basic moral sense ... he totally excluded the concept of

⁷¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 30.

⁷² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 30.

⁷³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 30.

sensus communis from moral philosophy.”⁷⁴ Nevertheless Kant tried to show that there is a connection between aesthetics and morality by defending that there is an analogy between the beautiful and the morally good and this analogical character helps human beings to develop their morality.

Taste as it were makes possible the transition from sensible charm to the habitual moral interest without too violent a leap by representing the imagination even in its freedom as purposively determinable for the understanding and teaching us to find a free satisfaction in the objects of the senses even without any sensible charm.⁷⁵

As we can see in the above quotation, taste is constituted in the aesthetic realm and transported into the moral realm. Nevertheless, Gadamer looks at the history of the concept of taste and pays attention to the moral element that was present at the beginning of this history. Without this return to the origins of the concept of taste, it would be impossible to evaluate the loss of moral element in Kant’s doctrine of taste. This moral element was the ideal of humanity that has begun to rise at the end of the Middle Ages. This ideal, which laid the foundations of the concept of taste, tries to develop a critical attitude towards the “school” dogmatism. Gadamer considers Balthasar Gracian as the beginning of the history of the concept of taste. Gadamer says that, according to Gracian, the most primitive of our sense of taste is the taste we get from the foods, and this primitive sense of taste is the point where “intellectual differentiation” has started in human history. A human being who stays away from the things that give no taste is the most crude version of the Gracian’s ideal of the cultured man. According to this ideal, says Gadamer, cultured man, that is, man having taste “achieves the proper freedom of distance from all the things of life and society, so that he is able to make distinctions and choices consciously and reflectively.”⁷⁶ According the Gracian’s ideal of *Bildung*, not Christian nobles but educated individuals who have taste will construct or create new society. In

⁷⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 29.

⁷⁵ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 228, §59.

⁷⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 31.

The Art of Worldly Wisdom, Gracian says that good taste is an indispensable moral element in our life because of its role in ‘choosing’.

Most of life depends thereon. It needs good taste and correct judgment, for which neither intellect nor study suffices. To be choice, you must choose, and for these two things are needed: to be able to choose at all, and then to choose the best. There are many men of fecund and subtle mind, of keen judgment, of much learning, and of great observation who yet are at a loss when they come to choose. They always take the worst as if they have tried to go wrong. Thus this is one of the greatest gifts from above.⁷⁷

Choice is the basis of morality and social life; so for Gracian, taste or good taste is an intimately moral idea. Gadamer says that “the history of the idea of taste follows the history of absolutism from Spain to France and England” and “the suppression of the hereditary aristocracy” by the rising absolutism.⁷⁸ According to this, good taste is an inseparable part of the ideal of “good society.” Gadamer summarizes this as follows: “New society no longer recognizes and legitimates itself on the basis of birth and rank but simply through the shared nature of its judgments.”⁷⁹ New society legitimates itself depending upon “*sensus communis*” because taste is not an issue of personal preference; taste was accepted as “a mode of knowing.” Since taste is a mode of knowing, people may confront a conflict between their tastes and their personal preferences: if taste were only a subjective like or dislike then there would never be a conflict between our taste and our subjective preferences. For example, I can personally love ethnic music but do not much like classical music; such is totally a personal preference. But I can encounter with a symphony of classical music and say that ‘it is beautiful,’ regardless of the fact that I dislike classical music. Also I can force myself to listen to that symphony many times because of its beauty and try to suppress my personal dislike of classical music just in order to obey what my taste tells me to do. So, I can develop my taste even if my personal preferences

⁷⁷ Baltasar Gracian y Morales, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*, (Forgotten Books, 2008) §51. (Available via <http://books.google.com>).

⁷⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 31.

⁷⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 31.

may contradict with it. Such a development may rise to the level of an effect that creates a change in my totally subjective preferences.

Gadamer says that judgments of taste are remarkably decisive; good taste does not hesitate about the decisions it gives. However judgments of taste cannot be proved and learned through experiment and/or through conceptual analysis because these judgments depend upon a human sense. We stay away from the things which give no taste or which disturb our taste and we do not hesitate about this negativity. Nevertheless taste is not a social sense either, for this reason taste can be against fashion, can like or dislike the things that are in fashion. Because “the phenomenon of taste is an intellectual faculty of differentiation,” taste does not feel compelled to obey society. But at the same time it is thought that ideal society will reconcile with the issues of taste, because taste is a mode of knowing; taste is the mode of knowing of the ideal society.⁸⁰ Gracian also tries to put forward that the things that are pleasing are shared by anyone having good taste and also that this taste cannot be analytically described: “There must be something good in a thing that pleases so many; even if it cannot be explained it is certainly enjoyed.”⁸¹ Taste does not depend upon evidences, it can oppose fashion, it is as a sense at the basis of being human; since the person having taste is an individual belonging to ideal society, he does not lose his sense of taste when he is taking moral decisions and ordering his behaviors. However, Kant has clearly separated our power of aesthetic judgment from having anything cognitive or truth value. Claims of taste are only indirectly related to morality and also this relation is a functional one in that taste makes our passage from pleasure of senses to moral sense easier. But this is not an indispensable function; practical reason can do also without aesthetic taste, because practical reason is endowed with all the concepts necessary to give moral judgments. Even where Kant tries to connect aesthetic judgments of taste to morality, he emphasizes that taste has no potential for giving us any content, any truth or any knowledge:

⁸⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 33.

⁸¹ Gracian, *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*, § 270.

The subjective principle for judging of the beautiful is represented as universal, i.e., valid for everyone, but not as knowable by any universal concept (the objective principle of morality is also declared to be universal, i.e., knowable for all subjects, and at the same time also for all actions of one and the same subject, yet by means of a universal concept).⁸²

Taste always remains out of science. Gadamer argues that in that way Kant also denies “the activity of aesthetic judgment in law and morality.”⁸³ Gadamer says that Kant paid a very high price in order to provide an independent area of validity: this high price was giving up the role that is played by the aesthetic judgment and the phenomenon of taste in law and morality. According to Gadamer “philological and historical studies” were living on this element of taste and aesthetic judgment. Kant’s transcendental analysis of aesthetic judgment rejects any truth claim by the works of literature and art, which are the basic sources of human sciences. Kant defines the concept of taste as judging an object on the basis of completely disinterested emotion of satisfaction and dissatisfaction and thereby he limits the concept of taste largely. Perhaps this can be a requirement of Kant’s transcendental analysis. Gadamer says that this abstraction does not reflect the concept of taste and undervalues the development of the concept of taste throughout history until Kant. For Gadamer, “taste is in no way limited to what is beautiful in nature and art, judging it in respect to its decorative quality, but embraces the whole realm of morality and manners.”⁸⁴ If we accept Kant’s definition of reflecting judgment, if reflecting judgment is only the judgment in which only a particular is given and a universal is sought for, then the realm of morality, for Gadamer, is an area in which reflecting judgments are always used. Every judgment about a thing taken in its concrete individuality, is a judgment about a concrete instance. Therefore, judging in such cases “involves not merely applying the universal principle, according to which it is judged, but co-determining, supplementing, and

⁸² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 228, §59.

⁸³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 36.

⁸⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 34.

correcting that principle.”⁸⁵ It follows that “all moral decisions require taste,” that is, taste “is an indispensable element” for many of our judgments.⁸⁶ On this basis, Gadamer criticizes Kant’s distinction of determining/reflecting judgment and his claim that reflecting judgment is used only when we are dealing with beautiful, sublime and with teleology.

As a result when Gadamer accuses Kant of subjectivizing aesthetics, the “subjectivization” he is talking about is not the changeability from person-to-person (we already know that Kant refutes such changeability) but the denial of their truth content. That is, for Kant aesthetic judgments do not contain or provide knowledge, do not depend upon knowledge. This is what Gadamer identifies as “subjectivization of aesthetics”. That Gadamer is right can be seen from the fact that art has become the main material of entertainment industry, and the fact that people expect nothing from artworks except for pleasure and fun. However when we look at the history of the concept of taste and the effects that art has created in the lives of people throughout history, the importance of art for knowledge and cognition can be seen more clearly.

The whole discussion about the concept of *sensus communis* showed very clearly that human beings are basically social beings and a sense for the social is at the very basis of human existence. Rationality comes after the social dimension of man. Society lives on morality or moral decisions and feelings are indispensable elements which constitute the life of society. Therefore, Gadamer is basically opposed to the acceptance of man as basically thinking entity, or as Cartesian cogito. Conceptual thinking, intellectual systems, rational proofs, scientific methods are all for the sake of humanity. On this basis, Kant’s theory of judgment seems inadequate for evaluating the moral side of human beings in that it overintellectualizes moral judgments. The tradition of *sensus communis* shares the common ground of opposing such intellectualization of social life and

⁸⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 35.

⁸⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 35.

warns that such tendency would have detrimental effects for social life of the future.

3.2 Genius

Gadamer says that, in fact, Kant's intention was not to establish a "philosophy of art," that is, Kant's main concern was not to answer questions about art but only questions about beauty and sublime. But there are certain interpretations that take Kant's third critique as a philosophy of art and these interpretations mostly accept the concept of genius as the center of Kant's aesthetics. As a passage to the concept of genius, Gadamer presents the doctrine of free and dependent beauty and the doctrine of the ideal of beauty. Kant defines free beauty as the beauty that "presupposes no concept of what the object ought to be."⁸⁷ Beauties of natural objects, such as "flowers," "birds," or beauties of ornaments such as "designs *à la grecque*, the foliage on borders or on wallpaper, etc"⁸⁸ belong to the kind of free beauty, because they are not connected with a particular concept or purpose; in Kant's words, they "signify nothing by themselves."⁸⁹ On the other hand, dependent beauty is conditioned on a concept or purpose. The examples Kant gives as examples of dependent beauty are beauties of "a human being," "a horse" (in the sense that horses function in travel and races), and "a building."⁹⁰ For judgments about such objects cannot be pure judgments of taste, or, as Gadamer suggests, "in all these cases the judgment of taste is obscured and limited."⁹¹ So if we are to discuss artworks or phenomena of art, we need to go beyond pure judgment of taste as a criterion. Nevertheless, it is also possible to produce pure judgment of taste about an object having a particular purpose and Kant explains the conditions of this at the end of his discussion of free and dependent beauty as follows: "A judgment of taste in regard to an object with a determinate internal end would thus be pure only if the person making the

⁸⁷ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 114, §16.

⁸⁸ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 114, §16.

⁸⁹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 114, §16.

⁹⁰ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 114, §16.

⁹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 40.

judgment either had no concept of this end or abstracted from it in his judgment.”⁹² But this does not mean that this is the only correct way of judging, because, says Kant, he who judges according to the purpose of the object will also produce a legitimate judgment about the object’s dependent beauty, or in Kant’s terms, “an applied judgment of taste.”⁹³ However, it must be noted that this possibility does not change the general inclination of Kant about the question of real beauty. Gadamer puts forward this point very clearly:

True beauty [for Kant] is that of flowers and of ornament, which in our world, dominated by ends, present themselves as beauties immediately and of themselves, and hence do not require that any concept or purpose be consciously disregarded.⁹⁴

Gadamer’s main concern with this distinction is that accepting this distinction means accepting Kant’s view about beauty proper. This distinction determines how we understand art in terms of general idea of beauty. “This is a particularly dangerous doctrine for the understanding of art, since free beauty of nature and—in the sphere of art—the ornament appears as the beauty proper to the pure judgment of taste, for these are beautiful ‘in themselves’.”⁹⁵ So under Kant’s doctrine of free and dependent beauty we can find two ideas: the first one is that which we have seen above regarding beauty proper, i.e. nature and ornament are the sole examples of free beauty.; the second is an idea against aesthetics of perfection. “The examples of free beauty,” notes Gadamer, “are obviously not intended to exhibit beauty proper, but only to ensure that pleasure as such is not a judgment of the perfection of the object.”⁹⁶

According to the scheme of free and dependent beauty, Kant argues that it is not possible to talk about ideal of objects that are dependent on a concept or purpose. In order to talk about an ideal of something Kant requires to “fix” or to

⁹² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 115, §16.

⁹³ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 115, §16.

⁹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 40.

⁹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 39.

⁹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 41.

“determine” the concept or purpose completely. Houses, for example, are objects dependent on a purpose, but this purpose is not “fixed” enough so that we—i.e. all people—can imagine a perfect house that pleases everyone. So there is no ideal of beauty for this kind of things.

So there remain only free beauties. In the area of free beauties, still, it is not easy to find ideal of beauty. Therefore, Kant proposes a different way to find this ideal. “The doctrine of the ideal of beauty,” says Gadamer, “is based on the difference between the normative idea and the rational idea or ideal of beauty.”⁹⁷ Normative idea is for natural objects. There are no perfect natural objects; there are only standards according to which we can evaluate the correctness of individual image. For example, if we want to judge a particular cow’s beauty, we must compare that particular cow with its normative or standard idea of cow, then it arouses pleasure because of its “correctness.”⁹⁸ So, Kant has eliminated both dependent beauties and free beauties to be candidates for ideal of beauty. The only alternative left was human beings, or in Kant’s words, “only that which has the end of its existence in itself, the *human being*, ... this *human being* alone is capable of an ideal of *beauty* ...”⁹⁹ The purpose of the existence of man is found in morality, so man becomes the model of morality when he expresses what is morally good. “Expression of the *moral*”¹⁰⁰ is the element which enables us to fix the purpose of humanity, so to find ideal of beauty in *man*. So ideal of beauty consists of “visible expression”¹⁰¹ of what is morally good.

Although the doctrine of the ideal of beauty, states Gadamer, seems to imply the advantageous position of artistic beauty, for Kant the reverse is the case. Natural beauty is superior to artistic beauty in both its pureness and its content. Although it is stated that natural beauties are free of all purpose and conceptual determination, a surprise is waiting for us in Kant. “Beautiful *forms*

⁹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 42.

⁹⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 42.

⁹⁹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 117, §17.

¹⁰⁰ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 120, §17.

¹⁰¹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 120, §17.

of nature”¹⁰² produces the idea that there is an intention behind that beauty; namely it seems that these beauties of nature are created to show mankind its moral side. “As beautiful,” says Gadamer, “nature finds a *language* that brings to *us* an intelligible idea of what mankind is to be.”¹⁰³

The examination of free and dependent beauty points to another dimension of what Gadamer calls “subjectivization of aesthetics.” Gadamer uses ‘subjectivization’ also in the sense that artwork is ontologically reduced to its effect upon the subject. As we will see in the following chapter, Gadamer argues that a work of art has a mode of being not independent but inclusive of the subjects that perceive or conceive it. This argument of being of the work of art is central to Gadamer’s hermeneutics. Kant, however, disregards the question of the ontology of artwork, because the sole criterion of our aesthetic judgments is the sense of pleasure aroused by the object. So when there is a debate about aesthetics it is about us we discuss, not about the object.¹⁰⁴

Upon this foundation, we can then look at how Kant sees genius: “For the judging of beautiful objects, as such, taste is required; but for beautiful art itself, i.e., for producing such objects, genius is required.”¹⁰⁵ According to Gadamer, the aim of the doctrine of genius in Kant is to show what art really is: “...for Kant art is more than the ‘beautiful representation of a thing’: it is the presentation of *aesthetic ideas*—i.e., of something that lies beyond all concepts.”¹⁰⁶ As we have seen, both in the area of natural beauty or in the area of artistic beauty, Kant wants to do away with conceptual structure. Conceptuality

¹⁰² Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 178, §42.

¹⁰³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 42.

¹⁰⁴ Schmidt emphasizes this ‘subjectivization’ goes to the point of disappearance of the artwork from all aesthetic concerns: “The judgment of taste is a sort of self-confession of the subject; it is defined by its disinterestedness in the object, even in the very existence of the object. With this thorough subjectivization of aesthetics, the disappearance of the aesthetic object begins. ... the work of art is prized for its effect upon the subject, not for itself.” Dennis J. Schmidt, “Aesthetics and Subjectivity” in *Hans-Georg Gadamer, Wahrheit und Methode*, Herausgegeben von Günter Figal (ed.), (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2007), p. 32.

¹⁰⁵ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 189, §48.

¹⁰⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 46.

and conformity to rules, for Kant, damages the process of artistic creation. Genius is the appropriate concept for this idea, since works of a genius is generally marked by originality, destruction of rules and creation of new rules or invention. These are products of “free use of his cognitive faculties,”¹⁰⁷ primarily of imagination and of understanding. Naturally, there are no rules for being a genius, but genius is a gift of nature given to few people. So Kant recognized art as being related deeply with nature by the help of the concept of genius:

[B]eautiful art cannot itself think up the rule in accordance with which it is to bring its product into being. Yet since without a preceding rule a product can never be called art, nature in the subject (and by means of the disposition of its faculties) must give the rule to art, i.e., beautiful art is possible only as a product of genius.¹⁰⁸

Art is part of nature in that a genius produces artworks. In that sense, beauty in art is a species of beauty in nature. Additionally, the activity of nature in producing natural beauties is parallel to the activity of genius, since nature continues to create beauties in art as the unconscious productive force of genius: “it [genius] cannot itself describe or indicate scientifically how it brings its product into being, but rather that it gives the rule as nature.”¹⁰⁹

Gadamer clearly sees a separation in Kant between the standpoint of taste and standpoint of genius. At the end, standpoint of genius has been the better suited approach for the evaluation of artworks and also for Kant’s passage to teleology. The main concern of first part of Kant’s *Critique of Power of Judgment*, asserts Gadamer, is not to develop a philosophy of art but to develop a foundation for justification and legitimation of teleology. The main problematic seems to be natural beauty and the main function of this problem is to “ground the central position of teleology.”¹¹⁰ Because of that, not the concept of taste but the concept of genius took the lead in Kant’s third critique. To understand the

¹⁰⁷ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 195, § 49.

¹⁰⁸ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 186, § 46.

¹⁰⁹ Kant, *Critique of the Power of Judgment*, p. 187, § 46.

¹¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 48 (italics are original).

difference between standpoints of taste and of genius it will be helpful to look at the following quotation from Gadamer:

[T]aste often has a leveling effect in contrast to the originality of the artistic work of genius. Taste avoids the unusual and the monstrous. It is concerned with the surface of things; it does not concern itself with what is original about an artistic production.¹¹¹

The appearance of the concept of genius in the eighteenth century was in a sense a reaction to the classicist aesthetics and so to the concept of taste in general. Gadamer mentions *Sturm und Drang*¹¹² as a movement violently opposed to the concept of taste and Enlightenment rationalism. Nevertheless, he speaks of Kant as occupying an intermediate position about these two concepts and in a sense as a defender of the concept of taste. *Sturm und Drang* overemphasized the role of genius in artistic creation and in its rebel against rationalism. Kant was harshly hostile to the *Sturm und Drang* movement¹¹³ and for that reason he occupied an intermediate position and limited the concept of genius as the creator of artworks. However after Kant, modern aesthetics valued genius much more than Kant did, and raised it “to the status of a universal concept of value” and the concept of genius “achieved a true apotheosis,” that is, it was elevated to a divine status.¹¹⁴ Gadamer wants to emphasize that Kant is not

¹¹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 50.

¹¹² *Sturm und Drang* is generally translated into English as Storm and Stress. Encyclopædia Britannica presents its basic description as the following: “German literary movement of the late 18th century that exalted nature, feeling, and human individualism and sought to overthrow the Enlightenment cult of Rationalism. Goethe and Schiller began their careers as prominent members of the movement. The exponents of the *Sturm und Drang* were profoundly influenced by the thought of Rousseau and Johann Georg Hamann, who held that the basic verities of existence were to be apprehended through faith and the experience of the senses.” “*Sturm und Drang*.” (2008). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved April 10, 2008, from Encyclopædia Britannica Online: <http://search.eb.com/eb/article-9070053>.

¹¹³ As ‘the’ man of Enlightenment, it is very understandable that Kant has opposed *Sturm und Drang*, however the connection between them seems much more stronger than appears at first look. Zammito presents the extent of Kant’s reaction to the *Sturm und Drang* as being the basic motive of his writing of *Critique of Judgment*: “Herder and the *Sturm und Drang* were the main targets of Kant’s theory of art and genius. Indeed, Kant’s hostility to the *Sturm und Drang* was one of the most important motives behind his entire enterprise of a treatise on aesthetics.” John H. Zammito, *The Genesis of Kant's Critique of Judgment* (London: The University of Chicago Press, 1992), p. 10.

¹¹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 50.

responsible for this development; in other words, the dominance of the concept of genius seen in the nineteenth century aesthetics is not a Kantian phenomenon.

I have shown that this kind of systematic predominance of the concept of genius over the concept of taste is not Kantian. Kant's main concern, however, was to give aesthetics an autonomous basis freed from the criterion of the concept, and not to raise the question of truth in the sphere of art, but to base aesthetic judgment on the subjective a priori of our feeling of life, the harmony of our capacity for "knowledge in general," which is the essence of both taste and genius.¹¹⁵

3.3. *Erlebnis*

The first point Gadamer touches on is that the word *Erlebnis* is relatively a contemporary word; it appeared commonly in 1870s. Two words, says Gadamer, constitute the roots of word of *Erlebnis*; one is *erleben* and the other is '*das Erlebte*'. *Erleben* is said to mean to experience something real immediately, at first hand, without any intermediary. '*Das Erlebte*,' on the other hand, means "the permanent content of what is experienced."¹¹⁶ In spite of the transiency of experience, *das Erlebte* expresses what is left and what preserves its importance after the experience was lived. Therefore, *Erlebnis* is a word which carries these two meanings in itself. It was biographical literature, which using this union of meaning in the best way provides the basis for the concept of *Erlebnis*: "Something becomes an 'experience' not only insofar as it is experienced, but insofar as its being experienced makes a special impression that gives it lasting importance."¹¹⁷ Gadamer expresses why this concept has been coined and used: most basically *Erlebnis* is developed against Enlightenment rationalism. Understanding and perception was two of the important concepts of the idea and project of Enlightenment. We were supposed to use and trust our faculty of understanding, and during this process it was supposed to be necessary to take data only from clear and distinct perceptions and to leave aside everything that transcend our understanding and perception. Against this "cold rationalism," the

¹¹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 52.

¹¹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 53.

¹¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 53.

concept of *Erlebnis* seems to be in a real relationship with life, because it refers both to the immediate experiences and to the continuing effects of these experiences. Obviously opposing such a cold rationalism was only possible by embracing life, by returning to life and by making life the ultimate foundation of human experience. Dilthey, Schleiermacher, Schiller, Hegel, Nietzsche, Bergson and Simmel were important philosophers who contributed to this development of the concept of life against Enlightenment rationalism. What is tried to be expressed by the word *Erlebnis* is that each unit of life, i.e. each *Erlebnis*, has a relationship with the totality and infinity of life and that this relation includes more than a simple relation between part and whole.

In contrast to the abstractness of understanding and the particularity of perception or representation, this concept [*Erlebnis*] implies a connection with totality, with infinity ... Every act, as an element of life, remains connected with the infinity of life that manifests itself in it. Everything finite is an expression, a representation of the infinite.¹¹⁸

This relation to infinite is present in *Erlebnis* as a word. When Gadamer deals with *Erlebnis* as a concept, he starts with Dilthey's contributions. Dilthey was the first philosopher who dealt with *Erlebnis* as a philosophical concept. In order to understand Dilthey's consideration of the concept, it will be helpful to look at the situation of human sciences in the nineteenth century. Nineteenth century was the age in which most important developments in natural sciences took place and these developments resulted in the absolute authority of natural sciences in the field of knowledge. It was natural sciences which constituted an ultimate model for human and social sciences. According to Gadamer the "concept of self-consciousness" and the idea of method which accepts only "clear and distinct perceptions" as certain are epistemological products of a feeling of alienation of the "age of mechanics" from the natural world. Reflection of this phenomenon, asserts Gadamer, can be found also in nineteenth century human sciences: "... so also the human sciences of the nineteenth

¹¹⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 55.

century felt a similar alienation from the world of history.”¹¹⁹ In natural sciences data is collected, roughly speaking, by experiments, observations and calculations, which are all present time events and recorded at the time of their occurrence in order to be available for later use. However this is not possible for especially historical sciences, and also for human and social sciences in general, since for these sciences the possibility of experiment and observation is limited, though not absent. Moreover, human world is qualitatively different from the natural world in that experiment and observation are not always appropriate methods for research and understanding. In any case, human sciences needed something to be studied and this is the question of what is “the given” in human and social sciences. According to Gadamer “what is given” has been the central question for Dilthey:

The spiritual creations of the past, art and history, no longer belong self-evidently to the present; rather, they are given up to research, they are data or givens (*Gegebenheiten*) from which a past can be made present. Thus the concept of the given is also important in Dilthey’s formulation of the concept of *Erlebnis*. What Dilthey tries to grasp with the concept of “experience” is the special nature of the given in the human sciences. Following Descartes’ formulation of the *res cogitans*, he defines the concept of experience by reflexivity, by interiority, and on the basis of this special mode of being given he tries to construct an epistemological justification for knowledge of the historical world. The primary data, to which the interpretation of historical objects goes back, are not data of experiment and measurement but unities of meaning. That is what the concept of experience states: the structures of meaning we meet in the human sciences, however strange and incomprehensible they may seem to us, can be traced back to ultimate units of what is given in consciousness, unities which themselves no longer contain anything alien, objective, or in need of interpretation. These unities of experience are themselves units of meaning.¹²⁰

We can conclude from this long quotation a number of important points about the concept of *Erlebnis* that Dilthey had in mind. Firstly, *Erlebnis* is the primary datum, the given, for human sciences. Secondly, the type of this primary

¹¹⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 55.

¹²⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 56-57.

datum is in the form of unities of meaning and these unities basically belong to consciousness. More clearly, primary data of human sciences are not external that can be measured by or applied to experiments, but internal, things about our soul or our consciousness, things that belong to Descartes' immaterial substance of human beings, that is, to *res cogitans*. In that sense "experience" is defined by Dilthey as being reflexive—as being conscious of itself. Gadamer argues that Kantianism and positivist understanding of social science in nineteenth century took the most basic data as our sensations. Obviously *Erlebnis* is quite different from "sensation" in that *Erlebnis* represents an irreplaceable relationship with life. Meaning of experience and life resists any attempt to mechanize it completely. What is the relation between life and meaning? Dilthey represents relationship between life and meaning in a very original way and it is impossible both to construct and to present such original representation in any kind of mechanistic model that takes sensation as its ultimate object. Gadamer summarizes Dilthey's idea as follows:

Since life objectifies itself in structures of meaning, all understanding of meaning consists in "translating the objectifications of life back into the spiritual life from which they emerged." Thus the concept of experience is the epistemological basis for all knowledge of the objective.¹²¹

Gadamer adds that the same understanding of the concept of *Erlebnis* dominated by epistemological concerns is also found in Husserl. Husserl uses the term *Erlebnis* as "the comprehensive name for all acts of consciousness whose essence is intentionality."¹²² So Gadamer argues that Dilthey and Husserl preferred to put forward the epistemological side of the concept and this caused the teleological function or meaning of the concept to stay behind the epistemological function. By teleological meaning, Gadamer means that *Erlebnis* fulfils a function or a goal within the unity of one's life. This is the production of unity both in singular experiences that are named as *Erlebnis* and also in life as a whole. In that sense, there are some requirements that make something an

¹²¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 56-57.

¹²² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 57.

experience, an *Erlebnis*. It must be experienced by a real human being: first an experience (if it is to be called *Erlebnis*) must be an experience of unique self and secondly this experience must have a unique relationship, “unmistakable and irreplaceable relation,”¹²³ with the unity of the life of this self. In other words, without life, without human beings, there is no *Erlebnis* and without *Erlebnisse* (experiences) it is impossible to find a life that belongs to the unity of the self. Just as every experience is experience of something, or is intentional, so every experience is also lived experience in the sense that it is lived or experienced by someone; an *Erlebnis* is always an experience of someone. Therefore, among experienced objects, experience, the experiencing subject and the life of that subject there seems to be constructed an unbreakable relationship. Therefore, concluded Gadamer, *Erlebnis* has something more than “being the ultimate datum and basis of all knowledge”¹²⁴ and the relation between life and *Erlebnis* is an issue that contains a set of philosophical problems that are in need of attention.

At the end of the section, Gadamer makes a connection “between the structure of *Erlebnis* as such and the mode of being of the aesthetic.”¹²⁵ This means that the aim of the discussion of the concept of *Erlebnis* in *Truth and Method* is to put forward a point about the so called aesthetic experience. It would be a fault to think that there are different kinds of experience and aesthetic experience is one of them. When Dilthey, Husserl, Simmel and also Bergson tries to clarify the concept of *Erlebnis* or the concept of life, they are at the same time clarifying what is the nature of aesthetic experience since they follow one another; they are structurally alike: “[a]esthetic experience is not just one kind of experience among others, but represents the essence of experience per se.”¹²⁶ In other words, Gadamer strongly rejects the category of ‘aesthetic experience’ or ‘aesthetic consciousness’ as a branch that can be separately thought of, analyzed

¹²³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 58.

¹²⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 58.

¹²⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 60.

¹²⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 60.

and lived. Such a separation is an alienation of aesthetic dimension from “the continuity of life”.¹²⁷ However, Gadamer also refuses to limit aesthetics to the concept of experience or to *Erlebnis* in the sense that “*Erlebniskunst* (art based on experience) is art per se.”¹²⁸ *Erlebniskunst* has limits in aesthetic theory, since it places large amount of importance upon experience and it does not pay sufficient attention to other “criteria of value” for an artwork.

The concept of *Erlebniskunst* contains an important ambiguity. Originally *Erlebniskunst* obviously meant that art comes *from* experience and is an expression of experience. But in a derived sense the concept of *Erlebniskunst* is then used for art that is intended *to be* aesthetically experienced. Both are obviously connected. The significance of that whose being consists in expressing an experience cannot be grasped except through an experience.¹²⁹

Such overemphasis on experience, according to Gadamer, is a wrong way toward the evaluation of what a work of art is. The concept of aesthetic *Erlebnis* as the sole criterion for the value of work of art was actually a reaction against the rationalization of art or the idea of ‘art for the sake of society.’ In the theory of social sciences, it was also an idea used as a weapon against the Cartesian methodological attacks coming from rationalist philosophy and natural sciences. Dilthey was the most important representative of this inclination. However, in aesthetics, *Erlebnis*, combined with the idea of genius, resulted in limitation of art into a space which can only be ‘lived aesthetically’ by the subject. Art is accepted as art only on the condition that it is an expression of experience, a self-expression of the creator of the work of art, and ideally self-expression of a genius. In a footnote Gadamer defines this development “in the aesthetics of eighteenth century” as “the transition from ‘imitation’ to ‘expression’.”¹³⁰ The importance of mimesis or imitation in art will be examined in the following chapter. What is important here is that this development, Gadamer asserts, is a

¹²⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 60.

¹²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 61.

¹²⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 61.

¹³⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 163, 26n.

result of the concept of *Erlebnis*. Aesthetic consciousness as a distinct form of consciousness is also related with the expressionist tendencies. The opposition between symbol and allegory or devaluation of allegory and the rise of symbol as the center of artistic creation is also given by Gadamer as an example of the subjectivist expressionism in aesthetics resulting from *Erlebnis*. Now we will explore this example in details.

Gadamer is disturbed by two developments that occurred in the nineteenth century; as we have seen, one is the dominance of the concept of genius in that it results in a “doctrine that genius creates unconsciously” and second one is the overemphasis upon the subjective experience as a reaction to Enlightenment rationalism. Gadamer accuses the doctrine of genius of causing the tradition of rhetoric to be devalued. However, this time, the reaction was more to religious discourse than to rationalism of Enlightenment.¹³¹ For Gadamer, one of the examples that show us that rhetoric tradition was devalued in the nineteenth century is the fact that the two terms, “*symbol* and *allegory*”, which were used as synonyms until then has been transformed into opposite terms or the fact that symbol has been accepted to have a more artistic value than allegory. Gadamer summarizes the original difference between allegory and symbol before they have been radically contrasted:

“Allegory” originally belonged to the sphere of talk, of the logos, and is therefore a rhetorical or hermeneutical figure. Instead of what is actually meant, something else, more tangible, is said, but in such a way that the former is understood. “Symbol,” however, is not limited to the sphere of the logos, for a symbol is not related by its meaning to another meaning, but its own sensory existence has “meaning”.¹³²

¹³¹ The article of Peter Crisp is very illuminating about this point: “Medieval and Renaissance traditions of allegory were inextricably bound up with orthodox Christian traditions of religious symbolism and Biblical interpretation. The decline of allegory was closely linked to the decline of orthodox Christianity as the unquestioned frame of reference for European cultures. When Goethe and his successors attacked allegory they were attacking something identified with older forms of religious orthodoxy. When they praised symbol they were setting up their own ‘imaginative’ alternative to that orthodoxy.” Crisp, Peter. “Allegory and symbol - a fundamental opposition?” in *Language and Literature*, Vol. 14, No. 4, 2005, p. 335.

¹³² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 60.

Towards the end of eighteenth century, developments in the field of aesthetic theory led symbol to be “conceived as something inherently and essentially significant” and, on the other hand, led allegory to have only “external and artificial significance.”¹³³ According to Gadamer, the only advantage that symbol has and allegory does not have is symbol’s metaphysical background regarding the “connection between visible and invisible.”¹³⁴ Symbol metaphysically represents the unity of visible and invisible. That is to say, symbol shows us that it is impossible to separate “visible appearance,” or “world of senses” or “the sensible” from “invisible significance” or “world of ideas” or “the divine.”¹³⁵ Allegory also shows this unity but not in the way that symbol does it. This distinction drawn by Romantic theorists, especially by Goethe, concluded in taking side of the symbol as the basic element of aesthetics and of life also. Symbol began to occupy “a central position within the philosophy of art” as a consequence of seeing every artwork as inherently symbolic.¹³⁶ Gadamer attributes the first differentiation of the concept of symbol to Goethe. Goethe writes about his special experiences, where everything that happens seemed to him as symbols. However Schiller tried to limit the meaning of symbol only in aesthetic field. Gadamer also cites Friedrich Schelling, Karl Wilhelm Ferdinand Solger and Georg Friedrich Creuzer as theorists who contributed to this development of the concept of symbol. It is clearly understood from this section that Gadamer finds the allegory/symbol opposition as not very well-founded or as not an absolute opposition. Nevertheless, this does not mean that Gadamer takes the side of allegory against symbol. On the contrary, he argues that it would be wrong to see this opposition as totally without any basis. We see here the general characteristic of Gadamer’s writing in *Truth and Method*, that is, presenting a genealogy of concepts that will be used to complete his later arguments. So Gadamer presents the metaphysical basis of symbol as

¹³³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 64.

¹³⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 64.

¹³⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 64-66.

¹³⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 67.

the following: “A symbol is the coincidence of sensible appearance and suprasensible meaning ... The symbol does not simply dissolve the tension between the world of ideas and the world of the senses: it points up a disproportion between form and essence, expression and content.”¹³⁷ These peculiar characteristics of symbol helped the concept to be centralized in aesthetics of the nineteenth century.

The important point that Gadamer tries to emphasize is that the devaluation of allegory is a result of “the emergence of the concept of genius” and “art’s being freed from the fetters of rationalism.”¹³⁸ The idea of *Erlebnis* as the ultimate foundation and criterion of art also contributed to this development. To see why this is the case we need to look at what are the basic properties of allegory. Allegories are certainly connected with the reality because allegories are creations with a definite purpose. It can be the purpose of criticizing the present social, political or moral reality, criticizing politicians, persons effective in society or criticizing a political movement or party or directly the state. The purpose of allegory can also be educative, as in religious allegories, that is, such allegories intend to give a message to the readers or listeners that will be a guide in their practical life. So allegories are rationally comprehensible artworks since they have a unique meaning supposed to be discovered by the audience. So, for Gadamer allegory represents a case against the understanding of art as production of genius alone and as expression of *Erlebnisse* of the creator. So Gadamer is in search for a new understanding of art which does not refer to art from the perspective of aesthetic consciousness, aesthetic experience and genius alone. More proper understanding of art is necessary because, for Gadamer, art is not reserved for aesthetic pleasure of individuals; on the contrary, art conveys truth not only for individuals but also for the society. Gadamer accounts for the following fact by means of a fuller understanding of art:

¹³⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 67.

¹³⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 68.

At any rate, it cannot be doubted that the great ages in the history of art were those in which people without any aesthetic consciousness and without our concept of “art” surrounded themselves with creations whose function in religious or secular life could be understood by everyone and which gave no one solely aesthetic pleasure.¹³⁹

¹³⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 70.

CHAPTER IV

THE CONCEPTION OF TRUTH FOUND IN ART

Kant was the person who determined basically the aesthetics of nineteenth century. Thus aesthetics of the nineteenth century had to deal with the ontological difficulties caused by Kant. These were the dualisms of “world of senses and world of morality”¹⁴⁰ and of appearance and reality. Kant tried to escape these dualisms by accepting a nominalist understanding of reality. This understanding, says Gadamer, constitutes an obstacle to the understanding of artworks or of “aesthetic being,”¹⁴¹ because it necessarily sees aesthetic being as opposed to or as a modification of real being, that is, artworks become appearances, whereas nature stays as reality. Before the creation of opposition between art and reality, art had a purpose. This purpose was “to supplement and fill the gaps left open by nature.”¹⁴² This purposeful understanding of art also meant that art fulfills the function of “perfecting of reality.”¹⁴³ However if we understand art only as the appearance of what is real, then art becomes inferior to reality and sometimes detrimental in understanding that reality. When we say appearance of something we designate that appearance as a mask or a veil standing between reality and us. Art as a veil, as a mask or as a transfiguration of reality is the characteristic understanding of art in the new philosophical aesthetics and it was a historical fact that the understanding of art changed from being a perfecting activity to aesthetic appearance. This is what is meant by Gadamer as the ontological shift that occurred in the definition of aesthetics.

¹⁴⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 71-72.

¹⁴¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 72.

¹⁴² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 71.

¹⁴³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 71.

Gadamer says that by standing against recently created opposition between art and reality, phenomenological tradition has shown that aesthetic experience is itself the experience of reality. Work of art is not merely an appearance and Gadamer tries to show that this points to the fact that aesthetics has a truth value and that something which has a truth value cannot be a hallucination, illusion, dream or appearance but the reality itself.

The shift in the ontological definition of the aesthetic toward the concept of aesthetic appearance has its theoretical basis in the fact that the domination of the scientific model of epistemology leads to discrediting all the possibilities of knowing that lie outside this new methodology ["fiction"!].¹⁴⁴

This means that scientific method has an effect on the development of aesthetic theory in the nineteenth century. These are not independent developments, but interdependent phenomena at the most basic level. The methodological epistemology of natural science discredits any alternative epistemologies which do not use scientific method and since aesthetics is not a field based on method, it is also discredited (just like philosophy is discredited) as a branch with no truth value or as a "fiction" opposed to reality. Aesthetics as a new field of evaluation of the beautiful actually is a kind of accommodation or adaptation to this new discrediting of art before scientific truth. Here we encounter a concept which is of critical importance: aesthetic consciousness. The methodological scientific understanding, which claims that art has no truth value, did not result in the disappearance of art. Art naturally has always been continuing its existence. Well then, the people dealing with the art having no truth value and even as something with a masking, veiling appearance had two choices: either they could protest against this understanding of art or they could create a special space for art in which art can continue its activities in a meaningful way. So "aesthetic consciousness" and "aesthetic differentiation" are the result of this second choice. With the help of Kantian aesthetics, aesthetic consciousness is able to differentiate art from truth and from reality and reserves a special space for art; the sole aim of art is the pleasure of individual. So the

¹⁴⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 73.

special and autonomous space of art is in the subjectivity of individual. And in that space of subjectivity art is completely autonomous: “[a]rt becomes a standpoint of its own and establishes its own autonomous claim to supremacy.”¹⁴⁵ Art rules itself, governs itself only on the basis of the laws of beauty.

The concept we can differentiate from “aesthetic consciousness” is taste. As it has been shown, taste is a social sense, it functions as social cement. “Taste still obeys a criterion of content,” which means that taste still takes into consideration the relationship of artworks with its social background, with the values of society, and most importantly with a truth content.¹⁴⁶ Taste tries to find a unity between social life and art. Yet for aesthetic consciousness the case is nearly the opposite: aesthetic consciousness is supposed to preclude “any criterion of content” and to dissociate “the work of art from its world.”¹⁴⁷

[Aesthetic consciousness] no longer admits that the work of art and its world belong to each other, but on the contrary, aesthetic consciousness is the experiencing (*erlebende*) center from which everything considered art is measured. What we call a work of art and experience (*erleben*) aesthetically depends on a process of abstraction. By disregarding everything in which a work is rooted (its original context of life, and the religious or secular function that gave it significance), it becomes visible as the “pure work of art.” In performing this abstraction, aesthetic consciousness performs a task that is positive in itself. It shows what a pure work of art is, and allows it to exist in its own right. I call this “aesthetic differentiation.”¹⁴⁸

Content here means values inherent in the artwork, the social, political and psychological milieu in which the artwork is created, the purpose and function the artwork serves in the life of people. In short, by content Gadamer

¹⁴⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 73.

¹⁴⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 73-74.

here means all “extra-aesthetic elements that cling to” the work of art.¹⁴⁹ So the evaluation and differentiation of an artwork by taste always includes a consideration “on the basis of some content.”¹⁵⁰ In contrast, the same evaluation and differentiation by aesthetic consciousness necessitates exclusion of any content and taking into consideration only the aesthetic qualities of the artwork. The aim is to bring up “pure work of art” so that artworks can have an independent field of existence or, in other words, no social or political determination can enter between aesthetic consciousness and artwork. Aesthetic differentiation is the name of this process of abstraction: “Thus through ‘aesthetic differentiation’ the work loses its place and the world to which it belongs insofar as it belongs instead to aesthetic consciousness.”¹⁵¹ However, Gadamer opposes this differentiation since this differentiation depends upon a wrong theory of perception. According to this theory of perception, we can talk about pure perception in the sense that pure perception can be defined basically as a “response to a stimulus.”¹⁵² It is clear for Gadamer that such an understanding of perception must be aware of the fact that this is “merely an ideal limiting case,”¹⁵³ that is, such a conception can only be used as a basic ideal definition for our use.¹⁵⁴ How we define perception directly affects how we define aesthetic experience, because aesthetic experience totally comes out of the human faculty of perception. All arts address one or more of our sense organs. The direct relationship between the theory of perception and aesthetic experience takes its source from this fact. The point that Gadamer wants to emphasize is not

¹⁴⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 74.

¹⁵⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 74.

¹⁵¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 76.

¹⁵² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 78.

¹⁵³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 78.

¹⁵⁴ Gadamer notes that Aristotle also denies such an ideal case that define perception: “He showed that all aisthesis tends toward a universal.” Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 78. In *De Anima* Aristotle says that the complexity of perception can even be detected in our most basic perceptions of objects: “The senses perceive each other’s special objects incidentally; not because the percipient sense is this or that special sense, but because all form a unity: this incidental perception takes place whenever sense is directed at one and the same moment to two disparate qualities in one and the same object.” Aristotle, *On The Soul*, trans. J. A. Smith, p. 92, in *World’s Greatest Classic Books*, CDROM, Version 1.00.021, Corel Corporation, 1995.

only the consideration of this direct relationship between our idea of perception and art; he also emphasizes that perception does not properly describe our relationship with the world. Understanding is more appropriate term in designating the basic phenomenon of our being in the world. Gadamer summarizes his views on pure perception in the following passage:

Even perception conceived as an adequate response to a stimulus would never be a mere mirroring of what is there. For it would always remain an understanding of something as something. All understanding-as is an articulation of what is there, in that it looks-away-from, looks-at, sees-together-as. All of this can occupy the center of an observation or can merely “accompany” seeing, at its edge or in the background. Thus there is no doubt that, as an articulating reading of what is there, vision disregards much of what is there, so that for sight, it is simply not there anymore.¹⁵⁵

What we must recognize here is the relationship between perception and understanding. Saying that there can never be a pure perception means saying that perception always includes understanding or perception is always ‘accompanied’ by understanding. When we perceive something aesthetically or without aesthetic concern or consciousness, at every step understanding is at work. Understanding is also a process or action in which there is an articulation of what is understood, of “what is there”. This articulation destroys the ideal of pure perception and renders all perception an act of ‘understanding-as.’

Until here, by considering *Bildung*, *sensus communis*, aesthetic judgment taste, genius and *Erlebnis*, Gadamer tried to construct the necessary basis of human sciences. All these concepts are presented under the title of “Transcending the aesthetic dimension.” By aesthetic dimension Gadamer refers to the modern understanding of art and he presented a criticism of modern aesthetics by reaffirming the tradition of *Bildung*, *sensus communis* and *taste* against Kant’s theory of judgment and also against romantic aesthetics of genius and *Erlebnis*. Transcending the aesthetic dimension also means transcending the subjectivist understanding of art containing no truth, so that we can reintegrate

¹⁵⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 79.

arts into the human sciences' search for knowledge and break the methodological understanding of science which is still the dominant ideal case for any field that tries to be science. But it is still unclear what "artistic truth" means and also why it is important for the mode of knowledge operative in social science. The ontology of the work of art, which constitutes one of Gadamer's original contributions to hermeneutics, is where we can find an answer to these questions. Ontology of artwork and also ontological basis of the experience of artwork (not 'aesthetic experience') are not supplementary concerns for the question of truth in human sciences. On the contrary, for Gadamer, real experience of art is exemplary of hermeneutical character of experience of human beings, so it is also central in when human sciences are concerned. In the next chapter, Gadamer's ontology of the work of art I will try to explain in detail and see what we can conclude from his ontology.

4.1 Ontology of Artwork as Play

We are in search of truths that is unobtainable through the methodological ideal of natural sciences. There are such truths in human world, because social, psychological, historical world constantly resists methodological, deductive, intellectualized or rational comprehension of itself. Methodologically unobtainability and resistance to rationalization of these truths comes from the fact that they require a different kind of understanding. These are not mathematical, analytical, statistical or universally applicable truths. Truths pertaining to human beings are truths standing between particularity and universality. In the previous chapter we said that attaining these truths requires more than the ability of reasoning. *Bildung* and *sensus communis* is presented for explaining what this 'more' refers to. Aesthetic consciousness claims that art plays no role in understanding any truth in the sense of cognition. This is true only on the condition that truth is understood as the truth of scientific method. *Bildung* and *sensus communis* are built on the fact that truth is more comprehensive than understood by scientific method. Art is a field in which we find truths about human beings; and even sometimes art becomes the unique way

of expressing some truths. For example, you may describe the hunger in Africa by giving the statistics of the number of people who died from hunger, the reports how many people live on very low levels of food, etc. However we know that the most attractive and explanatory elements that would fit to describe the truth in Africa, are photos of those hungry people. You can forget numbers but you cannot forget these photos. Now Gadamer's ontology of work of art tries to explain why this is the case, depending upon the mode of being of the work of art.

The first consideration about the mode of being of work of art is whether understanding it as an 'object' is a proper way of understanding it. For Gadamer the work of art is something outside the framework of subject/object distinction. A work of art is not an object which stands before a subject. For this reason, experience of art cannot be summarized as perception of an artwork by a subject. In order to show that this is not the case, Gadamer turns towards the ontology of the work of art. What a work of art in fact is or what "the mode of being of the work of art"¹⁵⁶ is, is the main question of this ontology. Only this kind of ontological inquiry can show us what kind of an experience can be called an aesthetic experience. However, Gadamer starts this ontological inquiry not directly from the work of art itself but from "the mode of being of play."¹⁵⁷ The reason for this is not only that play constitutes a very good example that would be helpful to understand concept of experience and hermeneutical understanding, but also that Gadamer sees art as a form of play. Conceptualizing art as play shows that the ground of thinking artwork is outside the framework of subject/object distinction. Does this mean that art is not a serious activity? No. Here, in order to show the seriousness of play and also of art, Gadamer starts with the relationship of seriousness in play.

Play fulfills its purpose only if the player loses himself in play.
Seriousness is not merely something that calls us away from
play; rather seriousness in playing is necessary to make the

¹⁵⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 103.

play wholly play. Someone who doesn't take the game seriously is a spoilsport. The mode of being of play does not allow the player to behave toward play as if toward an object.¹⁵⁸

The seriousness of play can be seen from the fact that a player who does not play seriously is always at the end thrown outside of play. That a person is not losing himself in playing and approaching to the play like approaching to *an object* means that that person is not really playing the game. For this reason, Gadamer says that the attitude of the individuals would not be a good starting point for the ontology of the play. The subject matter of the ontology of play is play itself, not players. In the same way, it would be wrong to start the inquiry of aesthetic experience from the subject who attends to the work of art. This is why Kant's approach is problematic because his main concern is not the work of art itself but the perception of the work of art by a human subject and because he starts from the subject he cannot conceive the proper being of the work of art.

The main argument of Gadamer is that "play has its own essence, independent of the consciousness of those who play."¹⁵⁹ This means that play exists even when there is no one playing it, or rather, that there is a special relation between players and play. This relation is a relation of presentation. Players present the essence of the play. The essence of the play is always present, but it is presented when it is played. This will become clearer when we think about the examples used by Gadamer. His first examples are from the use of the word "play" in language: "play of light, the play of the waves, the play of gears or parts of machinery, the interplay of limbs, the play of forces, the play of gnats, even a play on words."¹⁶⁰ It is clear that lights and waves are not subjects, at least in the sense of the cartesian subject. However we still talk about their playing. This gives us a clue about the nature of play. Play, says Gadamer, consists of "to-and-fro" movement as exemplified in the play of light or gnats. This movement is not towards completing a goal or reaching an end: "The

¹⁵⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 103.

¹⁵⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 103.

¹⁶⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 104.

movement of play as such has, as it were, no substrate. It is the game that is played – it is irrelevant whether or not there is a subject who plays it. The play is the occurrence of the movement as such.”¹⁶¹ What is central is this movement not the ones who perform this movement. This movement is not only an activity of a subject or subjects but a movement which directs the subjects that participate in it, because this movement is not without rules, it is an ordered movement that playing subjects must accord to this order. Subjects are not in control of this to-and-fro-ness, but the movement of play itself controls anything in the play. Now, it is clear what Gadamer means by saying that “play is not to be understood as something a person does.”¹⁶² To understand this we must force ourselves to think outside the dominant paradigm of subject/object distinction since “the primordial sense of playing is the medial one”¹⁶³: “It is certainly necessary that we free ourselves from the customary mode of thinking that considers the nature of the game from the point of view of the consciousness of the player.”¹⁶⁴ That is, play is a movement that occurs in between. It is a happening and it has an existence not in the sense that an object or a subject exists. It has a type of existence of an event or a happening. Nevertheless, it must be noted that in addition to this event type of existence, play has an ideality. Play is such a happening that players must loose themselves in the play. The subjectivity of players disappears so that the play becomes really a play. If the subjectivity of player does not disappear, the play loses its purity and quality. It is not the case that individuals determine the mode of being of play, rather play determines what the being of individuals will be.

This can be seen more clearly when we think of play not only as a human activity but as a process of *nature*. If we pay attention to the movement of nature, it is as though we have been watching a dance. In fact, dance is a kind of play.

¹⁶¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 104.

¹⁶² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 104.

¹⁶³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 104.

¹⁶⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Philosophical Hermeneutics*, trans. and ed. David E. Linge, (California: University of California Press, 1976), p. 66.

Not only the movements of waves and of light, but also the movements of plants and animals are a type of dance, a dance without a goal and a spontaneous dance, i.e. without effort. Man too, as a part of nature participates in this dance: “[h]is playing too is a natural process.”¹⁶⁵ Nature is the presentation of this movement. To put it in more specific terms, what we call nature, what we think when we say nature, is just the movement that controls everything, that dissolves everything in this movement and makes them a part of itself. Let us think about the mode of being of nature. What is nature? Is it the totality of trees, animals, mountains, etc., or is it something more? It seems that nature is something more; it is something that *presents* itself through trees, animals, rivers, plants, winds, etc. The same is true for the mode of being of play—and as we will see later it is true for the mode of being of artworks. That is, play presents itself through the player or players; play uses players in order to achieve its self-presentation: “Play is really limited to presenting itself. Thus its mode of being is self-presentation. But self-presentation is a universal ontological character of nature. ... Play is self-presentation.”¹⁶⁶ The noun form of “present” is worth dealing here. Presentation not only means presenting something for someone, but also means making present, making it exist, here and now. Hence the mode of being of play is to exist in here and now when it presents itself, when it is played.

Now it can be more clearly understood what Gadamer means when he says that “all playing is a being-played,”¹⁶⁷ or that “the real subject of the game is not the player but instead the game itself.”¹⁶⁸ If we insist on separating the subject and the object in a play, what we would get is the player as subject and the played as object. Play in any case is not an object, not a mere activity, but a happening between player and what is played. This is the medial sense of playing, i.e. the in-betweenness of play.

¹⁶⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 105.

¹⁶⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 108.

¹⁶⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 106.

¹⁶⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 106.

Gadamer further writes that the presentation characteristic of play opens the way towards art as play. For him “all presentation is potentially a representation for someone.”¹⁶⁹ Here the spectator comes into the discussion. As we know, plays are generally played before an audience, even in some plays audience is so important that in the case of its absence it is accepted as an absent player, such as in football. Gadamer identifies the spectator as the forth wall of the play. Play constitutes a closed world in which all the elements that make up the game are fused, and the spectator is one of these elements or one of the walls of this closed world: “Openness toward the spectator is part of the closedness of the play. The audience only completes what the play as such is.”¹⁷⁰ When the audience is absorbed in the play, according to Gadamer, there happens “a complete change” so that play becomes a meaningful whole for an audience. So the play raises to “ideality” in that it can be represented in different times and for different spectators without losing its meaningfulness and originality. But this does not mean that there is a radical difference between the player and the spectator; on the contrary, the central element of the play is its meaning and its meaning is the same for the players and the spectator. Both players and spectators try to understand what the work of art means:

The spectator has only methodological precedence: in that the play is presented for him, it becomes apparent that the play bears within itself a meaning to be understood and that can therefore be detached from the behavior of the player. Basically the difference between the player and the spectator is here superseded. The requirement that the play itself be intended in its meaningfulness is the same for both.¹⁷¹

Gadamer calls this total change as *transformation into structure*, “in which human play comes to its true consummation in being art.”¹⁷² When play becomes art in the hands of human beings, there occurs a transformation of the play into a structure in which there is a meaning for understanding and

¹⁶⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 108.

¹⁷⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 109.

¹⁷¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 109.

¹⁷² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 110.

reunderstanding through time. Where players play this structure, it gains an independent existence as a “pure appearance.” That the play gains an ideality means that it gains repeatability and permanency. It is detachable from the creation process and takes the status of a complete work by itself: “It has the character of a work, of an *ergon* and not only of *energeia*.”¹⁷³ Gadamer calls this independent existence “absolute autonomy.” This absolute autonomy enables play to appear as a structure. As to the concept of transformation, it must be said that transformation is total. Subjectivities of the creator of the artwork, players and spectators disappear, do not exist anymore in this structure and there appears such a “pure appearance” that this new appearance becomes a permanent and true being. “Thus transformation into structure,” says Gadamer, “means that what existed previously exists no longer. But also that what now exists, what represents itself in the play of art, is the lasting and true.”¹⁷⁴ It is important to notice here the relationship between transformation and structure. Structure implies meaning of the artwork is presented and transformation implies the disappearance of subjectivities and the appearance of a new lasting pure appearance in ideality. The relation between them is that transformation is for the sake of structure, that is, such a disappearance of subjectivities is necessary for the understanding of the meaning presented.

[P]lay itself is a transformation of such a kind that the identity of the player does not continue to exist for anybody. Everybody asks instead what is supposed to be represented, what is “meant.” The players (or playwright) no longer exist, only what they are playing.¹⁷⁵

Gadamer also writes about the disappearance of the world itself or of our reality. What happens when actors play in theatre and spectators watch the play, what happens when we listen an opera or a melody, what happens when we are confronted with a painting? Put in general terms, what happens in the experience of a work of art? Experience of the artwork changes and transforms the world,

¹⁷³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 110.

¹⁷⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 111.

¹⁷⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 111.

the reality in which we live. By subordinating our consciousness to the play of art, the meaning of reality becomes complete, what is true in reality shows itself. Think of a raw gold, which is unshaped and mixed with rock; after it is cleared and processed, an artist uses this gold to make a necklace and the gold shines or shows itself. The same can be said of reality and art. Reality stands as untransformed, when play of art closes its walls and subordinates its participants, the world disappears. But when we return to reality it is no longer the same reality, but the transformed, shining reality. In that sense it is understandable why Gadamer opposes Kant by defending that the reality of art cannot be merely a copy of reality in nature.

The being of all play is always self-realization, sheer fulfillment, *energeia* which has its *telos* within itself. The world of the work of art, in which play expresses itself in the unity of its course, is in fact a wholly transformed world. In and through it everyone recognizes that that is how things are.¹⁷⁶

If it is the case that art does not try to copy reality, then the idea of *mimesis* must be reconsidered. According to Gadamer, the concept of *mimesis* must not be used in the sense that art is an activity of imitating reality, but in the sense that art or artworks are presentations of themselves, not presentations of the other, outer reality. Artworks present their own essence so fully that they complete what is missing in bare reality or what is incomplete in reality in its untransformed situation. In that sense *mimesis*, if it is thought as the basis of all arts as in Aristotle, Plato and classical theory of art, cannot be merely imitation. Gadamer discusses this point by an example from a playing child imitating. What is central in an imitating child is presentation. If child is imitating a frog, what he wants to exist is only frog or the representation of frog, not himself. He does not want to be recognized as a child imitating a frog, he wants to be the right representation of frog. For this reason, the only criterion is the right representation. At this point, recognition is effective as a way to knowledge, or as the way to truth. Then *mimesis* is not copying but representation. In imitation the aim is to present the essence of what is represented. The child imitating frog

¹⁷⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 112.

is not representing a particular frog with its “accidental aspects” but the frog in its ideality; because the child wants to reach the right representation. However this does not mean that we are supposed to compare the representation with the “real” frog. On the contrary, all frogs exist with their contingent and accidental characteristics. The frog in its representation, however, has an ideality; in that sense it has a superior being:¹⁷⁷

[E]ven what is represented, a well-known event of mythological tradition, is—by being represented—raised, as it were, to its own validity and truth. With regard to knowledge of the true, the being of the representation is more than the being of the thing represented. Homer’s Achilles more than the original.¹⁷⁸

What happens in the experience of art for players, for actors or for spectators cannot be simply thought of as pure perception or pure acting. According to Gadamer, rather than thinking in terms of perception and activity of subjects, more appropriate category for the experience of art would certainly be “recognition.” By thinking experience of art as a way of recognition would make it possible to see the “cognitive import of imitation” and of art in general.¹⁷⁹ It is important to be careful what cognition and recognition refers to here. Of course, Gadamer here is not talking about mathematical and technical truths that natural science deals with. He is obviously talking about the truths pertaining to the human world in its various aspects; social, psychological,

¹⁷⁷ With regard to the superiority of artwork over reality, Hammermeister interprets Gadamer’s understanding of art as reversal of Plato’s theory of art; and I think that it is a very valuable interpretation: “In order to demonstrate how art can disclose truth, Gadamer resorts to Plato’s theory of art, but only to reverse it. Whereas Plato had charged artworks with being ontologically flawed representations of ideas, even further removed from the eternal essence of the object than their materially existing counterparts, Gadamer argues for a superior status of art. It is art that truly contains the essence of the object, not an immaterial idea. In the artwork we do not face a lack of ontological significance but, rather, an increase of true existence and hence of cognizability: ‘Works of art have an ontologically superior status.’” Kai Hammermeister, *The German Aesthetic Tradition* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p. 192.

¹⁷⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 114.

¹⁷⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 113.

historical etc.¹⁸⁰ Gadamer says that “... what we experience in a work of art and what invites our attention is how true it is—i.e., to what extent one knows and recognizes something and oneself.”¹⁸¹ As we know, artworks represent the things we are familiar with; such as, a picture of a flower, a romantic film, a tragedy performed in theater, a novel written about war ... all represent a content about our human world. We know how a flower appears, we know what love is and we know what is tragic, and what can be lived in a war. Nevertheless, art represents things in a new light, in their ideality, so that what we know is transformed into something different. We learn the essence of what we know by the help of art.

But we do not understand what recognition is in its profoundest nature if we only regard it as knowing something again that we know already—i.e., what is familiar is recognized again. The joy of recognition is rather the joy of knowing *more* than is already familiar. In recognition what we know emerges, as if illuminated, from all the contingent and variable circumstances that condition it; it is grasped in its essence. It is known as something.¹⁸²

In addition to the essence of things, in *The Relevance of the Beautiful* Gadamer states another dimension of recognition in art. This other dimension is self-recognition. Because art or art as mimesis shows us the essence of things, because it helps us to fill the incomplete parts of meaning regarding being or the world, we develop “familiarity” with the world. And since we are one of the constituents of this world, we develop familiarity also with ourselves. In this sense, recognition of any kind will include self-recognition.

[T]here is more to recognition than this. It does not simply reveal the universal, the permanent form, stripped of all our contingent encounters with it. For it is also part of the process that we recognize ourselves as well. All recognition represents the existence of growing familiarity, and all our experiences of the world are ultimately ways in which we develop familiarity

¹⁸⁰ Here it seems necessary to mention Heidegger. Gadamer’s explanations regarding the ontological and cognitive status of the work of art are mostly parallel with Heidegger’s philosophy of *Dasein*. This point will be examined in the fourth chapter.

¹⁸¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 113.

¹⁸² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 113.

with that world. As the Aristotelian doctrine rightly seems to suggest, all art of whatever kind is a form of recognition that serves to deepen our knowledge of ourselves and thus our familiarity with the world as well.¹⁸³

Gadamer calls the situation according to which play exists when it is played or an artwork exists when it is performed and viewed “total mediation.”¹⁸⁴ This can most easily be understood when we think of musical performance. We cannot think of music without thinking that it is performed, even when we think of it quietly in our memory. We perform the piece of music in our imagination so that the work of music exists. Mediation, that is, the performance of the artwork in a specific time and place, is not distinct from the work itself; on the contrary, in mediation the work of art attains its existence. All presentations of an artwork, regardless of time and place, belong to the artwork itself. There is no original of an artwork. What we suppose to think of an artwork’s original or its original presentation is only one of the many presentations of it. We may only call it as the first presentation, which is in no way superior to its other presentations in different ages. This is what Gadamer means by “contemporaneity” of a work of art. It means that artworks preserve their identity through their various presentations in different times and places and, at the same time, this identity does not presume a timeless, unchanging, original work. Because there is no distinction between the work and its mediation; its mediation is the mode of being of the artwork itself; it exists by being mediated, and there is no other way to speak about an artwork. We need to listen a piece of music, to read a piece of literature, to watch a theater play, to see a picture, to visit a monument, in order to have an idea about it, a symphony must be performed, a poem must be written and read aloud, a play must be performed on stage, a picture must be drawn and exhibited so that we can talk about them as artworks:

¹⁸³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Art and Imitation,” in *The Relevance of the Beautiful and Other Essays*, trans. Nicholas Walker, ed. Robert Bernasconi, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), p. 99.

¹⁸⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 118.

We ask what this identity is that presents itself so differently in the changing course of ages and circumstances. It does not disintegrate into the changing aspects of itself so that it would lose all identity, but it is there in them all. They all belong to it. They are all *contemporaneous* (gleichzeitig) with it.¹⁸⁵

The creator, the performer and the spectator are all encompassed in the being of the play of art. As an event, the artwork transcends these three camps and reaches its being in ideality. Each performance is original; not a repetition of an original. Each performance is different in one sense or another but all belong to the same work. In that sense “the mediation that communicates the work is, in principle, total.”¹⁸⁶ The temporal structure of an artwork is its contemporaneity. The temporal structure of art is “highly puzzling” since it cannot be grasped from the perspective of historical time, the only time which we are currently and generally familiar with.¹⁸⁷ In order to go beyond this available conception of historical time, Gadamer wants us to think about the temporal structure of festivals. What is characteristic of a festival is its celebration. No one of these celebrations are or can be exactly the same with any other; however this does not mean that every celebration is a different festival but that all celebrations of a festival belongs to the being of that festival. Festival is “an entity that exists only by always being something different.”¹⁸⁸ It is irrelevant to the being of the festival who is celebrating it. The important thing is whether it is celebrated or not. It seems that the being of a festival depends upon the people who celebrate it, but it is not possible for people to celebrate a festival without being there a festival: “... the festival is celebrated because it is there.”¹⁸⁹

Everyone being there participates in the festival either as a spectator or as a dancer or performer. Being present at a festival means participating in it: “To be present means to participate,” or as Gadamer writes in the same paragraph,

¹⁸⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 119.

¹⁸⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 118.

¹⁸⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 121.

¹⁸⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 121.

“watching something is a genuine mode of participating.”¹⁹⁰ This is nearly the same in the experience of art. When we attend to a festival we do not think ourselves as viewing a historical or past creation but we know that we are in an event which is genuinely present. Being present at a festival, in a play or at a performance of an artwork such as a play or a film, means to participate in them. But this being present has an important characteristic that differentiates it from usual presences in other places or activities: being present with regard to a work of art is actually “being outside oneself” which is conceptualized in philosophy as *ekstasis*. Gadamer explains what “being outside oneself” stands for as follows:

[B]eing outside oneself is the positive possibility of being wholly with something else. This kind of being present is a self-forgetfulness, and to be a spectator consists in giving oneself in self-forgetfulness to what one is watching. Here self-forgetfulness is anything but a privative condition, for it arises from devoting one’s full attention to the matter at hand, and this is the spectator’s own positive accomplishment.¹⁹¹

When this self-forgetfulness is not accomplished, then we become bored. But when we are caught up by the artwork, we realize that the artwork “has a claim to permanence and the permanence of a claim.”¹⁹² That is, artworks by their nature want our full attention so that they can make us to understand their claim, which is not a momentary or changing assertion but a permanent truth. More specifically stated, the claim bestowed by the artwork is always a truth-claim. Art makes a claim on us, on the world or on reality with the aim to transform us and reality in its structure and this transformation is towards the truth: “The transformation is a transformation into the true.”¹⁹³ What makes a work of art contemporaneous is its claim, because a claim “can be enforced at any time.”¹⁹⁴ Permanence of the claim of an artwork is the basis of its contemporaneity so that the work of art is always present when it is presented.

¹⁹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 122.

¹⁹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 122.

¹⁹² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 123.

¹⁹³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 112.

¹⁹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 123.

Artwork demands us something here and now; its claim is fully present. In that sense artwork poses us a task to be fulfilled: contemporaneity does not happen by itself but it is achieved by us. By moving out of our subjectivity, by accepting the dominance of the artwork on us, by giving ourselves fully to the being of artwork, we achieve contemporaneity.

“Contemporaneity,” on the other hand, means that in its presentation this particular thing that presents itself to us achieves full presence, however remote its origin may be. Thus contemporaneity is not a mode of givenness in consciousness, but a task for consciousness and an achievement that is demanded of it. It consists in holding on to the thing in such a way that it becomes “contemporaneous,” which is to say, however, that all mediation is superseded in total presence.¹⁹⁵

The most proper example for what Gadamer lays out in this section is tragedy. He takes tragedy as an example for the being of a work of art, its contemporaneity, its spectator being a part of it, its relation to life or its transformation into structure. He uses Aristotle’s definition of tragedy as evidence, since “in defining tragedy he [Aristotle] included its *effect* (Wir-kung) *on the spectator*.” According to Aristotle, tragedy impacts on the spectator some emotions, which he names as *eleos* and *phobos*, and these emotions are special to tragedy itself. *Eleos* and *phobos* are generally translated as pity and fear but Gadamer opposes to this translation since pity and fear are too subjective emotions for explaining the effect of tragedy on the spectator; also pity and fear can be felt in many other circumstances.¹⁹⁶ However the effect of tragedy on spectator or the emotions caused by it are special to tragedy in that tragedy is also a phenomenon of life; it is not limited to aesthetics. So Gadamer proposes that we do not translate *eleos* and *phobos* as pity and fear, since their explanation would certainly be more than simply pity and fear.

Rather, both are events that overwhelm man and sweep him away. *Eleos* is the misery that comes over us in the face of what we call miserable. Thus we commiserate with the fate of

¹⁹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 123-124.

¹⁹⁶ See Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. N. G. L. Hammond (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2001), §13.

Oedipus ... Likewise, phobos is not just a state of mind but, as Aristotle says, a cold shudder that makes, one's blood run cold, that makes one shiver. In the particular sense in which phobos is connected to eleos in this definition of tragedy, phobos means the shivers of apprehension that come over us for someone whom we see rushing to his destruction and for whom we fear.¹⁹⁷

When we watch or read a tragedy these emotions, says Aristotle, are purified, another problematic translation according to Gadamer. Instead, says Gadamer, purification of *eleos* and *phobos* actually refers to the “tragic pensiveness” (*tragischen Wehmut*). The term “tragic pensiveness,” coined by Gadamer, denotes that confronted by tragedy, we, spectators, realize that the same tragedy can be lived by us. Anyone can be the hero of a tragedy in life. We are not in control of life, tragedy can find us anywhere however we try to escape from it. In that mood we become pensive, we undergo tragic pensiveness. Realizing “the power of destiny” we recognize our finitude. In that sense Gadamer talks about self-knowledge produced by this feeling of tragic pensiveness. We get free from the illusion that ‘this does not happen to me.’

All this analysis is related with the “aesthetic differentiation” to which Gadamer opposes. Aesthetic differentiation means that the spectator can evaluate the work of art based on its aesthetic qualities; in that sense only he can also differentiate what is aesthetic from what is not. A result of aesthetic differentiation is “aesthetic consciousness,” which is supposed to differentiate what art is, what life is and what morality is. Aesthetic consciousness experiences the aesthetic object aesthetically and it develops a distance from the object. Such a consciousness, if there is at all, cannot feel the tragic pensiveness because he is able to differentiate himself from what happens at stage; there is no question of knowledge in aesthetic experience from the perspective of aesthetic consciousness. This consciousness looks for the degree of pleasure that is produced in viewing an aesthetic object. However, as Gadamer said, watching is inevitably a mode of participation. When we watch a tragedy, we cannot but

¹⁹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 123-124.

think of ourselves as if in the same situation. Participation in a tragedy “is not a matter of choice.” Gadamer continues:

However much the tragic-play performed solemnly in the theater presents an exceptional situation in everyone's life, it is not an experience of an adventure producing a temporary intoxication from which one reawakens to one's true being; instead, the elevation and strong emotion that seize the spectator in fact deepen his *continuity with himself*. Tragic pensiveness flows from the self-knowledge that the spectator acquires. He finds himself again in the tragic action because what he encounters is his own story ...¹⁹⁸

Presentation is the mode of being of the work of art and contemporaneity is its mode of temporality. It seems that non-performing arts pose a problem with regard to Gadamer's assertions. However, by explicating the ontological structure of picture Gadamer solves this problem. It must be admitted that the being of picture does not depend upon its presentation or mediation. Surely, picture presents something, it is a presentation in the full sense of the word. But before going into the details of what the ontological structure of picture is, we must differentiate picture from two things; from copy and from mirror image; because it is very important to determine what is the relationship between a picture and what it represents. If we take this relation as that of copying we would certainly lose what picture is in itself. Picture is ontologically different from copy and mirror image. First of all, “The essence of a copy is to have no other task but to resemble the original. The measure of its success is that one recognizes the original in the copy.”¹⁹⁹ If we recognize what that copy stands for, copy fulfills its purpose and, in Gadamer's words, “effaces” itself, i.e. cancels itself out. That is to say, the copy does not have an independent existence distinct from what it copies, but it is a partially dependent existence in terms of its function of mediating the original, it is a means rather than an end in itself. On the other hand, mirror image is completely dependent on the thing it reflects, when the thing disappears the image also disappears. Contrary to partial

¹⁹⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 128.

¹⁹⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 133.

dependence and functionality of the copy and the total dependence of mirror image on the original, the picture has an independent existence. Picture is not “a means to an end”, nor is it a “self-effacing” image in the mirror. So Plato’s theory of art must be refuted because art is not a copy or reflection of something.²⁰⁰ In the case of copy, the relationship between the original and the copy is one-sided; namely, the copy tries to make the onlooker to recognize the original, the direction of the relationship is from the copy to the original. However, in picture this direction is inverted, i.e., what is original “comes to presentation in the representation,” in the picture.

Every such presentation is an ontological event and occupies the same ontological level as what is represented. By being presented it experiences, as it were, an *increase in being*. The content of the picture itself is ontologically defined as an emanation of the original.²⁰¹

When something is pictured, it emanates ontologically. It presents itself in picture in such a way that there appears something which can “not to be found simply by looking.”²⁰² Each presentation brings out what is hidden, what is unknown, unthought-of, what is not imagined before. This is what Gadamer means by “*increase in being*.” The concept of emanation, states Gadamer, is taken from Neoplatonic philosophy and helps us to found the ontology of picture in a positive sense. Being pictured does not diminish the being of what is represented, on the contrary, it constitutes “an overflow” of being. So, concludes Gadamer, the mode of being of picture is also representation.

²⁰⁰ All these issues concerning imitation, copy, mirror image etc. can be thought on the background of what Gadamer tries to reject regarding the understanding of art. Michael Kelly summarizes what Gadamer is opposing: “The truth issue in Gadamer’s aesthetics arises with his discussion of Plato’s well-known critique of the poets, in book X of the *Republic*, that a work of art is an imitation of an imitation of the truth. A picture of a bed, for example, is a mere appearance of a bed made by a carpenter, which in turn is an appearance of the Form of the bed, which is the one and only true bed. So the truth about art, for Plato, is that it is ontologically incapable of truth. Because art is unaware of this limitation, it continues to lay false claims to truth. In short, art is a lie.” Michael Kelly, “A Critique of Gadamer’s Aesthetics,” in *Gadamer’s Repercussions: Reconsidering Philosophical Hermeneutics*, Bruce Krajewski (ed.), (California: University of California Press, 2004), p. 104.

²⁰¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 135.

²⁰² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 135.

The picture then has an autonomy that also affects the original. For strictly speaking, it is only through the picture (Bild) that the original (Urbild) becomes the original (Ur-bild: also, ur-picture)—e.g., it is only by being pictured that a landscape becomes picturesque.²⁰³

Now, it must be noted and can be seen from the above quotation that the relation between representation (picture) and the original (what is pictured) cannot be explained in simple terms. The relationship examined here is actually “paradoxical,” since “the original acquires an image only by being imaged, and yet the image is nothing but the appearance of the original.”²⁰⁴ This complex relationship is exemplified by Gadamer by using a public image of a person, such as a statesman or a hero. In such cases we clearly see that the picture that a public person presents to people in turn changes and challenges that person, because he feels that he must accord to his image. For example, a hero cannot say that I gave up being a hero. If he says, his picture or his image suddenly changes into something different.

Let me lastly consider Gadamer’s discussion of literature in the context of the ontology of the work of art. The analysis of literature is the most important part for the central problem of this dissertation, because in this part Gadamer gives the first signs of the links that tie the ontology of the work of art to human sciences.

Literary arts seem to be different from performance arts in that literature seems to be in no need of performance, presentation or mediation. What is central in literature is reading. So, the activity of reading must be carefully examined before going further. People can and generally read alone and silently, though there are public readings also. Considered as a “purely interior mental process,” reading a literary work may remain a truly subjective event. But, according to Gadamer, this is not the case, since even the silent mental process of reading includes interior voice. This inner voice accompanying all reading

²⁰³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 136.

²⁰⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 137.

guarantees the dependence of reading on performance. Think about yourself and try to read without an inner voice, then try to read with this inner voice but without doing any emphasis on any word, both of which is impossible.

[T]here is obviously no sharp differentiation between reciting and silent reading. Reading with understanding is always a kind of reproduction, performance, and interpretation. Emphasis, rhythmic ordering, and the like are part of wholly silent reading too. Meaning and the understanding of it are so closely connected with the corporeality of language that understanding always involves an inner speaking as well.²⁰⁵

This gives us the necessary clue for the mode of being of literature. Because it depends on performance, literary works are also dependent on mediation. The content of the literary work presents itself as an event so that its meaning is revealed or mediated. Having established that Gadamer goes on to put forward the scope of literature, that is, the criteria according to which a text can be considered as a literary work. This criterion is language.

All written texts share in the mode of being of literature—not only religious, legal, economic, public and private texts of all kinds, but also scholarly writings that edit and interpret these texts: namely the human sciences as a whole. Moreover, all scholarly research takes the form of literature insofar as it is essentially bound to language. Literature in the broadest sense is bounded only by what can be said, for everything that can be said can be written.²⁰⁶

The process of reading must basically be understood as an example of “transformation into structure argument.” Just as a play presents itself through players and makes itself present by presenting itself to the spectators, texts also need a reader in order to speak. Reader in front of a text occupies a unique position in which he plays the role of both a player and a spectator. Literary works exist when they are read; in the process of reading, the text finds its performer and spectator at the same time, because, as we have noted above, the spectator belongs to the mode of being of artworks. People cannot read texts the

²⁰⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 153.

²⁰⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 155.

language of which they do not know a word. People read in order to understand and this requires recognizing what the text says to us. Presentation of an intelligible meaning is the common nature of all texts and what differentiates literary arts from the others we discussed above is that literature is an event of language. There are no mimics, no dance, no colors, no shape to be seen; there is only language. “[L]iterary art,” says Gadamer, “has in common with all other texts the fact that it speaks to us in terms of the significance of its contents,” which means that the primary component of literature is its meaning. “Our understanding,” he continues, “is not specifically concerned with its formal achievement as a work of art but with what it says to us.”²⁰⁷ So, the subjective pleasure we take from the reading of a literary text has nothing to do with the real concern of the text. Its real concern is to speak to us, to be heard, to have effect on us, to change us and our life. This primary quality of literature renders all texts as events waiting to be understood. What we have said above the experience of art applies equally to the understanding of all texts: “All written works have a profound community in that language is what makes the contents meaningful. In this light, when texts are understood by, say, a historian, that is not so very different from their being experienced as art.”²⁰⁸ This would certainly run contrary to the current discourse of science in which experience of art is totally different from scientific activity. However, all writing, including scholarly writing, are inevitably events of art, because language necessitates such artfulness. What is the main concern of any scholarly writing? Certainly, it is a presentation of an argument or a thesis. Texts always present something to the reader for his understanding.

We have said that the mode of being of artworks and experience of art in general covers literature also. On the other hand, the mode of being of a text deserves more investigation because of its total dependence on language. Gadamer highlights some important characteristics of texts that illuminate certain steps in determining the ontology and the experience of literature.

²⁰⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 155.

²⁰⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 156.

Gadamer first argues that “the mode of being of a text has something unique and incomparable about it.”²⁰⁹ This unique and incomparable character is the strangeness of a text. Texts are strange to us because they need a kind of translation in order to be understood. A text is not something “immediately intelligible” but carries a trace of a mind or a soul which presents itself through words. The strangeness under consideration does not resemble an encounter with a person talking a foreign language. In that case, the person in question can perform gestures and certain tones in his voice so that we can understand roughly what he means. Reading a text, however, is a process of “deciphering and interpreting.” When someone writes a text, this text constitutes for the reader an “alien and dead” mind. In the process of reading, this alien and dead mind must be transferred to the reader’s mind as a familiar and contemporaneous mind. As we have seen earlier, contemporaneity is the mode of temporality of all artworks. In that sense, reading is a miraculous process in which we encounter a “pure mind” speaking to us here and now. Literature demands from the reader to make present what is past or dead; literature demands presentation—i.e., reading with understanding—in order to achieve contemporaneity:

[A] written tradition, once deciphered and read, is to such an extent pure mind that it speaks to us as if in the present. That is why the capacity to read, to understand what is written, is like a secret art, even a magic that frees and binds us. In it time and space seem to be superseded. People who can read what has been handed down in writing produce and achieve the sheer presence of the past.²¹⁰

So Gadamer reserves a special place for literature in the ontology of work of art. All of these investigations regarding the ontology of the work of art and aesthetic experience are very much related to the hermeneutics in general. Gadamer, as a philosopher of hermeneutic tradition, claims that hermeneutics must be rethought upon the arguments above; for, history of hermeneutics showed many orientations toward different directions according to the answers

²⁰⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 156.

²¹⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 156.

given to the questions about art and about the experience of art. Gadamer gives the classical definition of hermeneutics as follows: “The classical discipline concerned with the art of understanding texts is hermeneutics.”²¹¹ However, the central problem hermeneutics deals with is and must be, according to Gadamer, ‘understanding,’ not only the understanding of texts, so that hermeneutics must be able to “embrace the whole sphere of art and its complex of questions.”²¹² This is why Gadamer started his *Truth and Method* with a discussion of aesthetics and experience of art. What is operative in the experience of art is understanding: “... art offers an excellent example of understanding...”²¹³ And Gadamer defines understanding according to the scheme he proposed regarding the ontology of work of art. In his ontology, Gadamer eliminates the attitude which sees the artwork as an object. Artworks are properly seen as events in which creators, performers and spectators move in the paths of structure of meaning. Accordingly, here is the definition of understanding: “Understanding must be conceived as a part of the event in which meaning occurs, the event in which the meaning of all statements—those of art and all other kinds of tradition—is formed and actualized.”²¹⁴

At the end of the first part of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer passes to the general problem of hermeneutics in relation to the comprehensive issue of understanding. The question he poses for this issue is what the task of hermeneutics is. He shortly deals with two answers in opposition, which are the answers given by Schleiermacher and Hegel. Schleiermacher proposes “reconstruction” for the proper understanding of past acts and artworks, whereas Hegel suggests “integration” to achieve the kind of understanding we search for. Gadamer is closer to Hegel than Schleiermacher, since Schleiermacher’s project of reconstruction of the world which the artwork originally belongs is always doomed to failure. This impossibility of reconstructing “the original occasion

²¹¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 157.

²¹² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 157.

²¹³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 158.

²¹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 157.

and circumstances” comes from a misconception regarding the temporal and also the ontological structure of artwork.²¹⁵ This does not mean that reconstruction is a futile effort. Such an effort can help us to understand the meaning searched on the condition that we do not reserve reconstruction as a method for obtaining the real and the only meaning of the work of art or on the condition that we cannot see “understanding as a second creation, the reproduction of the original production.”²¹⁶

When we look at Hegel, we see his awareness of the impossibility of restoration. The loss generated by the passage of time cannot be recovered in any way. Efforts to restore the original would always remain, as he calls it, “external activities” which only serve to wipe the dust from the artwork. An artwork can be said to have “internal” and “external” elements. Internal elements of an artwork are the lost elements of the “surrounding, productive and lifegiving reality of the moral world” in which the artwork had flourished.²¹⁷ Trying to restore these elements is not the real aim of historical understanding because of the fact that the artwork raises to a higher level above the moral world of particular people belonging to the original world of the artwork.²¹⁸ It is our destiny that we are historically away from the original world. So, Hegel formulates the task of hermeneutical consciousness as “*thoughtful mediation with contemporary life.*” Past remains always as past, but the artwork stands still in its contemporaneity so that we can perform thoughtful mediation in our present reality. As a result, art and history are connected to each other because of their temporal structure. By presenting Schleiermacher’s and Hegel’s views on understanding historical constructs, Gadamer employs his ontology of artwork as a basis for his general hermeneutics. He then passes to the history of hermeneutics to evaluate how his ontology could give rise to a new way in evaluating central hermeneutical and philosophical problems. But before the

²¹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 159.

²¹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 159.

²¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 160.

²¹⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 160.

elaboration of history of hermeneutics, I would like to consider the critique of Gadamer's aesthetics by Michael Kelly.

Michael Kelly offers a critique of Gadamer's aesthetics and argues that there is no reason to claim that art has a truth content and that art transcends the field of subjectivity. The core of Kelly's critique is that Gadamer presents no persuasive argument which shows that aesthetics and art are not subjective. Kelly claims that "aesthetics, as well as art, is undeniably and unproblematically subjective."²¹⁹ Behind Gadamer's claim that art is not subjective as conceptualized by modern aesthetics lies the idea that art has a truth content. Kelly, however, thinks that Gadamer has a confusion about what truth means here. Art has a truth content but this truth is totally about art, and nothing beyond: "Gadamer unintentionally converts *truth about art* into the *truth content of art*."²²⁰ Kelly agrees with Gadamer that art is not a lie, an imitation of imitation, in the sense of Platonic ontology. However, for Kelly, this only shows us that art is autonomous, that is, art is not something that must be evaluated by looking at its relationship with what it represents. Art is valid in itself, it is independent of any external criterion of validity. So from this anti-Platonic understanding of art, Gadamer reaches to a wrong conclusion by ascribing an extra-aesthetic truth content to art. Kelly supports his claim by showing that Gadamer's notion of truth which is contained in art stays in the borders of aesthetics; that is, what Gadamer thinks as truths deducible from the artwork are not truths beyond the experience of art. The only candidate can be Gadamer's use of Heideggerian notion of "unconcealment" of the work of art or "openness" to the claim addressed to us by the artwork. The claim of art, however, can only be a claim about itself, about its reality, about its autonomy. "But," asks Kelly, "what is addressing us in art and what does truth have to do with it?" What art discloses is itself, what art claims is also the truth *about* itself; since, art is not a description or prescription of an other reality as defended by Gadamer. Gadamer refuses to make a comparison between art and what it represents; so, for Kelly,

²¹⁹ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 103.

²²⁰ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 104.

insisting on the truth claim of the artwork beyond itself would be to accept a dualism of art and reality. So, if Gadamer does not want to make contradictory claims about art, he must stick to the autonomy of art and renounce his claim about the truth content of art.

Kelly also states that although the humanistic concepts of *Bildung*, taste, *sensus communis* and judgment are used by Gadamer to support the normativity of truth claims made by art, they are also very distant from this purpose. Although the examination of these concepts clearly shows that there are extra-scientific and normative contents about humanity, which are beyond the verification methods of science. But the normative content of these concepts cannot necessarily be named as truth. Rather it would be more appropriate to accept them as “more universal points of view” in the case of *Bildung*, social “norms” in the case of *sensus communis*, having a sense of particular cases in the case of judgment, and having “an eye on the whole” in the case of taste.²²¹ All these are, of course, central for human sciences, it is not necessary to think that the insights we gain from *Bildung*, taste, *sensus communis* and judgment are truths carrying the same meaning with the truths of science. So these concepts contribute nothing to Gadamer’s assertion that art has a truth content. Since, for Kelly, ‘truth claims’ are claims which “require verification” and it is clear that “art cannot possibly provide” such verification.²²²

Gadamer’s ontology of the work of art tries to do away with aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic differentiation so that art can be seen as transcending the field of consciousness and subjectivity. Kelly’s critique continues in that respect too. He states that the being of the work of art, explained by Gadamer, shows only and positively, the autonomous being of work of art. That art has a being that opens itself in the encounter with it and in transmitting its message is the core of Gadamer’s ontology. However this point, states Kelly, does not necessarily lead us to suspend aesthetic consciousness, since aesthetic

²²¹ Kelly, “A Critique of Gadamer’s Aesthetics,” p. 109.

²²² Kelly, “A Critique of Gadamer’s Aesthetics,” p. 109.

consciousness is just the respect for this message and this message can only be understood if art stays fully autonomous in the field of subjectivity. The sole message of art, Gadamer has in mind, at the end comes to contribute to our self-understanding. This makes, Kelly adds, Gadamer's aesthetics "more subjective than he claims."²²³ The real target of Gadamer's attacks on aesthetic consciousness is a form of subjectivity; in Kelly's words, "an abstract, alienated subjectivity."²²⁴ If, says Kelly, we define subjectivity in the form of a "historically situated subjectivity"²²⁵ then Gadamer would not have any objection. This is necessary since subjectivity of art cannot be transcended in any way and Kelly thinks that this confession is totally in accord with and of the same species with Gadamer's assent that "we cannot transcend our historicity."²²⁶

I presented Kelly's critique here since this it can help us to see many hidden links that are important in understanding Gadamer's elaboration of humanistic concepts with his ontology of artwork in their relation to hermeneutics. First let us ask what the function of the conceptual analysis of Gadamer presented in the first chapter is. My central concern is to see the unity in Gadamer's analysis of the basic concepts of humanistic tradition, his analysis of the work of art and lastly the history of hermeneutics. These three parts are intimately related and constitute a unity in understanding the basis of Gadamer's philosophical hermeneutics. In that light, basic concepts of humanistic tradition are not presented for ancillary function of presenting a justification of the normativity of art. Gadamer's basic concern is to give a phenomenological explanation of human experience and to show that all human experience is characteristically hermeneutical. Experience of art has the same status with all our experiences, so it is also hermeneutical. However with the newly developed aesthetics, art has lost its place among our human experiences and has become or

²²³ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 116.

²²⁴ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 116.

²²⁵ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 116.

²²⁶ Kelly, "A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics," p. 116.

is made into a different and unique kind of experience totally different from our daily experiences. Rather than the calculable, experimentable, measurable, repeatable and verifiable experience, when truly human experience is concerned we are in the field of hermeneutics. Aesthetic experience is hermeneutic experience since it shows the very character of humanity in all its aspects. Hermeneutic experience is totally excluded from the scientific context for the very reason that it is not in the area of verifiable experiences. So, humanistic concepts analyzed in the first part are results of this concern for human experiences which are thrown out of the scientific context. Gadamer opposes this reduction of science to only verifiable experiences, because we need 'knowledge' to develop. The possibility of such a knowledge must firstly be shown not in the sense that human behavior can be predictable if we develop a method unique for them (which is the main concern of the birth of social science as a branch of natural science), but in the sense that knowledge must be redefined so that we can include in it basic human experiences. *Bildung*, *sensus communis*, judgment and taste constitute the conceptual basis of showing this redefinition of knowledge. Art, on the other hand, is the indispensable element of these concepts. All these concepts include artfulness and concern for beauty in one form or another.

We cultivate ourselves by being open to the other, feeling the tension between our particularity and universality, and by learning to be tactful. All of these require to be experienced, to see examples, to have a sensibility and art is undoubtedly one of the main sources to become *gebildet* (cultured). Remember the emphasis upon character education and personal development in the idea of *Bildung*. Art is, as we have seen, the primary area of experience in which we undergo such a change. Art has such a power on us that we cannot but change by every encounter with an artwork if we let the artwork to convey its message to us. The power of art to change people was greater in antiquity, in Middle Ages, in Renaissance than today, since the truth content of art was not dismissed. Can anybody deny that Renaissance art has played a great role in the big change that occurred in world history. This art not only reflected the new understanding of

man developing in those days, but also fostered the development of this new understanding. So people of *Bildung* are people of change.

The idea of change contained in *Bildung* is not an isolated, individual affair, but a change which occurs because we live in a society and share common things with society. Common sense is the corresponding sense for these shared opinions, assumptions, beliefs, attitudes, etc. The philosophers who gave importance to common sense share the basic idea that all of us have common sense in a primary form but it must be developed through social practice and education. Art is again the indispensable element for the development of common sense, since it is a very active constituent of social life. What Gadamer criticizes in aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic differentiation is the understanding of art as totally isolated from society. Art is a social happening even in its most abstract forms, since it always conveys meaning to its audience, spectators or readers. The concepts of judgment and taste are in no need of showing their relationship with art. But Kelly does not see in any of these concepts a necessity to link them with truth, nor a necessity to attest a truth value to art. He says that “taste is a sensibility, the truth of what it senses is not something taste can be expected to verify.”²²⁷ However, this equation of truth with the possibility of its verification is just what Gadamer opposes. Taste determines most of our choices in life, so taste is intimately connected with morality. For Gadamer, the impossibility of scientific verification in morality, in society, in human issues does not necessitate to dispense with the notion of truth in these areas. We act because we think that some way of acting is true. Truth is a guide for us, we need truth in our life, we encounter, change, modify and sometimes deny it. In that sense, art occupies a special place since art is able to show what is hidden. Artworks uniquely are able to bring forward what is unknown, unthought-of, what is not imagined before, as Gadamer showed in his ontology of artwork.

²²⁷ Kelly, “A Critique of Gadamer's Aesthetics,” p. 109.

CHAPTER V

HISTORY OF HERMENEUTICS RE-EVALUATED

In order to do justice to Gadamer's elaboration of basic humanistic concepts, his critique of modern aesthetics and his ontological elaboration of art, all of these must be related to general theory of hermeneutics. What makes Gadamer an important philosopher of our century and of philosophical hermeneutics in general and what makes his *Truth and Method* his *magnum opus* is his unique way of presenting the necessary background for hermeneutics, philosophy and human sciences. So in this chapter I will firstly present the history of hermeneutics following the account in *Truth and Method*.

Prehistory of hermeneutics is the history of battles going around the question of interpreting the Bible. Reformation theology tried to free itself from the traditional allegorical interpretation performed by the Church. However the Reformation was not the real turning point for hermeneutics as it seems. Insofar as the Bible is accepted as a "unity," that is, as a text above human beings, above time, above history, any interpretation of it would be dogmatic. Gadamer says that Dilthey was aware of this fact and this awareness lead Dilthey to specify the starting point of modern hermeneutics not as the Reformation movement but as the eighteenth century historical enlightenment after which hermeneutics "could rise to the significance of a universal historical canon."²²⁸ In this historical enlightenment the dogmatic unity of the Bible was destroyed as a result of a realization of a fact: "... men like Semler and Ernesti realized that to understand Scripture properly it was necessary to recognize that it [the Bible] had various authors."²²⁹ Therefore, interpretation of Christian writings had to include

²²⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 177.

²²⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 177.

historical interpretation in addition to the grammatical one. This has also destroyed the “difference between interpreting sacred or secular writings,” which has been a decisive step in unifying hermeneutic endeavour.²³⁰ So called ‘hermeneutic circle’ attained its fuller meaning then.

The context of world history—in which appears the true meaning of the individual objects, large or small, of historical research—is itself a whole, in terms of which the meaning of every particular is to be fully understood, and which in turn can be fully understood only in terms of these particulars. World history is, as it were, the great dark book, the collected work of the human spirit, written in the languages of the past, whose texts it is our task to understand.²³¹

Historical enlightenment resulted in the appearance of historical consciousness. This process, according to Gadamer, deserves a higher description than what Dilthey called “liberation of interpretation from dogma.”²³² Because, for Gadamer, it was the universalization of the nature of hermeneutics, which means that it became a task for everyone and for every age. What does this universality mean? In order to understand the new universal character of hermeneutics, we need to look at the first theoretical elaboration of this subject, which is accomplished by Friedrich Schleiermacher.

Schleiermacher is accepted as the father of romantic hermeneutics. Gadamer proceeds by examining Schleiermacher’s way of constructing the unity of hermeneutics. The unity of hermeneutics must be searched in the unity of the procedure of understanding, not in the unity of the particular contents such as religion, law or classical literature. In other words, hermeneutics as a field searching for understanding is not limited to certain religious, legal or textual difficulties in terms of understanding. Understanding texts is only a part of the general problem of understanding. Hermeneutics deal with nature of understanding in a very general sense, since “the effort to understand is needed wherever there is no immediate understanding—i.e. whenever the possibility of

²³⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 178.

²³¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 178.

²³² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 178.

misunderstanding has to be reckoned with.”²³³ The situations in which there is mediation or there is no immediate understanding, are variously confronted in our daily life, since language which we speak is always a kind of mediation. What makes hermeneutics universal is the universality of “the experience of alien and the possibility of misunderstanding.”²³⁴

Before going into a detailed analysis of Schleiermacher’s theory of universal hermeneutics, Gadamer touches upon two philosophers, Benedictus de Spinoza and Johann Martin Chladenius, in order to show us different understandings of interpretation. Spinoza argues that there is basically no difference between interpretation of Scripture and “interpretation of nature.” In Scripture there are incomprehensible passages, especially “stories of miracles and revelations.” These are hard to comprehend because they contradict our natural process of reasoning. These contradictions can be resolved, according to Spinoza, by interpreting these by concentrating upon “the mind of the author ‘historically’.”²³⁵ The central concern of historical interpretation is to learn “what the author could have had in mind.”²³⁶ Its historicity comes from the necessity of knowing “the life, studies, and habits (*vita, studium et mores*) of that author.”²³⁷ It is not appropriate in such kind of a research to ask whether the miracles really happened or not. In other words, historical interpretation that Spinoza proposing here is not an interpretation for the sake of finding the historical truths but for the sake of finding the meaning that is hidden behind these stories: “it does not matter whether what is meant corresponds to our insight since we want to know only the meaning of the statements (*census orationum*) but not their truth (*veritas*).”²³⁸ For Spinoza, moral statements, on the other hand, are directly understandable like natural phenomena, in no need of

²³³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 178.

²³⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 178.

²³⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 181.

²³⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 181.

²³⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 181.

²³⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 182.

historical interpretation. For example, studying Euclid's theorems, asserts Spinoza, does not require any historical interpretation since they are based purely on rational principles. In describing how understandable Euclid's theorems are, Spinoza at the same time summarizes what is necessary for understanding and interpretation of the Bible.

Euclid, whose writings are concerned only with things exceedingly simple and perfectly intelligible, is easily made clear by anyone in any language; for in order to grasp his thought and to be assured of his true meaning there is no need to have a thorough knowledge of the language he wrote. A superficial and rudimentary knowledge is enough. Nor need we enquire into the author's life, pursuits and character, the language in which he wrote, and for whom and when, nor what happened to his book, nor its different readings, nor how it came to be accepted and by what council. And what we here say of Euclid can be said of all who have written on matters which of their very nature are capable of intellectual apprehension.²³⁹

As a different response to the problem of the "the decline of self-evident understanding,"²⁴⁰ Chladenius sees no need for psychological or historical interpretation. What is needed, according to him, is the study of "the subject matter" or "the substantive insight" with which the obscure text deals. He thinks that a speech or a text is based on certain concepts. If these concepts are not familiar concepts for the reader, understanding is impossible. To have some knowledge about the necessary concepts of a text means to be familiar with the subject matter of the text. Therefore, lack of understanding is a result of the "insufficient knowledge about the subject matter."²⁴¹ On that basis Chladenius defines interpretation as follows: "[a]n interpretation is, then, nothing other than teaching someone the concepts which are necessary to learn to understand or to

²³⁹ Benedictus de Spinoza, *Complete Works*, Michael L. Morgan (ed.), trans. Samuel Shirley (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 2002), p.466.

²⁴⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 183.

²⁴¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 184.

fully understand a speech or a written work.”²⁴² So Spinoza is wrong in thinking that the obscurities of Scripture will be removed when we understand the author’s meaning hidden at first sight, because, for Chladenius, the author’s meaning is not always the same with the true meaning of the speech or text. Texts must be understood in themselves not in terms of the author’s intentions, because the author can be unaware of certain things that his text includes or he can be following some thoughts unconsciously which can contradict or do not rightly express his intentions. So for Chladenius, Gadamer summarizes, “the norm for understanding a book is not the author’s meaning.”²⁴³ The narrowing of interpretation only to account for understanding obscure passages and bringing forth the intention of author is not appropriate for the very reason that interpretation is intimately related with the subject matter of the text. If that narrowing was right, then interpretation would be an ancillary discipline used only in exceptional cases. Chladenius states that interpretation would also be needed

...even if a book were written with all necessary caution, and even if there were no difficulties with orthography or language such that a philologist or critic needed to supplement it. This is because interpretation consists of teaching the reader or listener certain concepts necessary for a complete understanding of a text. In constructing an interpretation, one must consider the insight of the pupil and use this or that interpretation in accordance with the pupil’s lack of knowledge. Since there is not one interpretation of a book suitable for all readers, there may be as many as there are classes of readers grouped according to knowledge and insight. To be precise, every person needs a special interpretation.²⁴⁴

However, interpretation stops when we achieve a complete understanding of the text. This idea of the possibility of complete understanding proves again the occasionality of the act of interpretation. So Spinoza and Chladenius

²⁴² Johann Martin Chladenius, “On the Concept of Interpretation,” in *The Hermeneutics Reader: Texts of the German Tradition from the Enlightenment to the Present*, (ed.) Kurt Mueller-Vollmer (New York: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2006), p. 58.

²⁴³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 184.

²⁴⁴ Chladenius, “On the Concept of Interpretation,” p. 61.

represent two different versions of interpretation theory in the same tradition, namely rationalism. For Spinoza the dilemma of understanding could be resolved by historical interpretation, on the other hand, for Chladenius, it has nothing to do with history or the intention of the author but with the clarification of the subject matter. In contrast to these two views, Schleiermacher develops the universality of hermeneutics, according to which the problem of understanding is not an occasional but a universal phenomenon.

Let me start by an overview of Schleiermacher's remarks on understanding. According to Schleiermacher, understanding is ultimately connected to the aim, purpose and intention. That is to say, understanding something, such as a text, a speech or a symbol requires going back to the intention of that something, back to why it is written, why it is said, why it is composed as such. Schleiermacher says that "[e]very act of understanding is the inversion of speech-act, during which the thought which was the basis of the speech must become conscious."²⁴⁵

To understand means to grasp the intention behind the expression, because language carries the character of indirectness. We cannot communicate without language; we cannot see, or directly perceive the other's consciousness and what is going on there, if he or she uses some kind of language, which can also be body language. Because of this, the examples of misunderstanding between people generally takes the form of 'not understanding the real aim of ...' Schleiermacher concludes that "what we are looking for is the very thought that the speaker wanted to express."²⁴⁶ So the intention behind the expression is the focal point of understanding. But to reach that intention, grammatical and syntactic analysis is not sufficient, because to find the intention behind a person's sentence requires some knowledge about the person, about the situation in which the sentence is expressed, about the culture in which the person has

²⁴⁵ Friedrich Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*, trans. Andrew Bowie (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), p. 7.

²⁴⁶ Quoted from Schleiermacher's *Allgemeine Hermeneutik von 1809-10*, p. 76 by Jean Grondin in *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 68.

grown up, etc. The same sentence can be used by two people by very different purposes. This is where an investigation of the psychology of the creator or author is needed. Psychological interpretation, says Gadamer, is Schleiermacher's most important contribution to the theory of romantic hermeneutics. Where grammatical interpretation does not help us to understand the text, we need to go back to the author's creation process so that it becomes possible to understand his intention in composing his work.

The second point which needs attention when we are summarizing Schleiermacher's views is primacy of misunderstanding. Schleiermacher divided practice of interpretation in two kinds: stricter and laxer. The laxer practice takes understanding as the normal state and uses interpretation to elude misunderstanding; Spinoza and Chladenius represent examples of this practice. This was the regular practice when hermeneutics was concerned. Schleiermacher defines the idea behind the laxer practice as "*understanding results as a matter of course and expresses the aim negatively*: misunderstanding should be avoided."²⁴⁷ However the stricter practice takes the misunderstanding as the normal state and uses interpretation to provide understanding. He defines the main idea that represents stricter practice as "*misunderstanding results as a matter of course and that understanding must be desired and sought at every point*."²⁴⁸ And this stricter practice, according to Schleiermacher, must be the main method of hermeneutics because not understanding but misunderstanding covers most of our consciousness. Why is misunderstanding the normal state for us? Because of the *hermeneutical circle*, which is "the view that the meaning of the whole can only be grasped on the basis of the parts, while understanding the meaning of the parts presupposes a grasp of the meaning of the whole."²⁴⁹ Suppose that we contend that we understood most of the text but misunderstood or did not understand some passages. That hermeneutics will assist us in

²⁴⁷ Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*. p. 21.

²⁴⁸ Schleiermacher, *Hermeneutics and Criticism and Other Writings*. p. 22.

²⁴⁹ J. M. Connolly and T. Keutner, "Interpretation, Decidability, and Meaning," in *Hermeneutics versus Science? Three German Views*, (eds.) J. M. Connolly and T. Keutner (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1988), p. 2.

understanding those exceptions, will be an error. Because, if we did not understand one passage this means that we did not understand the whole because the meaning of parts is connected to the meaning of the whole and vice versa. So hermeneutics is *not* the discipline which comes to someone's aid when there is a misunderstanding. Schleiermacher expresses the task of hermeneutics as follows:

The business of hermeneutics cannot begin merely when the faculty of understanding becomes uncertain of itself; rather, it is involved from the very beginning in the endeavor to understand something said.²⁵⁰

So, Schleiermacher presents misunderstanding as the universal circumstance and occasion of interpretation. This universalization of misunderstanding is the contrary of the former view that takes misunderstanding as exceptional. If misunderstanding were exceptional then it would be possible to avoid it. But if it is universal, as defended by Schleiermacher, then misunderstanding is unavoidable. And he writes, "non-understanding is never completely eliminated."²⁵¹ As a result hermeneutics is not a field necessary when we encounter a problem in understanding something, that is, hermeneutics is not an occasional activity. This is the meaning of universality of hermeneutics. Hermeneutics is universal because it is needed wherever and whenever understanding and interpretation are at issue. More specifically, all situations in which a language is being used require hermeneutics in order to avoid misunderstanding as far as possible. Misunderstanding will certainly arise in one step of understanding since misunderstanding is the universal condition of understanding. Complete understanding of something, of something 'alien' more properly, is an ideal which is impossible in reality. So hermeneutics as a method on its own aims to avoid misunderstanding in advance.

These principles presented by Schleiermacher necessitated drastic changes in the practice of hermeneutics. And this change found its manifestation

²⁵⁰ Quoted from Schleiermacher's *Allgemeine Hermeneutik von 1809-10*, pp. 29-30 by Grondin in *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 70.

²⁵¹ Quoted from Schleiermacher's *Hermeneutik und Kritik*, p. 328 by Grondin in *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 70.

in the idea of *reconstruction*. If non-understanding is universal and understanding must be sought at every point, then the reader must deal with every part one by one: "I must be able to reconstruct every part from the ground up, just as if I were the author."²⁵² Because of the universality of misunderstanding and of hermeneutical circle, the interpreter has a difficult task which can be summarized as follows: The goal is to find the intention of the author; the intention of the author can be grasped with many interrelated knowledge about him and his age. To understand a part of the work necessitates to understand the whole and to understand the whole necessitates understanding the parts; so, this is a circle rounding infinitely. There is always some kind of misunderstanding, the end product of interpretation is always incomplete; so, the act of interpretation continues till infinity. Psychological interpretation aims at understanding "the individuality of the speaker or author,"²⁵³ by means of reconstructing the origin of author's thought in the exact steps of his creating. Gadamer summarizes the essence of psychological interpretation as follows:

It is ultimately a divinatory process, a placing of oneself within the whole framework of the author, an apprehension of the "inner origin" of the composition of a work, a re-creation of the creative act. Thus understanding is a reproduction of an original production, a knowing of what has been known (Boeckh), a reconstruction that starts from the vital moment of conception, the "germinal decision" as the composition's organizing center.²⁵⁴

Gadamer notes that although Schleiermacher universalized the claim of hermeneutics, his method has some consequences that hinder the way to truth we are searching for. Firstly, the reconstructive hermeneutical procedure described above does not take us to the subject matter of the text but only to the intention of the author, which is a wrong direction for Gadamer. Secondly, being away from the subject matter of the text or speech under consideration is considered by Schleiermacher "as an aesthetic construct, as a work of art or 'artistic

²⁵² Grondin, *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 71.

²⁵³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 186.

²⁵⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 186.

thought.”²⁵⁵ If we are not searching for what the text is saying is true or not with respect to its subject matter, this means that we are left only with how the text says what it says. This is clearly an aestheticization of the all objects of understanding apart from the objects of science. According to Schleiermacher, dialectic, not hermeneutics, deals with the subject matter or the truth claim of texts. Dialectic deals with “being” not with individual beings. Let us explore Gadamer’s example of Trojan War in Homer’s poems. Schleiermacher clearly separates reading of Homer on Trojan War into two: one can be a reading in search for the historical fact about this war and this reading would completely disregard the poetic and psychological side of the text and tries to find whether there is truth in them about a particular fact; one can also try to understand Homer’s poem on Trojan War and this reading must disregard whether what is said is true about the particular occasion, and tries to reconstruct the creation process of Homer seeing it as “a free construct and the free expression of an individual being.”²⁵⁶ For Schleiermacher, the primary mode of understanding is this second type; that is, understanding the other, the individuality of the person. So texts are expressions of individuality of their creators. Understanding Homer’s poems means understanding Homer himself, understanding his intentions, or as Schleiermacher puts it, understanding Homer better than he understood himself. So Gadamer observes that “Schleiermacher's problem is not historical obscurity, but the obscurity of the Thou.”²⁵⁷ The idea of understanding the creator better than he understood himself deserves special examination for Gadamer:

Schleiermacher asserts that the aim is *to understand a writer better than he understood himself*, a formula that has been repeated ever since; and in its changing interpretation the whole history of modern hermeneutics can be read. Indeed, this statement contains the whole problem of hermeneutics.²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 187.

²⁵⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 187.

²⁵⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 190.

²⁵⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 191.

For Schleiermacher, reconstruction of the creation process necessarily means a better understanding because the reverse of the creation process and applying hermeneutical circle to the text in question produces many things which the author remained unconscious and which become evident to the interpreter. The life context of the author and the cultural environment he was involved are not available as a whole to the writer, but it can be researched by the interpreter. So, the better understanding formula refers to knowing the factors of which the author was unconscious or partially conscious. Because reproduction necessitates a divination and identification with the mind of author, hermeneutics cannot be formulated as a mechanical process but it must be thought of as an art. In other words, hermeneutics is a task of “feeling”, of “an immediate, sympathetic, and con-genial understanding.”²⁵⁹ Artfulness of the hermeneutical process becomes clearer when we are aware of one more conclusion of Schleiermacher’s understanding of understanding, namely, the conclusion that “the artist who creates something is not the appointed interpreter of it.”²⁶⁰ The interpreter is the one who will perform the reflection on and sympathy with the artist in a manner in which there is a reproduction of a production, or an art of reproduction moving in the hermeneutical circle and this whole process is unavailable to the author. Gadamer concludes that Schleiermacher’s theory of understanding has close relationship with the aesthetics of genius and of *Erlebnis* which has been a primary object of his criticism of Kant. Aesthetics of genius is aesthetics of unconscious production and aesthetics of *Erlebnis* reduces the artwork to the expression of the personality of the artist; and this has produced the aesthetic differentiation of the modern philosophy of art. So, Gadamer criticizes Schleiermacher in certain aspects of his new discipline of universal hermeneutics: first Schleiermacher limited the aim of understanding to the intention of author or speaker, second he is responsible for the banishment of “critique based on understanding the subject matter from the sphere of scholarly interpretation,” which means also the banishment of the truth claim of artworks,

²⁵⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 190.

²⁶⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 192.

and lastly he aestheticized the textual tradition by arguing that texts are free productions of individuality which are breakable from their “content as knowledge” by submitting hermeneutics to the aesthetics of genius and *Erlebnis*.²⁶¹ The validity of Gadamer’s criticism is questionable, and this necessitates a detailed analysis of Schleiermacher’s works on hermeneutics. However this evaluation transcends the purpose and extent of this dissertation. Basically, Gadamer wants to emphasize that the universality achieved by Schleiermacher and his followers stay at the level of formal universality, because, says Gadamer, “they were able to harmonize it [the task of hermenutics] with the natural sciences’ ideal of objectivity, but only by ignoring the concretion of historical consciousness in hermeneutical theory.”²⁶²

It is necessary to understand the place of historical consciousness in hermeneutics here so that we can put forward how Schleiermacher’s universalization of hermeneutics had a special effect on the study of history in the nineteenth century. Universal hermeneutics of Schleiermacher showed itself in various stages of the development of the “historical school”, most important representatives of which were Leopold von Ranke, Johann Gustav Droysen and Wilhelm Dilthey. I will mainly concentrate upon Dilthey, but a short consideration of historical school will also be presented in order to show the background of Dilthey’s understanding of history.

The historical school tried to destroy any “teleological” understanding of history. For the historical school, the most important representative of teleological understanding of history was Hegel. According to Hegel, “Reason is sovereign of the World; ... the history of the world, therefore, presents us with a rational process.”²⁶³ Historical school, however, denies any attempt to evaluate history in terms of “a criterion that lies outside history.”²⁶⁴ Classicism, theology

²⁶¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 194.

²⁶² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 293.

²⁶³ G. W. F. Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, trans. John Sibree. (Kitchener: Bathoche Books, 2001), p. 22.

²⁶⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 198.

and Hegel's philosophy of history are all examples of teleological histories using "a priori" or "unhistorical" criteria. But this anti-Hegelian mood of the historical school does not destroy the idea of unity of history, or as they call it "universal history". They retained this idea since it was necessary for a total understanding of history. History must be a unity so that unique events can be evaluated in terms of their place in universal history, hence universal history gains its meaning from ever changing particular events. This was the hermeneutical circle in the form of historical research. What they call universal history can also be thought as a unified tradition. Tradition constitutes the text of history, which is waiting to be understood hermeneutically. The history of hermeneutics, as summarized by Gadamer, changed its path by the effect of the idea that the Bible and other texts must be understood in themselves, not with respect to earlier interpretations of the Church or other authorities. When this is applied to history, the historical school came to the conclusion that "the whole continuity of universal history can be understood only from historical tradition itself."²⁶⁵ So historical school is viewed by Gadamer as a continuation of Schleiermacher's literary hermeneutics.

The understanding of history on the basis of literary hermeneutics presents some problems for Gadamer. History is thought of as a text, but history is different from a text in certain respects. Texts are "self-contained," that is, texts are complete works standing before the reader; however, history "lacks the self-containedness" in question.²⁶⁶ In the first place, history is always growing toward future, in the second place, "interpreters are situated within" history as active participants of it.²⁶⁷ These problems did not hinder theorists from regarding their studies as "scientific research" and also from following a humanist ideal.²⁶⁸ This ideal is manifested, according to Gadamer, in the way in which they conceptualize the universal history. Gadamer writes that

²⁶⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 196.

²⁶⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 197.

²⁶⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 197.

²⁶⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 199.

[t]he unfolding of human life in time has its own productivity. The plenitude and variety of the human is increasingly realized in the unending vicissitudes of human destinies: this is a reasonable formulation of the basic assumption of the historical school.²⁶⁹

Unity of history is accomplished by reference to this formal idea of “rich variety” seen in individual forms in historical reality. The principle that history must be understood from the historical tradition alone means that there is only one alternative left for historical studies: research. In short, “history has a meaning in itself.”²⁷⁰ Therefore, if history shows something teleological about itself without applying any extra-historical criterion, then such a teleology can be accepted. Gadamer cites Herder and Ranke as recognizing such a teleology immanent in history. For Herder, the “idea of continuity” constitutes the structure of historical reality; for Ranke, it is the “success” of events in effecting the direction of history that constitutes the criterion for evaluation of universal history: “...success or failure causes a whole series of actions and events to be meaningful or meaningless. The ontological structure of history itself, then, is teleological, although without a telos.”²⁷¹

On the basis which Schleiermacher has constructed, Dilthey tried to find the necessary link between hermeneutics and social science. However this was not Dilthey’s basic aim. Mainly he wanted to specify the basis of human sciences and to show the differences between humanities and natural sciences but at the same time to harmonize “the human sciences’ mode of knowledge with the methodological criteria of the natural sciences.”²⁷² Dilthey agrees that the foundation of all sciences is experience but social sciences depend not on external experience but on internal experience. Dilthey thinks that the reason for this is the constitutive character of consciousness:

²⁶⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 199.

²⁷⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 200.

²⁷¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 201.

²⁷² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 233.

If I start from inner experience, I find the entire outer world given to me in my consciousness, the laws of this totality of nature being subject to conditions of my consciousness, hence dependent on them.²⁷³

The experience on which social sciences depend is the internal experience for Dilthey and this leads Dilthey, in his early writings, to the conclusion that the most basic science which deals with inner experience must be the grounding of social sciences. This science, Dilthey concludes, is psychology.

The simplest finding which analysis of socio-historical reality can come up with lies in psychology; accordingly, it is the first and most basic special science of the mind. Correspondingly, its truths are the basis for further construction.²⁷⁴

But what makes Dilthey a defender of hermeneutics, firstly, is his preference of interpretive psychology rather than explanatory psychology. In explanatory psychology a human psyche is divided into parts and these parts are studied and explained mainly with reference to physical symptoms and causes. However, interpretive psychology which is supposed to be the basis of social sciences, tries to understand the whole person. In that sense psychology can be the ground for social sciences. This ground also guarantees that we limit historical knowledge only to experience against the Hegelian rational understanding and any form of teleological understanding of history. Therefore, the cornerstone of Dilthey's new epistemology for human sciences is experience. But the concept of experience Dilthey has in mind must be totally different from the concept of sensation. For that reason, Dilthey particularly emphasizes that the experience of historical world must be conceptualized as *Erlebnis*, that is, lived experience. As we have noted in the first chapter, the concept of *Erlebnis* is coined against the rationalism of Enlightenment. It was coined to show that the concept of sensation is not able to give the full content of experience of the individual as a living human being. For the concept of sensation, as used in natural sciences, it would be possible to speak about the object and the subject of

²⁷³ Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, p. 84.

²⁷⁴ Dilthey, *Introduction to the Human Sciences*, p. 95.

sensation. Nevertheless, the concept of *Erlebnis* shows the impossibility of such a division when historical human experience is concerned:

For Dilthey the ultimate presupposition for knowledge of the historical world is experience (*Erlebnis*). In it the identity between consciousness and object—that postulate of speculative idealism—is still demonstrable reality. This is where immediate certitude is to be found, for experience is no longer divided into an act (a becoming conscious) and a content (that of which one is conscious). It is, rather, indivisible consciousness. Even to say that experience is *of* something is to make too great division.²⁷⁵

As indivisible basic data of human experience, particular experiences as *Erlebnisse* are not connected with each other according to the basic causal scheme used in natural sciences. So, the model of causality used in natural sciences is also another category which is not appropriate for understanding the historical world. Instead, Dilthey offered the concept of “structure” which is able to explain and describe the continuity and unity of ‘life’ responsible for the intrinsic connection between our *Erlebnisse*. It is important to consider the following passage, which describes the radical unity of psychic structure, from Dilthey’s “Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytic Psychology.”

Psychic life-process is originally and above all, from its most elemental forms to the highest, a unity. Psychic life does not grow together from parts; it is not composed of elements; it is not a composite nor is it a result of the collaboration of sensory and affective atoms; it is originally and always a comprehensive unity. Psychic functions are differentiated from it while all along remaining bound to their nexus. This fact, whose highest expression is the unity of consciousness and of the person, radically distinguished psychic life from the entire corporeal world.²⁷⁶

These different characteristics of human experience require conceptualizing understanding differently from objectivist methodological natural sciences. Accordingly, the second element which made Dilthey a

²⁷⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 217.

²⁷⁶ Wilhelm Dilthey, “Ideas concerning a Descriptive and Analytic Psychology,” in Wilhelm Dilthey, *Descriptive Psychology and Historical Understanding*, trans. R. M. Zaner and K. L. Heiges, (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1977), p. 92.

philosopher of hermeneutics is that he distinguished social sciences from natural sciences by the help of the emphasis on an original kind of understanding special to human sciences. Natural sciences study external manifestations. However, social sciences study external manifestations in order to find the reasons behind them: “we explain nature, we understand mental life.”²⁷⁷ This is because of the fact that all social events, sociological, historical, psychological etc. are expressions of an inner drive, purpose, motive etc.

It is orientation of self-awareness; it is the course of understanding that proceeds from the outside to the inside. This impulse cherishes every manifestation of life for expressing the inwardness from which it stems.²⁷⁸

There are interpretations to the effect that in time Dilthey preferred hermeneutics to psychology as a foundation of social sciences. But this is a point of controversy, because Dilthey has always insisted on a fixed basis, logic and method for social science, at least as a hope. And such a hope was the main target for Gadamer which he strongly resisted. For Dilthey, the final correct interpretation is reachable by the reader. It can be said that historical studies on Dilthey shows that hermeneutics played more prominent role in his later works. Psychology may be seen as a product of Dilthey’s enthusiasm to find a scientific background for human sciences, but in time, hermeneutics seemed to him more productive in giving “results” for studying *Erlebnisse* than psychology.²⁷⁹

Dilthey constructed his theory of human sciences on the idea of “homogeneity of subject and object.”²⁸⁰ This means that man is both subject and object of history; in other words, the historian is a man and his object, history, is

²⁷⁷ Quoted from W. Dilthey’s *Gesammelte Schriften* 5:144, by Grondin in *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 86.

²⁷⁸ Quoted from W. Dilthey’s *Gesammelte Schriften* 7:82, by Grondin in *Introduction to Philosophical Hermeneutics*, p. 87.

²⁷⁹ For a detailed explanation for Dilthey’s shift from psychology to hermeneutics see “Introduction” by Rudolf A. Makkreel & Frithjof Rodi in Wilhelm Dilthey’s *Poetry and Experience*, Rudolf A. Makkreel and Frithjof Rodi (eds.), (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1985), pp. 3-26.

²⁸⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 217.

also a creation of men and the same holds for all human sciences. For Dilthey, this is very advantageous for historical and human sciences. The homogeneity in question makes the real task of human sciences easier to attain, because the main task of these sciences is understanding. Dilthey takes 'life' as the totality which is in need of understanding. This understanding of life is achieved through the hermeneutical circle:

Like the coherence of a text, the structural coherence of life is defined as a relation between the whole and the parts. Every part expresses something of the whole of life—i.e., has significance for the whole—just as its own significance is determined by the whole.²⁸¹

For Gadamer, Dilthey's conception of life is the richest part of his philosophy. Dilthey's endeavour to make life the ultimate foundation of human sciences embodies some elements that can help us to find an exit from the dogmatism of Cartesian methodological ideal. Dilthey, nevertheless, did not go in this way. There were several reasons for this, according to Gadamer: first and foremost Dilthey was "a child of enlightenment." He was completely tied to the enlightenment's ideal of modern scientific rationality. However his great mind has always been aware that social and historical life contained more than what can be encapsulated in the methodological objectivity of science.

Dilthey emphasizes—and he is undoubtedly correct—that life's natural view of itself is developed prior to any scientific objectification. It objectifies itself in the wisdom of proverb and legend, but above all in great works of art, where "something of the mind detaches itself from its creator." Art is a special organ for understanding life because in its "confines between knowledge and act" life reveals itself at a depth that is inaccessible to observation, reflection, and theory.²⁸²

What has to be done, accordingly, is to find a way in which scientific objectivity could include all the ways to truth about human matters. The main obstacle is historicism which states the impossibility of objective knowledge for human sciences. Dilthey thought that he solved this problem by showing that the

²⁸¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 218.

²⁸² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 229.

subject-object distinction takes a different form when human psyche and life are concerned. Homogeneity of subject and object, unity of psychic structure, life's natural relation with knowledge, hermeneutical character of understanding show us that we can define historical knowledge in a new form of objectivity without necessarily abandoning the scientific ideal of objectivity. However, for Gadamer, this scheme does not fully accord with the situation of historian. The fact is that "historical observer is tied to time and place" in which he lives.²⁸³ For Dilthey, awareness of this fact is enough for transcending it. This means that if consciousness becomes "historical consciousness," conditioned state of the historian can be transcended. Historical consciousness treats everything as a part of history and so sees everything in its historicity. Put differently, historical consciousness is able to evaluate phenomena in their historical conditions seeing them as products of an era. The historian also sees himself as a product of his own historical and social circumstances. In that sense, Gadamer says, "[h]istorical consciousness is a mode of self-knowledge."²⁸⁴ According to Dilthey, this is the "historical sense" necessary for developing historical consciousness and also for producing historical knowledge. For Gadamer, however, the situation is just the reverse. He asks: "Is not the fact that consciousness is historically conditioned inevitably an insuperable barrier to its reaching perfect fulfillment in historical knowledge?"²⁸⁵ Dilthey thought that objectivity in the science of history is attainable if the principle of hermeneutical circle is applied to history as follows: "...an age should be understood in terms of itself and not according to the criterion of some alien present."²⁸⁶ Although Dilthey sees this as the perfect form of historical worldview, Gadamer opposes such kind of an understanding of objectivity as an acceptance of the idea of "infinite understanding". Infinite understanding is the idea that human beings can overcome the finitude of their viewpoint. In Hegel, the concept of absolute Spirit

²⁸³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 225.

²⁸⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 228 (Gadamer's italics).

²⁸⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 225.

²⁸⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 225.

makes such an infinite understanding possible, but as we know, Dilthey is against Hegel's speculative philosophy and any idea of a priori understanding of history. In place of absolute Spirit, Dilthey uses a different ideal for such a possibility of objective understanding. It is, as Gadamer views it, "the ideal of a historically enlightened reason that has matured into a genius who understands everything."²⁸⁷ Additionally, being a genius is not the only way to attain the ideal of historically enlightened reason, since if it was social science would be an impossibility for all humans. Historical enlightenment is "always obtainable through scientific method."²⁸⁸ Historical consciousness, which is supposed to transcend its situatedness in a historical context by an awareness of its indispensable historicity, is not able to solve the problem of attaining "objective knowledge" in any way.

In short, Dilthey argues that human beings are in every way capable of understanding, of knowing what is internal to them and also the external expressions of what is internal. The basic problem of historical sciences is to know the internal lying behind the external. Human beings are capable of discovering or deciphering the external manifestations of inner experience of human beings. At the end of this deciphering we acquire the knowledge of human world. Gadamer criticizes this epistemological way of putting things, since this epistemological schema does not refer to the historical element or the temporal distance involved in all human phenomena. If we are to stay in epistemology, the temporal distance still poses a problem of historicism, because understanding external manifestations, that is, understanding a historical event or a construct or a work, as an expression of what was internal, still carries the problem that the historian and what he studies are not of the same age or the same historical conditions. The historian is condemned to stay in his finitude, in his context which would make it impossible to attain "objective knowledge" of the subject. So, for Gadamer, in order to go out of these aporias of historicism, it is inevitable that we question the idea and ideal of "objective knowledge."

²⁸⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 226.

²⁸⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 227.

Contrary to Dilthey, Gadamer finds in Husserl a “more and more radical critique of the ‘objectivism’ of previous philosophy.”²⁸⁹ The most important component of this criticism is the concept of “life-world” which is put forward by Husserl, in his late book *The Crisis of the European Sciences*. As a result of epoche, Husserl reduced natural world to a phenomenon among other phenomena. In the *Crisis*, Husserl tries to analyze world’s different modes of being given. There is a change of emphasis in Husserl’s philosophy with his new analysis of life-world as a technical concept. Earlier, transcendental subjectivity was the center around which phenomenological analysis turned. All analysis at the end was referred to transcendental subjectivity. But the *Crisis* was a total change of attitude, as Husserl says, since “life-world” is seen as a more concrete ground upon which we build our investigations.

What is “life-world” as developed by Husserl, and what differentiates it from the ordinary world that we live, or are they different at all? Husserl says the following:

[T]he world which constantly exists for us through the flowing alteration of manners of givenness is a universal mental acquisition, having developed as such and at the same time continuing to develop as the unity of mental configuration, as a meaning –construct– as the construct of a universal, ultimately functioning subjectivity. It belongs essentially to this world-constituting accomplishment that subjectivity objectifies itself as human subjectivity, as an element of the world.²⁹⁰

We can understand from the above quotation that “the world” in its totality is a mental acquisition. The world, which Husserl is talking about, is not independent of mental life, but dependent upon mind’s activities and accomplishments. But Husserl wants to show that although the world is a mental accomplishment, it is neither totally subjective nor objective. Husserl’s aim in the *Crisis* is to put forward the true category of the world so that the problems of his century can be solved. For Husserl, the confusion about the world is

²⁸⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, pp. 235-236.

²⁹⁰ Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*, trans. David Carr, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 113.

responsible for the crisis of science and culture of his time. To arrive at this point, first it must be made clear that the concept of life-world is a result of a particular kind of epoche. In this epoche, Husserl says, to continue any activity regarding our natural life is forbidden, we do not ask questions about being or value. As a result, the world becomes a phenomenon for me. Husserl calls this process as “making our gaze free”. This free gaze can differentiate the life-world. Life-world is the world which has become a phenomenon for me. Life-world is a consequence of a new kind of epoche; in other words, after the epoche, there remains only life-world and all the other things are experienceable on the basis of this life-world. Husserl says that

[i]t is from this very ground that I have freed myself through the epoche; I stand *above* the world, which has now become for me, in a quite peculiar sense, a *phenomenon*.²⁹¹

This is the first step by which we arrive at the life-world: as a result of a total change of attitude²⁹² we make the world a phenomenon. Husserl is talking about something different from the empiricist understanding and experience of the world. Life-world is also something experienceable, and experienced by the phenomenologist but this is not the same as the sole experience of a spatio-temporal world. The life-world is different from the nature or the physical world, because life-world encompasses natural/physical world in that the structure of life-world is valid for our experience of any kind. “The life-world is a realm of self-evidences.”²⁹³ This means that any self-evident experience, whether or not subjective-relative or scientific-objective, belongs to the life-world. Life-world is the realm of all actual and possible experiences. There is no outside-life-world-experience. Experience means to be in the life-world, to be in the basic, non-relative structure of the life-world and to be in the relative manners of givenness in the life-world. In that sense, science, its theories, concepts, accomplishments also belong to the life-world as a kind of experience. But it is clear that life-

²⁹¹ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 152.

²⁹² Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 153.

²⁹³ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 127.

world evidences higher level of givenness than the scientific evidences have. For example, the statement 'a tree has roots under the ground' is self-evident but the statement 'planets travel in ellipses' is not self-evident as the first statement.

When science poses and answers questions, these are from the start and hence from then on, questions resting upon the ground of, and addressed to, the elements of this pregiven world in which science and every other life-praxis is engaged.²⁹⁴

There are different definitions of life-world in Husserl's works. Life-world is sometimes referred to as the world of immediate experience. This is the definition which is generally used in the parts about scientific realism. Husserl opposes scientific realism on the basis that theoretical objects are not experienceable. Husserl argues that scientific realism forgets the fact that theoretical concepts are derived from or they depend upon the world of immediate experience. However the concept of life-world is much richer than the immediately experienceable world. If such richness is not taken into account then we cannot understand Husserl.

Husserl's aim in mentioning the perceptual world as the life-world is simple: before any theoretical, scientific activity, there are events and spatio-temporal objects in our surrounding world and these constitute the basis of theories. In that sense, life-world is the a priori ground of natural sciences. However, scientific activities are not outside the life-world, since there are not only objects in this world, but subjects, that is, human beings who develop scientific theories. As we know, Husserl repeatedly mentions that life-world is something subjective, and that it includes cultural accomplishments. So the world of immediate experience is not able to account for such different sides of the life-world mentioned in the *Crisis*.

Life-world is not only the perceptual world, but it has human beings and history in itself. Human beings are temporal beings so life-world must have a temporal dimension. Because when we perform epoche, when we stop any practice related to aims, we are confronted with the life-world with all the objects

²⁹⁴ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 121.

in it, with all their different kinds. Now the problem is that if something is not in the form of an object of the life-world, then we must not count it as real. The objects of theoretical objective sciences, which are merely theoretical and not experienceable, cannot be accepted as real objects. For example, if a 'scientific realist' claims that all the objects around us can be reduced to a more fundamental reality, such as, to atoms, Husserl would not agree with that, since if only real things are atoms then we must distinguish them in our life-world. So, the things that are experienceable in the horizon of the life-world are real and this is the answer to the question of reality against both objectivism and relativism. These realities include cultural objects like tools, paintings, legal codes, theoretical meanings and scientific methods and also perceptual objects in space and time, the sun, mountains, birds, trees, rocks, seas, etc. However, Husserl shows the problem of the historical and socio-cultural relativity of the life-world. The life-world can be seen both as one and many. This problem is addressed by Husserl as "the life-world's relation to subjectivity." There are different life-worlds for different people and communities. So the problem of the uniqueness of the world arises. How can we explain that there are many worlds? Husserl claims that there are unchanging aspects of the life-world.

[T]he life world does have, in all its relative features, a general structure. This general structure, to which everything that exists relatively bound, is not itself relative. We can attend to it in its generality and, with sufficient care, fix it once and for all in a way equally accessible to all.²⁹⁵

All subjective-relative formulations of life-world share the basic structure that it is a world in the form of spatio-temporality. The ontological status of the life-world does not change in different socio-cultural life worlds: in order to be a horizon of a human being's life, it must be in the form of space and time.

²⁹⁵ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 139.

[T]he world is the universe of things, which are distributed within the world-form of space-time and are “positional” in two senses (according to spatial position and temporal position)—the spatio-temporal *onta*.²⁹⁶

The variations in other fields are normal since life-world is subjective, that is, there are subjects in the life-world. Consciousness determines the content of the life-world according to itself and according to other subjects in its life. In that sense life-world is an intersubjective world. We noted that Husserl was arguing against objectivism and realism of scientific realism. The first handling of the concept of life-world was against scientific realism, because the world in which we live is a cultural and not only a sensible world. The point emphasized by Husserl is that different intersubjective communities have different life-world contents, not different life-worlds.

Although contents of life-world are always subjective-relative, Husserl wants to show the necessity of the essential meaning structure for these life-worlds. For Husserl, each human community has more or less different life-world contents, but all these different contents share a common general structure. This general structure is not only the basis of natural sciences but also that of intersubjectivity.

The important point is that natural sciences are in crisis, since, for Husserl, they ignore the fact that life-world is in its essence a subjective world in that human beings are actively engaged in a life-world constituting activity. Life-world constituting activity is the activity by which consciousness creates different objects or different experiences “formed out of elementary intentionalities”.²⁹⁷

[T]he world as it is for us becomes understandable as a structure of meaning formed out of elementary intentionalities. The being of these intentionalities themselves is nothing but one meaning-formation operating together with another, “constituting” new meaning through synthesis. And meaning is

²⁹⁶ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 142.

²⁹⁷ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 168.

never anything but meaning in modes of validity, that is, as related to intending ego-subjects which effect validity.²⁹⁸

So natural sciences forget their root which is the life-world and its essential structure. Both natural and social sciences are blind to the essential structure of the life-world. Social sciences also embody a problem of relativism and Husserl argues against this by suggesting that there is an unchanging essential structure of life-world. Upon this structure variations emerge and subjective differences between people and cultures appear.

For Gadamer, the most important turning point for Husserl has been the analysis of temporality. Experiences occur in a temporal horizon, they are placed in a flow of before and after. This temporality is an indispensable horizon, or the a priori, universal horizon. The idea is that experiences flow continuously. The mode of the givenness of experience is to be a part of this temporal flow: "The flow of experience has the character of a universal horizon consciousness, and only from it is the discrete experience given as an experience at all."²⁹⁹ The horizon of spatio-temporality, of life-world, is not reserved only to consciousness. The same horizon is also carried by objects; because objects are, according to the phenomenological analysis, only given or they exist only in the intentionality of consciousness. All objects are objects of the life-world. This is the decisive point where Husserl opposes objectivism. Objects are not pure, unrelated, neutral phenomena. They always exist on the background of a priori of the life-world.

Thus the horizon intentionality which constitutes the unity of the flow of experience is paralleled by an equally comprehensive horizon intentionality on the objective side. For everything that is given as existent is given in terms of a world and hence brings the world horizon with it.³⁰⁰

²⁹⁸ Husserl, *The Crisis*, p. 168.

²⁹⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 237.

³⁰⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 238.

Depending on this, we can say that the most important contribution of Husserl to hermeneutics is this critique of objectivism, that is, Husserl's life-world clearly shows us that the idea of independently existing objects totally free from our determination is a wrong interpretation of reality. Objects are always and in the first place objects of life-world and the reality of objects are totally dependent upon their quality of carrying the world horizon with them. Accordingly, "the concept of *life-world* is the antithesis of all objectivism," argues Gadamer.³⁰¹

However this anti-objectivism does not necessitate to be immersed into subjectivism. Gadamer shows that life-world also resists being totally subjective against all the claims of relativism, since the concept of life-world, although historical and subjective for all its contents, is not totally subjective. This means that life-world is an accomplishment of subjects but not an accomplishment or constitution of an individual subject but of all subjects in history. "The all-embracing world horizon is constituted by a fundamentally anonymous intentionality—i.e., not achieved by anyone by name."³⁰² It is not the case that we become subjects and then we constitute the unity of experience, rather we are born into an already constituted life-world. "The unity of the flow of experience" is a given.

For Gadamer although Husserl's concept of life-world is valuable as a critique of objectivism, Husserl still remains within the schema of Cartesian ego. This can also be said for Dilthey. Gadamer writes about Husserl and Dilthey that "*the speculative import of the concept of life remained undeveloped in both men.*"³⁰³ To understand what does Gadamer mean by "undeveloped" concept of life in Husserl, we can look at how Husserl accounts for the constitution of "Thou" or other person.

³⁰¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 239.

³⁰² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 238.

³⁰³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 241, (italics are in the original).

Husserl starts his investigation of how “the other” is constituted by the transcendental ego by performing a new epoche which restricts the analysis only to “what is peculiarly my own”. He calls the area in which we are restricted the “sphere of ownness” which designates “an essential structure, which is part of the all-embracing constitution in which the transcendental ego, as constituting an Objective world, lives his life.”³⁰⁴ The sphere of ownness makes it possible for the ego to construct, at the same time, the things that are outside or transcends his sphere of ownness as alien. The requisite to the constitution of the sphere of ownness is to be able to discriminate a transcending field that does not belong to my primordial sphere. The discrimination does not happen automatically, but involves some steps. These steps are described by Husserl in the field of constitution of “others” as distinct conscious subjects.

I start by my “ego’s incessant self-perception.”³⁰⁵ In my primordial sphere of ownness I constitute myself as made up of an “animate organism” and as a psyche governing that body. But in my sphere of ownness, I can only have my animate body and I directly perceive or present other bodies which look like mine, and behave like me. Depending on this resemblance, I perform an apperception that designates others as others or as “men”. In the case of physical objects, I have perception of only one side of an object; for example, the front of the house. What I perform in the perception of physical objects is to “appresent” the side which I do not at the moment directly perceive. I am sure that the house has a backward side, which makes it a closed place and at the end a “house”. And to verify this appresentation, I have the chance to walk around the house and see the other side which I have previously apperceived. Now, the situation is not the same in the recognition of the “other” as another ego. What I can present is just the body or bodies. What I do next is to transfer the sense which I have of myself as a psychophysical unity to the “other” by means of an analogizing apperception. The character of this analogizing apperception of the other is such

³⁰⁴ Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, translated by Dorion Cairns (Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 1995), p. 93.

³⁰⁵ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 110.

that I have no direct means to verify it like the apperception performed regarding the physical objects.

Since in this Nature and this world, my animate organism is the only body that is or can be constituted originally as an animate organism, the body over there, which is nevertheless apprehended as an animate organism, must have derived this sense by an *apperceptive transfer from my animate organism*, and done so in a manner that excludes an actually direct, and hence primordial showing of the predicates belonging to an animate organism specifically, a showing of them in perception proper.³⁰⁶

The basis of this apperceptive transfer is the similarity between my animate organism and the other's body. What is distinctively important here is Husserl's emphasis that such an apperception is not a kind of inference: "it by no means follows that there would be an inference from analogy. Apperception is not an inference, not a thinking act."³⁰⁷ If not an inference, what is this apperception? If appresentation has no chance to verify its contents, do we still call it appresentation? Husserl says 'yes', because we know worldly objects with respect to their types and the constitution or the sense of these types depends upon a "primal instituting"³⁰⁸ which he does not explain in detail. But he tries to give a detailed examination of appresentation performed for the existence of others.

The one step in the constitution of the other is pairing, which is used for the process in which we pair or group the things that have a similar appearances. If we find the sense which is present in one of the things that are similar, we transfer it to the other and constitute a pair. Types are also constituted in the same manner; this is presented as an example of "primal instituting." After the act of pairing, we need some kind of process of verification of this pairing. This is accomplished, according to Husserl, by way of harmonious behavior that is perceived. The other shows incessantly harmonious behavior showing that he is

³⁰⁶ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 110.

³⁰⁷ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 111.

³⁰⁸ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 111.

a psychophysical unity like me. Harmony is perceived in the field of the behavior of the other, and this harmony which resembles my harmonious behavior is the only basis for the verification. Husserl calls this kind of verification as a “verifiable accessibility of what is not originally experienced.”³⁰⁹ At this stage comes the definition of what is the experience of other: “an experience that does not give something itself originally but that consistently verifies something indicated.”³¹⁰ Now, the last point in the constitution of the other is the recognition of spatial distinctness of other from me. Suppose that I and the “other” are looking at an object. I am looking at the object from here and he is looking at it from there. I have the capacity to go there and look at the same object from there, converting the there into a here. This fact is associated with my act of appresentation or apperception, though without going there, I can appresent how the object would appear from there in which the other is located. Husserl says, that “I apperceive him as having spatial modes of appearance like those I should have if I should go over there and be where he is.”³¹¹ So, Husserl concludes that others exist or are constituted as existing with the objective world—later it will be conceptualized as the life-world—around us. And this objective world is also constituted with the first other man that I encountered, because accepting that the world he perceives is the same world that I perceive is the basis of objectivity in question. Gadamer is right when he says that “the immanent data of reflectively examined consciousness do not include the ‘Thou’ in an immediate and primary way.”³¹²

For Gadamer there is something missing both in Dilthey and Husserl with regard to the concept of life. Both of them very much importance to the concept of life, in case of Dilthey as *Erlebnis*, in case of Husserl as life-world. *Erlebnis* and life-world are incomplete characterizations of life since they are used as epistemological concepts leading to human sciences in Dilthey and philosophy

³⁰⁹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 114.

³¹⁰ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 115.

³¹¹ Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, p. 117.

³¹² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 241.

as a science in Husserl. For Gadamer, Husserl's painstaking investigations concerning the subjectivity of the Other are results of an ontological prejudice common to both Dilthey and Husserl. They start with self-consciousness and try to stay within it for the sake of epistemological certainty. Because of this insistence they could not do justice, says Gadamer, to the notion of life. Life is something that envelops consciousness. Life cannot be encapsulated within the walls of self-consciousness. According to Gadamer, there is a "speculative import" of the concept of life, but the anti-Hegelian mode of thinking in Dilthey and the Cartesian underground of Husserl's phenomenology hindered both from seeing this side of life. Gadamer makes the following comment regarding the limitation of Husserl's understanding of experience which hindered him from completing his critique of objectivism:

In a series of many investigations he attempted to throw light on the one-sidedness of the scientific idealization of experience. To this end he gives a genealogy of the experience which, as experience of the living world, precedes its being idealized by science. To me, however, he still seems dominated by the one-sidedness that he criticizes, for he projects the idealized world of exact scientific experience into the original experience of the world, in that he makes perception, as something directed toward merely external physical appearance, the basis of all other experience ... Husserl's attempt to go back genetically to the origin of experience, and to overcome its idealization by science, obviously has to struggle especially with the difficulty that the pure transcendental subjectivity of ego is not really given as such but always given in the idealization of language.³¹³

The speculative side of life can be found, says Gadamer, more fully in Count Yorck. Gadamer makes a reading of fragments of Yorck with the result of a more developed concept of life which presents for him "a bridge between speculative idealism and the century's new experimental standpoint."³¹⁴ The basic question underlying Yorck's ideas about life is what it means to be alive or what "being alive" consists of. Scientific thinking, says Gadamer, can also be felt

³¹³ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 342.

³¹⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 241.

in Yorck's writings since his analysis of being alive basically depends upon Darwin's ideas: "Life is self-assertion, this is the basis."³¹⁵ It is clear that living things basically try to protect themselves from dangers, try to feed themselves to continue their life. In Gadamer's words: "The structure of being alive consists in being primordial division (Urteilung)—i.e., in still continuing to assert itself as a unity in division and articulation."³¹⁶ It is important to see here that Yorck's route to the unity of subject comes from life itself. He does not apply to any epistemological category or any phenomenological abstraction. Life itself is responsible for the unity of the subject or the living entity. Being alive necessitates being conscious of oneself against all other things. Self-consciousness is thereby constituted. Such analysis, says Gadamer, can also be found in Hegel. Hegel states that consciousness becomes self-consciousness by appropriating what is other, what is alien.

What is alive preserves itself by drawing into itself everything that is outside it. Everything that is alive nourishes itself on what is alien to it. The fundamental fact of being alive is assimilation. Differentiation, then, is at the same time non-differentiation. The alien is appropriated.

As Hegel had already shown and Yorck continues to hold, this structure of being alive has its correlative in the nature of self-consciousness. Its being consists in its ability to make everything the object of its knowledge, and yet in everything that it knows, it knows itself. Thus as knowledge it differentiates itself from itself and, at the same time, as self-consciousness, it folds back on and returns to itself.³¹⁷

So what is analyzed by Yorck (following Hegel) is the relationship between life and self-consciousness. This relationship is important because Yorck's analysis shows the status of the knowledge of life with respect to self-consciousness. Life is not a datum of knowledge; on the contrary, life can be known only by living. So, by our personal living we can be aware of life. Therefore, self-consciousness has one-to-one correspondence with life: "The

³¹⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 242.

³¹⁶ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 242.

³¹⁷ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 244.

only way to grasp life is, rather, to become inwardly aware of it... Life is experienced only in the awareness of oneself, the inner consciousness of one's own living."³¹⁸ Life in that sense is more than an epistemological category, it is rather a metaphysical category embracing any possible consciousness of it.

Martin Heidegger is responsible for a radical change regarding the question of understanding. His contribution to hermeneutics is presented by Gadamer as the "radical ontological reflection."³¹⁹ This reflection is a consequence of Heidegger's philosophy of Being or his transcendental analytic of *Dasein*. In order to answer the question of meaning of Being rather than of beings or in order to do fundamental ontology rather than an ontic inquiry, Heidegger qualifies an entity characterized by a distinctive mode of Being as *Dasein*:

Da-sein is a being that does not simply occur among other beings. Rather it is ontically distinguished by the fact that in its being this being is concerned about its very being ... *Understanding of being is itself a determination of being of Da-sein*. The ontic distinction of Da-sein lies in the fact that it is ontological.³²⁰

Very roughly, *Dasein* designates the being of humans or in Heidegger's words the being of "the human being," in that Being is an issue only for humans. However this does not mean that we can use *Dasein* and "man" interchangeably because *Dasein* is the term that makes us not to forget the question of Being with reference to man's existence. *Dasein* is the term that reminds us, in the midst of beings, the question of Being with reference to man's existence. *Dasein* is the term that is able to express an essential qualification of the Being of man. The literal translation of *Da-sein* as "Being-there" shows the situation in which man finds himself. *Da-sein* finds itself thrown into the world with all its surroundings. Entities carrying the character of *Dasein* are thrown into the world. So "being-in-the-world" is a defining characteristic of *Dasein*. Because *Dasein* is concerned

³¹⁸ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 244.

³¹⁹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 250.

³²⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. Joan Stambaugh (New York: State University of New York Press, 1996), p. 10

with Being by definition and its thrownness into the world is constitutive of its Being, the relationship between the world and *Dasein* is the key point in understanding Heidegger's philosophy.

That *Dasein* is concerned with Being or that Being is an issue for *Dasein*, means that the basic relation between *Dasein* and Being is understanding. When we are concerned with something, we establish a level and a kind of understanding that thing. So, says Heidegger, "we are always already involved in an understanding of being."³²¹ Being-in-the-world and understanding of Being are not arbitrary constructions of some subjective standpoint, but rather these are characteristics that are based firmly on temporality. Understanding is not a choice standing in front of *Dasein*, rather it is the very condition of the possibility of establishing a relationship with the world and objects. In that relationship time is the non-changing, the unavoidable horizon of all understanding of Being: "time is that from which Da-sein tacitly understands and interprets something like being at all. Time must be brought to light and genuinely grasped as the horizon of every understanding and interpretation of being."³²²

It is important to concentrate upon what Heidegger means by understanding. The kind of understanding Heidegger speaks here can be differentiated as "the primary understanding which constitutes the being of the there in general."³²³ As Gadamer summarizes, it must be differentiated from Dilthey's use of the concept of understanding which was "a resigned ideal," from Husserl's use as "a last methodological ideal" and from Droysen's use as "a methodological concept."³²⁴ This is Gadamer's thesis about Heidegger's fundamental contribution to hermeneutics.

³²¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 25.

³²² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 39.

³²³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

³²⁴ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 250.

Understanding must be thought of as primary understanding, as a deeply fundamental characteristic of *Dasein* or of man himself that it is impossible to think of the being of *Dasein* and also Being itself without taking understanding as the basic ontological category of human life. This results in a shift with regard to hermeneutics previously thought of as a theory of technique of interpretation. Rather hermeneutics must be seen in every aspect of human life if it is to be seen as the art of understanding. Thus understanding is the mode of the relationship we construct with the world. Understanding is what makes human life possible in its every aspect. The circular relationship between the text and reader, the paradigmatic case of hermeneutics must be broadened to *Dasein*'s being-in-the-world. The hermeneutic circle is functioning also for "primary understanding" which Heidegger tries to explain. In that sense Gadamer says that "traditional hermeneutics has inappropriately narrowed the horizon to which understanding belongs."³²⁵

An quotation from *Basic Problems of Phenomenology* would be good for clarifying the point: "To exist is essentially, even if not only, to understand."³²⁶ The mode of being of *Dasein* is existence. Existence is different from subsistence in that existence is a mode of being in which *Dasein* relates itself to the realm of possibilities. Existence means being possible, possibility to be in many different ways. *Dasein* transcends its factual situatedness towards different possibilities which are not already there. What man does in the world basically is to relate with the things in the world. The scope, shape, intensity, character of this relatedness show infinite variety in history. This relatedness with the world and with things in turn determines the relatedness of man with himself. Understanding is the very process of how we relate to the things. Different cultures have difficulties in understanding each other because they relate to the things differently, that is, they understand the world differently. Regardless of

³²⁵ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 251.

³²⁶ Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 276.

the differences in understanding the world and the objects in it, all men develop a kind of understanding in the world.

In understanding, the world is disclosed to *Dasein*. In that sense, understanding is disclosure: “Existing, being-in-the-world as such is disclosed in the for-the-sake-of-which, and we called this disclosedness understanding.”³²⁷ Here, “for-the-sake-of-which” stands for the character of the relationship we establish with the things; this means that we relate ourselves to things on the basis of their use for us. Here Heidegger reminds us the usage of the word understanding in ordinary language, which amounts to “‘being able to handle a thing,’ ‘being up to it,’ ‘being able to do something.’”³²⁸ Let me try to clarify this idea by an example. The film *The Gods Must Be Crazy* is a perfect example of what Heidegger means by understanding in a primary sense.³²⁹ In that film there was a tribe which remained isolated from all the other communities at the time. One day a coca-cola bottle is thrown from an airplane into the land in which that tribe lives. A member of this tribe finds the bottle and brings it to the tribe. They accept it as a gift from God and start to use it in their daily practical affairs as various tools. After some time, they start to argue about the right use of it and that causes serious discussions among the members, because there is only one bottle and there are many uses discovered by the members. This is a caricaturized version of what Heidegger means by understanding as the disclosure of the “for-the-sake-of-which.” Here perception is obviously not enough for describing our relationship with the world. Understanding conceived as not only a cognitive faculty but as a mode of being of *Dasein*, however, seems to accord more fully to describe how we make sense of the world and objects in the most primary way. *Dasein* “always already lets beings be encountered as things at hand.”³³⁰

³²⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

³²⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

³²⁹ *The Gods Must Be Crazy*. Directed by Jamie Uys. 1980.

³³⁰ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 80.

The central question we must examine is what does it mean to put understanding as the ontological condition of *Dasein*; that is, understanding must not be understood only as a cognitive faculty functioning in science. Heidegger says that

“understanding” in the sense of one possible kind of cognition among others, let us say distinguished from “explanation,” must be interpreted along with that as an existential derivative of the primary understanding which constitutes the being of the there in general.³³¹

When we talk about understanding in traditional philosophical discourse we generally refer to it as a kind of cognition. However Heidegger differentiates this cognitive “understanding” from “primary understanding” on the basis of *Dasein*’s Being-in-the-world. As we have said, primordial or primary understanding represents our basic relationship with the world and things, so that we find ourselves in a common world and common objects intelligible, understandable and usable. The same holds for our understanding of ourselves. We constitute ourselves and evaluate our being or meaning of our being by opening up the possible uses of ourselves. This takes the form of ‘concern’ when we are concerned with human beings and ourselves: “The being to which *Dasein* is related as being-with does not, however, have the kind of being of useful things at hand; it is itself *Da-sein*. This being is not taken care of, but is a matter of *concern*.”³³² I may project myself as a doctor or as a housewife and disclose these possibilities as realizing them factually. Our relationship with everything including ourselves depends on “primordial understanding” which is conceived here as projection, as being-possible: “*Dasein* is not something objectively present which then has as an addition the ability to do something, but is rather primarily being-possible.”³³³

It is important to realize how differently Heidegger presents the subject, the object and the world. *Dasein* has its being in potentiality, not in objective

³³¹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

³³² Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 114.

³³³ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

presence, not as a substance, but as a possibility: “Dasein is always what it can be and how it is its possibility.”³³⁴ In that sense Heidegger defines understanding “as a potentiality of being disclosive.”³³⁵ Entities which do not have the character of *Dasein* are what they are. But they also disclose themselves into what they are potentially as far as *Dasein* understands them. *Dasein* also discloses itself as far as it understands itself. So, what primordial understanding achieves when it understands is at the same time self-understanding. Understanding is total in the sense that when we understand the world in which we are thrown and the objects which we use for our daily purposes, we perform this primordial understanding side by side our primordial understanding of ourselves. World becomes “world” only on the condition that the “innerworldly beings” are related with each other including ourselves. World must be fundamentally constituted at the very practical level, before any theoretical activity. This is accomplished by understanding. In Heidegger’s words, beings must be freed “for their own possibilities” so that they become “servicable”, “usable”, or “detrimental” for *Dasein*.³³⁶

Things at hand are encountered within the world. The being of these beings, handiness, is thus ontologically related to the world and to worldliness. World is always already “there” in all things at hand. World is already discovered beforehand together with everything encountered, although not thematically. However, it can also appear in certain ways of associating with the surrounding world. World is that in terms of which things at hand are at hand for us. How can world let things at hand be encountered? Our analysis showed that what is encountered within the world is freed in its being for heedful circumspection, for taking matters into account.³³⁷

Understanding is projection in the sense that it is concerned with the realization of possibilities. However, neither projection nor realization of it occurs in a completely free space, rather there are limits coming from the very

³³⁴ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 134.

³³⁵ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 135.

³³⁶ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 135.

³³⁷ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 77.

thrownness of *Dasein* in the world. This means that *Dasein* finds itself in a established web of relations, in a world in the sense of Husserlian life-world. This connects *Dasein* with society, with tradition and with history.

As an existential, possibility does not refer to a free-floating potentiality of being in the sense of the “liberty of indifference” (*libertas indifferentiae*). As essentially attuned Da-sein has already got itself into definite possibilities. As a potentiality for being which it *is*, it has let some go by; it constandy adopts the possibilities of its being, grasps them, and goes astray. But this means that Da-sein is a being-possible entrusted to itself, *thrown possibility* throughout.³³⁸

Moreover, interpretation is put forward by Heidegger as the development of understanding. Interpretation requires such primordial understanding of being as “a totality of relevance which has already been understood.”³³⁹ This totality of relevance is a construct of ages of history of man. So, concludes Gadamer,

no freely chosen relation toward one’s own being can get behind the facticity of this being. Everyting that makes possible and limits *Dasein*’s projection ineluctably precedes it. This existential structure of *Dasein* must be expressed in the understanding of historical tradition as well.³⁴⁰

Expanding Heidegger’s phenomenology of *Dasein* to human or historical sciences, Gadamer tries to construct a radical or philosophical hermeneutics which not only deals with the question of texts but basically with the question of being of *Dasein*. Such analysis, for Gadamer, would easily show how historical knowledge or historical understanding depends on the primordial understanding constitutive of *Dasein*. The difference between the objects of natural science and of human sciences was put forward by Diltey in epistemological terms. However the difference in question is more ontological than epistemological. All the themes of human sciences have the character of *Dasein* as opposed to character of presence-at-hand. However this does not lead us to the conclusion that things at hand can be known objectively, though they can be thought of as objectively

³³⁸ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 135.

³³⁹ Heidegger, *Being and Time*, p. 140.

³⁴⁰ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 254.

present. Objective presence is a moment of *Dasein*'s projections towards the things at hand. So objectivity is a mode of understanding that *Dasein* constructs in taking care of the world of things at hand. Therefore, concludes Gadamer,

[Heidegger] follows Husserl in that historical being is not to be distinguished from natural being, as Dilthey does. On the contrary, the natural sciences' mode of knowledge appears, rather, as a subspecies of understanding "that has strayed into the legitimate task of grasping the present-at-hand in its essential unintelligibility."³⁴¹

What is not present-at-hand, however, are the beings who have the character of *Dasein*. History, art and all the issues concerning human beings carry the character of *Dasein*. Understanding in history, art and humanities reflect the characteristics of primary understanding in which *Dasein* projects its own possibilities and interprets accordingly. The superiority of Heidegger is that he is free from the objectivist understanding in that he accounts for the temporal and historical dimension of all understanding in a primary way and sees the idea of objectivity not as a necessary ideal of truth but as a kind of projection regarding the objects which are present-at-hand.

³⁴¹ Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 250.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Gadamer's hermeneutics comes with the claim that hermeneutics is philosophy itself, rather than being a way of doing philosophy. In that sense, *Truth and Method* should not be thought of as a systematic response to a particular question. Though it can be said that *Truth and Method* mainly tries to put forward the mode of being of human sciences, this does not mean that it is an investigation of issues and problems revolving around human sciences. In a similar way, the theory of understanding, investigation and critique of history of hermeneutics, ontological universality of language, critique of science based on the ideas of method and objectivity, putting forward the truths that methodological science excludes, rule out and cannot conceptualize the claim that there is a truth content of art; all these claims are insufficient to summarize the content of *Truth and Method*. For this reason *Truth and Method* shares the destiny of every *magnum opus* written by important philosophers: all words, sentences and paragraphs are in need of and worthy of re-reading, understanding, interpreting, explaining, criticizing. *Truth and Method* is a work on hermeneutics and also a work that can only be understood hermeneutically. Hermeneutical circle shows itself in *Truth and Method* so much that every part opens itself when the whole is better understood and also the whole opens itself when the parts are better understood. In this dissertation, I planned to enter into this hermeneutical circle. The richness of contents of *Truth and Method* forced me to concentrate upon only one part of it. On the other hand, an inclination in literature on Gadamer led me to concentrate on the not much studied first chapter of *Truth and Method* and the interrelation between subsections of this first chapter. That inclination I observed was the tendency to explain Gadamer's

claims about art, history and human sciences without mentioning the central concepts elaborated in the first chapter of *Truth and Method*. Nevertheless, the first and most important claim of the present dissertation is that if the concepts of first chapter of *Truth and Method* are not considered and studied or if they are pushed to a status of secondary importance, this would certainly make the understanding of other chapters impossible. For this reason, the second chapter of the present dissertation is devoted to a detailed investigation of the introductory concepts as they are presented by Gadamer. Each of these concepts, if they are to be investigated out of the context of *Truth and Method*, is historically and conceptually rich enough to be sole subjects of a work. It is because of this that the investigation of these concepts here is limited by Gadamer's presentation of them and by the philosophers he referred to when elaborating these concepts. In the third chapter, Gadamer's critique of Kant's aesthetics, and in the fourth chapter his elaboration of the ontology of the work of art are studied. In the fifth and last chapter the history of hermeneutics, which is presented by Gadamer under the title of "Historical Preparation," is investigated.

In the first chapter of *Truth and Method* Gadamer wants to establish the claim that experience of art is an experience of truth. There are three steps of this claim. In the first step, Gadamer concentrates on four concepts of the humanist tradition in order to understand human sciences without putting the concept of method at the center: *Bildung*, *sensus communis* (common sense), judgment and taste. Second is the critique of Kant's aesthetics and the third step is the construction of the ontology of the work of art. The conceptual investigation at the beginning aims to show us what kind of truth human sciences deals with, what ways and necessities there are to attain these truth, and why sticking blindly to the ideal of method constitutes an obstacle in the way of attaining these truths. These concepts constitute the real basis of human sciences. Human sciences which are not based upon these concepts look like a bird without wings. Accordingly, behind all claims of Gadamer about human sciences stands this

power that comes from the humanist tradition and this shows us the central importance of these concepts in understanding *Truth and Method*.

Bildung shows that the kind of knowledge in human sciences is a knowledge that penetrates itself into the personality of human sciences and that necessitates the human scientist to change her/himself and to educate her/his character. *Sensus communis* is a concept which establishes the fact that the knowledge gained in the human sciences cannot be thought apart from society, from the scientist's place in a social web of relations and his capacities in social issues. The scientist, by educating her/himself in *sensus communis*, develops her/his sense of distinguishing what is right and wrong, what is just and good for humans. Natural sciences try to reconcile the empirical data with rational principles, however human sciences could not be satisfied with this procedure. For, what is foundational in human sciences is to apply this practical, social and historical sense of what to do and how to do and develop the knowledge without losing this sense from sight.

The second step in establishing the claim that art has a truth value is Gadamer's critique of Kant's aesthetics. This critique starts from the part concerning the concept of judgment. Gadamer discusses the concept of judgment along the lines of Kant's distinction between determining and reflecting judgment. Science is composed of determining judgments. However, for Gadamer, human sciences are areas in which determining judgments are largely in use. For Kant, reflecting judgments are aesthetic and teleological judgments and they are not cognitive because they do not involve any knowledge about their object. Taste, in that picture, is the name of our power of aesthetic judgment. Although Kant claimed that he has found an *a priori* element in aesthetic judgments, this does not change the fact that for him these judgments are singular and subjective in nature. However, Gadamer maintains that aesthetic judgments are continuously used in law and morality. Consequently, our judgments of taste are both affected by society and affect society itself. Taste is a such a moral concept that it cannot be imprisoned in the subjective sphere; it

accompanies many of our judgments; it plays an active role in the formation of culture and society.

Gadamer's critique continues with Kant's concept of genius. Kant limits beautiful arts as creations of genius. Beauty is either beauty in nature or a creation of a genius. With the help of the concept of genius Kant links arts to nature. After Kant, aesthetics become fully autonomous, genius became the central element of art and aesthetics was subjectivized. Gadamer points to two facts when he talks about subjectivization of aesthetics: the first is the idea that art has not no cognitive aspect or no truth content, and the second is the fact that art and artwork have been reduced to the experience of it. This second fact shows itself in the concept of *Erlebnis* (lived experience).

Although the concept of *Erlebnis* includes a reaction against the rationalism of Enlightenment, we cannot say that it is not influenced by Kantian aesthetics. In fact, Kant tried to show that aesthetics is different from science and morality whose basis is rationality. *Erlebnis* functioned in two areas: in human sciences and in aesthetics. Basically *Erlebnis* is a concept about the life that remains out of the comprehension of Enlightenment rationalism. Since life resists rationalization and human sciences and art take their roots from life, *Erlebnis* is born out of the endeavor to find a solution to this situation. Dilthey wanted to go out of narrow streets of rationalism by recognizing *Erlebnis* as the no further divisible "given" of the human sciences. In art *Erlebnis* showed itself in expressionism. According to this, art depends on experience and is understood by experiencing it; in short, art is composed of expression of experiences. Therefore, for human sciences and for art escape from rationalism resulted in their imprisonment in subjectivity. The opposition between allegory and symbol is a result of the conception of art based on the idea of *Erlebnis*. Allegory has been devalued because it includes a communicable and unchanging message. Symbol, however, has been made the center of art because it functioned as a link between the sensible world and the world of ideas and because it showed, in opposition to rationalism, that the tension between these two worlds cannot be overcome. Symbol has a physical appearance but it points to something beyond

its appearance and this something is not fixed for all times and places. Symbol's undecidable meaning became a value for itself and accordingly artworks came to be seen as basically symbolic works. If we pay attention to the creation process of the genius, we can say that the genius is not wholly conscious of what happens in this process. The work of the genius is full of symbols and even the genius himself is not always able to analyze the meaning of these symbols.

Romantic tradition here has come to a point that Gadamer criticizes, because this understanding has accepted that there is an abyss between reality and art. Art was saved from the pressures of rationalism and became an autonomous field, but art's relation with reality was transformed into an opposition. The only thing that we can expect from an artwork is to take us, by the way of symbols, to the experiences of the genius. This is not a relationship with reality but only with the experiences of the genius. The autonomy of art resulted in the understanding that reality is out there, unique and in itself, however art is only appearance. Such an understanding, even though it guarantees the autonomy of art, renders art an inferior kind, an activity that veils or masks reality. Romanticism tried to escape from this situation by denying the mimetic side of art, by building art on expression, by compressing art into subjectivity and by breaking off art from reality. Therefore, neither Kant's aesthetics of genius nor romantic aesthetics of *Erlebnis* could pave the right way for understanding the mode of being of the work of art. This is because of the fact that the conceptualization of art in opposition to reality leads the conclusion that the experience of reality is totally different from the experience of art.

Here Gadamer introduces the concept of "aesthetic consciousness." Following Kant, methodological scientific understanding claimed that art has no truth value. "Aesthetic consciousness" is the result of the acceptance of this claim. This view tries to differentiate art from truth and reality, and evaluates artwork on the basis of its aesthetic qualities only. Gadamer calls this process of abstraction "aesthetic differentiation." Gadamer does not accept aesthetic consciousness and aesthetic differentiation as meaningful because he thinks that these are detrimental to the understanding of artwork in terms of its truth content.

In the fourth chapter I tried to give details of Gadamer's understanding of art so that it might be possible to see why Gadamer opposes aesthetic consciousness and differentiation.

Gadamer begins his account of understanding artwork by criticizing the idea of pure perception. Aesthetic consciousness thinks as follows: if pure perception is possible; that is, if we can perceive objects independent of social, political and psychological effects, we can also perceive artworks independent of its extra-aesthetic properties and concentrate only on its beauty. Gadamer argues that pure perception is impossible because every perception involves understanding or is accompanied by understanding. After that criticism Gadamer puts forward a theory regarding ontology of the work of art. This investigation is necessary for Gadamer because without that ontology the question of the understanding of artworks will always remain in an impasse. The basic point of this ontology is that the mode of being of artwork is different from the mode of being of an object. In order to show this difference Gadamer firstly analyzes the concept of "play" or the mode of being of "play;" because play is not only a clue and an example but at the same time it is a fact that is structurally tied to art.

In the fourth chapter I started with the idea of "play" and then tried to put forward how Gadamer built his ontology of artwork. I can summarize some properties of play that Gadamer presented as follows: The relationship between play, players and spectators is not a relation of subject-object but it is a relation of representation. Plays generally consist of to and fro movements without a definite purpose; this can be a movement of a ball or of players only. This movement itself is not a correlative of the wills of players; on the contrary, the movement of play controls and directs the players. Play requires players in order to actualize its movement, it reaches its presentation through players. Play is self-representation, it represents, actualizes its own essence by using players. For that reason, play is a happening, an event, it cannot be thought of in terms of the polarity of subject and object. Rather the mode of being of play is "in-between." This in-betweenness shows itself in the examples of play of lights, play of waves but also in human plays. This in-betweenness also includes spectators. Play

constitutes a self-contained world involving players and spectators; in that world, both players and spectators exist but they forget their subjectivities in it. Subject-object distinction cannot be applied to play in the sense that play is a happening in-between and also in the sense that players and spectators lose their subjectivities in play. Play has such a mode of being that it *does not disappear* when it is not played, however it *exists* when it is played. This somehow paradoxical mode of existence is a result of the ideality of the mode of being of play.

Gadamer applies this analysis to art by the formula “transformation into structure.” If a play has put itself in the form of an artwork there appears such a structure that the creator, the performers and the spectators lose themselves in the artwork, but at the same time the structure that appears becomes something permanent and true. When a theatre play is performed, the artwork presents itself through the players and the spectators. However this work already exists before the performance and will also exist after the performance; at the same time it needs to be represented to continue its existence. Players and spectators can understand the play and are affected by it only on the condition that they forget themselves and even forget the world. The artwork is a happening that exists by transforming everything that is involved in it. This is such a transformation that when players and spectators go out of this structure they can say that they see the world with different eyes. This actually shows that the structural transformation we see in the artwork is so powerful a transformation that it can include the world also in its effect. The artwork does not copy reality, it rather transforms it and we can only witness this transformation when we enter into the structure of the artwork. For Gadamer *mimesis* does not mean copying reality. *Mimesis* means artwork’s presentation of itself, representation of its ideality into actuality. For that reason, when we consider art as *mimesis*, we must think of art not as an activity of copying but as an activity of transforming reality. Accordingly, art as *mimesis* shows the defects of the understanding of art as subservient or inferior to, and as totally irrelevant and unconnected with reality.

Gadamer calls the situation according to which play exists when it is played or an artwork exists when it is performed and viewed, as “total mediation.” The most appropriate example is music, which always needs to be performed to exist. The originality of Gadamer’s idea of total mediation is that it conceptualizes the performance of the artwork in a specific time and place as belonging to the work itself. That is to say, the artwork and its performance are not two distinct things. All presentations of an artwork, regardless of time and place, belong to the artwork itself. There is no original of an artwork. The temporal structure of the artwork comes into the discussion here, which Gadamer calls “contemporaneity.” Artworks do not exist in the ordinary temporal succession, rather artworks live in contemporaneity. It means that artworks preserve their identity through their various presentations in different times and places, and at the same time, this identity does not presume a timeless, unchanging, original work. Because there is no distinction between the work and its mediation; its mediation is the mode of being of the artwork itself. Each performance is original, and not a repetition of an original. Each performance is different in one sense or another but all belong to the same work. Festival is also the primary example for understanding what Gadamer means by total mediation and contemporaneity.

Here we encounter a very important point for Gadamer: contemporaneity is connected with the truth claim of an artwork. What makes a work of art contemporaneous is its claim, because a claim is something that must be defended at any time. Permanence of the claim of artwork is the basis of its contemporaneity so that the work of art is always present when it is presented. An artwork demands us something here and now; its claim is fully present. In that sense the artwork poses us a task to be fulfilled: contemporaneity does not happen by itself but it is achieved by us. By moving out of our subjectivity, by accepting the dominance of the artwork on us, by giving ourselves fully to the being of the artwork, we achieve contemporaneity.

Non-performing arts do not pose a problem with regard to Gadamer’s assertions, and by his analysis of picture as a representative art, he tries to show

the validity of his ontology. For the truth claim of artworks, picture is a perfect example because, according to Gadamer, when something is pictured, it emanates ontologically. It presents itself in picture in such a way that there appears something which cannot to be seen or understood only by a simple looking activity. Each presentation we find in pictures brings out what is hidden, what is unknown, unthought-of, what is not imagined before. Literature also is a representational art because of its relation with reading activity. In reading there is always a performance, a presentation or a mediation. The process of reading must basically be understood as an example of transformation into structure argument. Literary works exist when they are read; in the process of reading, the text finds its performer and spectator at the same time, because, as we have said above, spectator belongs to the mode of being of artworks. Nevertheless texts have one more characteristic than other kinds of artworks. Texts are totally dependent on language. This constitutes a unique and incomparable character that we can see only in literature: strangeness of the text. Texts are strange to us because they need a kind of translation in order to be understood. A text is not something “immediately intelligible” but carries a trace of a mind which presents itself through words. It is here when it is read, that soul represents itself.

In the last chapter I tried to give a detailed analysis of Gadamer’s elaboration of the history of hermeneutics. When dealing with this history Gadamer also explains how he sees this history in a critical eye. In this conclusion I will not give a summary of this historical analysis, but just relate this history with the previous three chapters, because I included the last chapter into my dissertation in order to see the relationship between hermeneutics and Gadamer’s humanistic concepts, his critique of Kantian aesthetics and his ontology of the work of art. In the fifth chapter, the analysis of history of hermeneutics shows that the problems of this field belong to the question of understanding. The question of understanding and its elaboration by different philosophers show that the inclinations of philosophers are very important in dealing with the question. Enlightenment rationalism and methodological natural science which follows it had a great effect on this history. Schleiermacher

identified understanding with deciphering the intention of the author, of the creator of the artwork or of the actor/actors of the event, and even also with performing this deciphering process better than the artist or the actor do. As a method to this purpose, Schleiermacher proposes reconstructing the artwork and also the circumstances in which the artwork has flourished. If we can evaluate this in the light of Gadamer's ontology of the work of art, this shows that the idea of reconstruction cannot be accepted as the sole method since the contemporaneity of artwork makes the artwork to transcend the creator and the time of its creation. Additionally, Gadamer's ontology shows that an artwork cannot be limited to the intention of the author. An artwork has its own mode of being. Dilthey wants to raise the understanding in human sciences to the level of natural sciences and he makes incomparable contribution to hermeneutics and human sciences. However, since Dilthey ignores the ontological foundations of understanding and focuses only on epistemological analysis of it, he remains, according to Gadamer, within the limits of methodological science. The most important step in transcending the limits of methodological science is taken by Husserl. Husserl criticized the idea of objectivist science by making the natural science a fact of the life-world, which is necessarily historical construction, and also by denying that natural science can give us objective knowledge outside and above the life-world. Nevertheless, since Husserl could not free himself from the idea of Cartesian subject, his criticism has not entered into the realm of hermeneutic experience. Gadamer comments here that Heidegger is the person who would certainly show the right way to us. Heidegger brings an explanation that is outside of the epistemological and Cartesian frame by showing that understanding is the most basic ontological category of *Dasein*. Understanding, before it is conceptualized as an epistemological and methodological category, is the fundamental relationship we have with the world.

Just as we encountered the concept of "aesthetic consciousness" in aesthetics, we encounter with the concept of "historical consciousness" in the history of hermeneutics and in the study of history. The concept of historical consciousness is developed in the Historical School which started with Ranke

and Droysen. It is the consciousness of the fact that human beings are both a part of history and its actors. Historical consciousness is aware of its historicity and evaluates history with this awareness and claims that history can be and must be understood from within history and by having recourse only to history. Just as the notion of aesthetic consciousness excludes all extra-aesthetic elements in its evaluation of artworks, historical consciousness also excludes any concept, category or criterion outside history. For example, Hegel applies an extra-historical criterion to history when he argues that history is the movement of reason. In contrast, the Historical School conceptualizes history as a text and history must also be interpreted within the hermeneutic circle which follows the literary hermeneutics of Schleiermacher; that is, history must be evaluated in its own terms. Dilthey continues this tradition and argues that human sciences can attain the ideal of objective knowledge by basing them on the historicity of human beings, on the hermeneutic structure of history and the concept of “life” as the ultimate datum. Gadamer criticizes the Historical School firstly by arguing that although there are some common properties of history and text, history is not a text. He thinks that historical consciousness cannot solve the problem of objective knowledge in history and that this ideal of objective knowledge must be transcended rather than, as Dilthey tried to do, adapted to the human sciences. The knowledge of history will always remain historical, because history, just as art, has the mode of being of *Dasein*. Historicity is our basic ontological determination; it is our thrownness into the world. This does not mean that human sciences constitute a field of subjective thoughts and that they are not even sciences. This means rather that we need to conceptualize a different kind of truth which is established on the basis of humanistic concepts of *Bildung*, *sensus communis* and taste, which does justice to the truth content of art, which sees all sciences including the natural sciences and the ideal of method and objectivity as parts of *Dasein*’s primary understanding of the world, or of the Husserlian life-world.

So, can we give examples of truths found in art and what can we get from the fact that there is truth in art? We know that the things which most properly

express the historical periods are artworks. Novels, pictures, theatre plays and all other kinds of artworks express the reality of their time in a unique way to which we cannot attain by any other way. As Gadamer discussed, the kind of representation contained in art is neither a mirroring nor a copying. Art has such a representative power that it makes the things appear in a new light which is impossible to find in other ways of representation. For that reason when we are influenced by a film, a novel or a picture, we not only recognize something about world and humanity, but also about ourselves. Artworks have the power to change us because they show us the truth about ourselves. The pleasure we take from the artwork is caused mostly by the fact that we recognize something that we do not know before. In that sense the pleasure of art is not a simple pleasure but a pleasure coming from learning or, in Gadamer's words, it is the "joy of recognition".³⁴²

³⁴² Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 113.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

TURKISH SUMMARY

Bu tez Gadamer'in *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'de ortaya koyduğu sanatın doğruluk değeri taşıdığı iddiasının kavramsal arka planını ortaya koymayı amaçlar. Bu kavramsal arka plan sanatın bir doğruluk değeri olduğu iddiasını anlamak için ele alınması zorunlu olan pek çok önemli kavramı içerir. Bu tür bir amacın zorluğu *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in pek çok filozofa, felsefe tarihinden pek çok felsefi ve estetik akıma göndermelerle dolu olmasından kaynaklanmaktadır. Ancak bu zorluk hermeneutik yazma biçiminin bir sonucudur. Gadamer ilgili filozofların ayrıntılı bir okumasını ve yorumunu yapar, onlarla diyaloga girer ve hatta onlar arasında diyaloglar oluşturur, onların bazı düşüncelerini reddeder bazılarını kabul eder. Bazen Gadamer'in savunduğu, reddettiği, eleştirdiği, yorumladığı ya da yalnızca açıkladığı şeyleri ayırt etmek zorlaşır. Bazı bölümlerde Gadamer hiç kendi düşüncelerinden bahsetmez, aynen bir felsefe tarihi kitabında olduğu gibi yalnızca diğer filozofların düşüncelerini sunar. Bu tez, arka plandaki tarihsel, sanatsal ve felsefi kavramların hakkını vererek, bu hermeneutik bilmeceinin içinde bir yol bulmaya çalışır.

Tezin detaylı özetine başlamadan önce, okuyucuya bir izlek sağlaması amacıyla, tezin akışını kabaca özetlemek istiyorum. Birinci bölüm olan giriş bölümü, tezin sorunsalını genel hatlarıyla ortaya koyup, konuyu ele alırken izlenecek yolu anlatır. İkinci bölüm *Bildung* (kendini-yetiştirme, eğitim, kültür) ve *sensus communis* (ortak duyu, sağduyu) kavramları üzerinedir. Üçüncü bölüm yargı, beğeni, deha ve *Erlebnis* (yaşanmış deneyim) kavramları etrafında tartışılan Gadamer'in Kant estetiği eleştirisinin bir incelemesini sunar. Dördüncü

bölüm oyun, temsil, *mimesis*, bütüncül dolayım ve eşzamanlılık kavramları ile temellendirilen sanat eserinin ontolojisini tanıtır. Son bölüm ise Gadamer'in kurucu kavramlarını hermeneutiğin genel çerçevesine uygun bir şekilde yerleştirebilmek için hermeneutiğin tarihini inceler.

Bu tezin amaçlanan sonucu Gadamer'in sanat eserinin doğruluk içeriği olduğuna dair iddiasının kavramsal temelini ortaya koymaktır, böylece Gadamer'in felsefesinin bir yoruma göre göreci bir değerine göreyse tutucu olarak etiketlenilmesine bir yanıt vermek mümkün olacaktır. Bu tez doğrudan Gadamer'in düşüncelerini kendine has sunuş tarzını izleyerek bu etiketleri kaldırmayı amaçlıyor. Görecilik ya da tutuculuk Gadamer için kullanılması o kadar yanlış kavramlardır ki, burada incelenen yalnızca tek bir kavramı ele almak bu etiketlerin tamamen yanlış olduklarını kolayca gösterebilecektir. Örneğin *Bildung* öyle bir kavramdır ki onu tutuculuklar bir arada düşünmek olanaksızdır. Çünkü *Bildung* kendini öğrendikleri ile değiştirebilen, eğitebilen ve yetiştirebilen insan idealini temsil eder; ayrıca öteki deneyiminden aldıklarıyla kendisine dönüp kendisini değiştirebilmek için kendisine yabancı olana, ötekine olabildiğince açık olan insan idealidir *Bildung*. Öte yandan, göreciliğe karşı olarak, Gadamer'in *Erlebnis* kavramı eleştirisi öznel deneyim üzerine yapılan aşırı vurgunun ve bu kavramın bireyi aşan hakikate karşı körlüğünün bir eleştirisini içerir.

Gadamer'in nereden başlayıp nereye gittiğinin genel olarak göz ardı edildiğini düşünüyorum. *Hakikat ve Yöntem* ne dil, ne gelenek ne de ön yargı kavramları ile başlar. Gadamer *Bildung* ve *sensus communis* ile başlar. Dil, gelenek ve önyargı kavramları ikinci bölümün ortasına kadar doğrudan tartışılmaz. Yani, Gadamer dil, gelenek ve önyargı tartışmalarından önce çok önemli bir temel kurar. Bu tezde dil, gelenek ve önyargı tartışmalarına girmeyeceğim ancak bu merkezi kavramların öncesinde *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'de sunulan kavram ve düşünceler olmaksızın anlaşılamayacağını ya da yanlış anlaşılacağını iddia edeceğim.

Gadamer'in ynteme dayalı sreler izlenerek bilimin geliřtirilmesine karřı olmadıęını belirtmek gerekir, ancak Gadamer yntemin sanat ve insan bilimlerinde etkin olan dięer anlama trlerinin stnde egemenlik kurmasına ve bunları dıřlamasına karřıdır. Nesnelcilięin egemenlięi beraberinde ya ona karřı bir protesto olarak ya da nesnellięi yalnızca doęa bilimi iin kabul eden ve onun dıřındaki tm alanlar iin reddeden bir anlayıř olarak znelcilięi getirmiřtir. Gadamer znelcilięin hibir trne kabul etmez, nk o z-bilincin sınırlarının tesinde ve ondan daha kapsamlı bir hakikati arar ve onu savunur. Bu hakikatin ne olduęu karmařık bir sorudur ve daha geniř bir arařtırma gerektirir, ancak bu tez Gadamer'in hakikat dřncesinin tohumlarının *Hakikat ve Yntem*'in ilk iki blmnde olduęunu savunmaktadır. Bu doęruluk kesinlikle nesnel bir doęruluk deęildir, ama znel olarak deęiřen bir kanı olarak da dřnlemez. Gadamer'in doęruluęu insanı, toplumu, felsefeyi ve bilimi gz nne alan "yařayan bir doęruluk"tur. Hakikat ya da doęruluk yařamın hareketine gre deęiřebilecek kadar esnek ancak ideal olandan, bu dnyanın tesinde, idealar dnyasında olandan da etkilenecek kadar felsefi bir oluřtur/olaydır. İnsanların temel gerilimi, Gadamer'e gre, idealar dnyası ile duyuvar dnyası arasında kalmıř olmalarıdır. Ancak bu ikicilik, oyunun ontolojisinde rneęini grdęmz, "aradalık" alanının ayırdına varılması ile ařılabilir. Modern bilimsel bilgi anlayıřı bize sanatta, tarihte ve felsefede ulařabileceęimiz ierikleri veremeyecek kadar dardır. Bu ieriklerin doęruluk ya da bilgi olarak meřrulařtırılması, Kartezyen zne-nesne ayrımı ve onun bilen zne varsayımı zerine kurulmuř olan egemen bilgi anlayıřını deęiřtirmeyi gerektirir. Gadamer bize bařka bir doęruluk anlayıřı sunar. Bu anlayıřta anlama bize olan, bařımıza gelen bir řeydir ve doęruluk bu anlama olayı ierisinde sahip olunan deęil, iletilen bir řeydir. Gadamerci hakikatin bu kısa tanıtımı bize Gadamer'in temelde yalnızca bilimsel doęruluk ile deęil yařamımızın her ynnde bulunan anlama olgusu ile uęrařtıęını gsterir. Doęruluk soyutlanmıř bir znellik alanı ierisinde ve znenin nesne ile kurduęu iliřkide ortaya ıkılmaz. Doęruluk bizim dnyayla, tekiyle, toplumla ve kendimizle kurduęumuz iliřkinin her ařamasında kendini gsterir. Gadamer'in aradalık ve anlamının ve doęruluęun diyalojik zellięi derken kastettięi řey

budur. Gadamer kendisinin özgün bir doğruluk ve anlama kuramı ortaya koyduğunu iddia etmez, tersine o sunduğu görüşlerin felsefe tarihinde bulunabileceğini göstermeye çalışır. Bu nedenle, o sürekli Platon, Aristoteles, Hegel, Dilthey, Heidegger ve diğer birçok düşünürün metnlerinin hermeneutik bir okumasını gerçekleştirir ve her zaman eleştirel bir tonda olsa da, onların düşüncelerini rehber olarak kullanır.

Modern çağda ortaya çıkmış olan epistemoloji hakikat konusu ile ilgilenirken hep yetersiz kalır. Epistemoloji dünya ile nasıl bir ilişki içerisinde olduğumuzu anlamamızı sağlayan ontolojik bakış açısına sahip değildir. Epistemoloji bilgiyi elde etme yollarımızı araştırdığı için daha çok yöntem temellidir. Daha farklı söylersek, epistemoloji daha baştan bilginin ve hakikatin bizde ayrı bir şey olduğunu kabul eder. Ancak hakikat sorunu onu nasıl elde edeceğiz şeklinde formüle edilmemelidir, çünkü hakikat ya da doğruluk bir nesne ya da bir nesne hakkındaki bir önerme değil, bir olay, bir oluşturmaktır. Bu nedenle ontolojik soru epistemolojik olandan daha uygun görünmektedir. Doğruluk olayı bizi içine alır. Bilmek istediğimiz şey bir parçası, etmeni ve etkeni olduğumuz bir şeydir.

Sanat olgusu ilk olarak ontolojik bir araştırmayı gerektirir. Gadamer'in kendisinin sanat eserinin ontolojisi hakkındaki genel yaklaşımı onu kendisinin hermeneutik deneyim kuramıyla yeterince ilişkilendirmemiş olmasıdır. "Felsefi Yolculuğum üzerine Düşünceler" başlıklı yazısında Gadamer *Hakikat ve Yöntem* ile ilgili olarak şöyle der: "yapmam gereken şey oyun kavramına bir daha geri dönüp onu evrensel dilsellik unsuru ile genişlettiğim ontolojik perspektife yerleştirmektir."³⁴³ Yine de bu bizim bu bağlantıyı kuramayacağımız anlamına gelmez. *Bildung*, *sensus communis* ve beğeni ile ilgili tartışmalarda, insan bilimlerinde, hukukta ve ahlakta bulunan estetik unsura pek çok gönderme buluruz. Edebi sanatlarla ilgili tartışmada dil unsuru da incelenmiştir. Tüm edebi ve edebi olmayan sanatlar ve insan bilimleri hepsinin içerdiği anlam unsuru ile

³⁴³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Reflections on My Philosophical Journey," *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer*'in içinde, der. Lewis Edwin Hahn, (Chicago and LaSalle: Open Court Press, 1997), s. 41.

birleşir. Gadamer'in estetik bilinç ve tarihsel bilinç eleştirileri onun tüm deneyimlerimizin, tüm düşünsel yönleriyle yaşam deneyimi olarak birliğini savunduğunu gösterir. Felsefe, sanat ve tarih yaşam bağlamı içerisindedir ve felsefe yaparken, sanatı deneyimlerken ya da tarihi araştırırken yaşamın dışına çıkmayız. Anlama yaşamın her yönünde, sanat ve tarih de dâhil olmak üzere, çalışır, işlevini sürdürür.

Eğer sanat eserinin doğruluk değeri olduğu iddiasını geçerli olarak kabul edersek, bu bize ne kazandırır? Sanatın doğruluk iddiasını kabul etmek yaşamımızda ya da bilimde herhangi bir şeyi değiştirir mi? Bu gerçekten önemli ve değerli bir iddia mıdır? Bugünün bilim insanlarının büyük sanat eserlerinden öğrenecek herhangi bir şeyleri var mıdır? Sanırım tüm bu sorular bu tezde incelenen kavramların merkezindedir. Gadamer öncelikle doğruluğun nesneler hakkında ölü, keşfedilmeyi bekleyen önermeler olmadığını gösterir. Doğruluk ancak insanın kişiliğine nüfuz ettiğinde ve onun karakteri etrafında filizlendiğinde doğruluk olur. Doğruluk bilim insanlarını da içeren insanoğlunun sonsuz serüvenidir. *Bildung* idealini kalbinde ve aklında taşımak, kendini ortak duyuda eğitmek ve beğenimizi geliştirmek bu serüvenin olmazsa olmaz unsurlarıdır ve bu tür bir serüven sanat eserlerini sağladığı biliş olmaksızın mümkün değildir.

Gadamer'in hermeneutiği bir felsefe yapma tarzı olmaktan çok, hermeneutiğin felsefenin kendisi olduğu iddiasını taşımaktadır. Bu anlamda *Hakikat ve Yöntem* tek bir soruya verilen sistematik bir yanıt olarak düşünülemeyecek bir eserdir. Merkezdeki iddianın insan bilimlerinin oluşup oluşmadığını ne olduğunu ortaya koymak olduğu söylenebilirse de, bu yine de bu eserin yalnızca bu sorunun etrafında kümelenen konu ve sorunların incelenmesi olarak kabul edilmesi anlamına gelmez. Aynı şekilde anlama kuramı, hermeneutik tarihinin incelenmesi ve eleştirisi, dilin ontolojik evrenselliği, yöntem ve nesnellik kavramlarına dayalı bilimin eleştirisi, bilimin dışladığı, yok saydığı, anlam veremediği hakikatlerin varolduğunun gösterilmesi, estetiğin bir hakikat içeriğine sahip olduğu gibi iddialar da *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in içeriğini özetlemekte yetersiz kalır. Bu yüzden *Hakikat ve Yöntem* tüm büyük filozofların

başyapıtlarının yazgısını paylaşır: tüm sözcükler, cümleler ve paragraflar tekrar tekrar okunmaya, anlaşılmaya, yorumlanmaya, açıklanmaya, eleştirilmeye değerdir ve buna ihtiyaç duyarlar. *Hakikat ve Yöntem* hermeneutik üzerine yazılmış ve ancak hermeneutik ile anlaşılabilir bir eserdir. Hermeneutik döngü kendisini *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'de öylesine gösterir ki her bölüm ancak bütün daha iyi anlaşıldıkça ve eserin bütünü bölümler daha iyi anlaşıldıkça kendilerini açar. Benim bu tezde yapmak istediğim şey bu hermeneutik döngünün içine girebilmektir. *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in içerik olarak zenginliği beni bu eserin ancak belli bir bölümüne yoğunlaşmak zorunda bıraktı. Öte yandan Gadamer üstüne yazılan literatürde gördüğüm bir eğilim beni *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in pek de fazla incelenmemiş ilk bölümüne ve bu bölümün parçaları arasındaki ilişkiye yöneltti. Bu eğilim, Gadamer'in ilk bölümde ortaya koyduğu kavramlara hiç başvurmaksızın onun sanat, tarih ve insan bilimleri hakkındaki iddialarını ortaya koymaya çalışma eğilimiydi. Halbuki, elinizdeki tezin, birinci ve en önemli iddiası *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in ilk bölümünde Gadamer'in tartıştığı kavramların incelenmemesinin ya da ikincil öneme sahip bir konuma sokulmalarının *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in anlaşılmasını doğrudan olanaksız kılacağıdır. Dolayısıyla, bu tezin ikinci bölümü bu kavramların Gadamer tarafından nasıl sunulduğunun ayrıntılı bir incelemesidir. Söz konusu kavramlar *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in dışına taşarak incelenmek istenirse her biri tek başına birer tez konusu olabilecek tarihi ve içeriği olan kavramlardır. Bu nedenle, bu kavramların incelenmesi Gadamer'in sunuşu ve onun bu kavramları anlatırken göndermeler yaptığı filozoflarla sınırlı bırakılmıştır.

Hakikat ve Yöntem'in ilk bölümünde Gadamer sanat deneyiminin bir hakikat deneyimi olduğu iddiasını temellendirmeye çalışır. Bu temellendirmenin üç ayağı vardır. Gadamer, ilk önce, insan bilimlerini yöntem kavramını merkeze koymadan anlayabilmek için hümanist geleneğin dört önemli kavramına yoğunlaşır: *Bildung*, *sensus communis* (sağduyu ya da ortak duyu), yargı ve beğeni. İkinci aşama Kant estetiğinin eleştirisi, üçüncü aşama ise sanat eserinin ontolojisinin kurulmasıdır. Gadamer'in başlangıçta yaptığı kavramsal inceleme bize insan bilimlerinin nasıl bir hakikat ile uğraştıklarını, bu hakikate ulaşmanın

ne gibi yolları ve gereklilikleri olduđu ve neden yöntem idealine körü körüne bağı kalmanın bu hakikate ulaşmanın önünde bir engel oluşturduğunu bize göstermeyi amaçlar. Bu kavramlar insan bilimlerinin gerçek temelidirler. Bu kavramlara dayandırılmayan insan bilimleri kanatları koparılmış bir kuşa benzer. Bu nedenle Gadamer'in insan bilimlerine dair bütün iddialarının arkasında humanist gelenekten aldığı bu güç vardır; bu da bize bu kavramların *Hakikat ve Yöntem*'in anlaşılmasında ne kadar merkezi önemleri olduğunu gösterir.

Bildung insan bilimlerinde edinilen bilginin doğrudan bilim adamının kişiliğine nüfuz eden, onu değişmeye ve karakterini eğitmeye zorlayan bir bilgi olduğunu gösterir. *Sensus communis* bu bilginin toplumdan, bilim adamının toplumsal ilişkiler ağındaki yerinden ve toplumsal alandaki becerilerinden kopartılamayacağını temellendiren bir kavramdır. Bilim adamı kendini ortak duyu içerisinde eğiterek insan için neyin doğru ve yanlış, neyin haklı ve iyi olduğunu ayırt etme yeteneğini geliştirir. Doğa bilimi ampirik verilerle rasyonel ilkeleri uzlaştırmaya çalışır, insan bilimleri ise bununla yetinemez. Çünkü, insan bilimlerinde neyin nasıl yapılacağına dair pratik, sosyal ve tarihsel hislerimize başvurmak ve bilgiyi bu anlamda geliştirmek esastır.

Sanat deneyiminin hakikat içeriğine sahip olduğu iddiasının ikinci ayağı Kant estetiği eleştirisidir. Yargı kavramı Kant eleştirisinin başladığı kesimdir. Gadamer yargı kavramını Kant'ın belirleyici ve düşünümsel yargı ayırımına üzerinden tartışır. Bu ayırma göre bilim belirleyici yargılardan oluşur, halbuki, Gadamer'e göre, insan bilimleri ağırlıklı olarak düşünümsel yargıların kullanıldığı alanlardır. Düşünümsel yargılar, Kant'a göre, estetik ve teleolojik yargılardır ve bize nesneye dair bir bilgi veremeyecekleri için bilişsel değillerdir. Beğeni ise estetik yargı gücüne verdiğimiz addır. Kant estetik yargılarda *a priori* bir temel bulsa da bu yargıları bireysel yargılar olmaktan kurtarmaz, bu *a priori* unsur bize yalnızca estetiğin özerkliğini verir. Halbuki, Gadamer'e göre, estetik yargı gücü hukukta ve ahlaki alanda sürekli kullanılırlar; dolayısıyla beğeni yargılarımız hem toplumdan etkilenir hem de toplumu etkiler. Beğeni bireysel alana hapsedilemeyecek kadar temel ahlaki bir kavramdır, pek çok

yargılarımızda bize eşlik eder, kültürün ve toplumun temel değerlerinin oluşumunda etkin rol oynar.

Gadamerin eleştirisi Kant'ın deha kavramını ele alması ile devam eder. Kant güzel sanatları deha yaratıları ile sınırlar. Güzellik ya doğadaki güzelliştir, ya da dehanın yarattığı eserlerde bulunur. Deha kavramı ile Kant güzel sanatları da doğaya bağlamış olur. Kant sonrasında artık estetik bağımsız bir alan haline gelmiş, deha sanatın merkezi haline getirilmiş ve sanat öznelleştirilmiştir. Estetiğin öznelleştirilmesi ile Gadamer iki olguya işaret etmektedir: birincisi sanatın bilişsel olmadığı ya da hiçbir doğruluk içeriğine sahip olmadığı düşüncesi, ikincisiyse sanatın yalnızca sanat eserinin deneyimine indirgenmesidir. Bu ikinci olgu kendini *Erlebnis* (yaşanmış deneyim) kavramında dışa vurur.

Erlebnis her ne kadar aydınlanma rasyonalizmine bir tepkiyi içerse de, yine de bu kavramın Kantçı estetikten etkilenmediğini söyleyemeyiz. Zaten Kant estetiğin temeli rasyonalite olan diğer alanlardan, yani bilimden ve ahlaktan, farklı olduğunu kanıtlamaya çalışmıştır. *Erlebnis* kendini iki alanda gösterdi: insan bilimlerinde ve sanatta. Temelde *Erlebnis* aydınlanma rasyonalizminin kavrayışının dışında kalan yaşama dair bir kavramdır. Yaşam rasyonelleştirilmeye direndiği için ve sosyal bilim ile sanat kaynağını yaşamdan aldığı için, *Erlebnis* bu duruma bir çözüm üretme çabasının sonucudur. Dilthey *Erlebnis*'i insan bilimlerinin daha fazla parçalarına ayrılamayacak verisi olarak ortaya koyduğunda rasyonalizmin dar sokağından çıkmayı amaçlıyordu. Sanatta ise *Erlebnis* kendinin dışavurumculukta gösterdi. Buna göre sanat deneyime dayanır ve deneyimlenerek anlaşılır; yani, kısaca, sanat deneyimin dışavurumundan ibarettir. Dolayısıyla, rasyonalizmden kaçış Dilthey'da da, sanatta da öznelliğin içine hapsolmek ile sonuçlanmıştır. Sembol ve alegori kavramları arasında 17. yüzyılda ortaya çıkan karşıtlık da *Erlebnis* üzerine kurulmuş bir estetiğin sonucudur. Alegori iletilebilir ve değişmeyen bir mesaj içerdiği için değersiz görülmüş, sembol ise duyusal alanla idealar dünyası arasında bağ kuran bir işleve sahip olduğu için, bu iki alan arasındaki tansiyonun giderilmezliğini göstermesi açısından rasyonalizme direndiği için sanatın

merkezi haline gelmiştir. Sembolün fiziksel bir görünüşü vardır ama görünüşünün ötesinde bir şeye işaret eder ve bu işaret ettiği şey her zaman ve her yerde aynı olmayabilir. Sembolün belirsizliği sembolün değeri haline geldi ve böylece sanat eserleri temelde sembolik şeyler olarak görülmeye başlandı. Dehanın yaratım sürecine dikkat ettiğimizde dehanın yaratırken bu süreçte yaşadıklarının tam olarak bilincinde olmadığını söyleyebiliriz. Dehanın sanat eseri sembollerle doludur ve bu sembollerin anlamını bazen dehanın kendisi bile çözümleyemez.

Romantik gelenek bu noktada artık Gadamer'in eleştirdiği bir noktaya ulaşmıştır. Çünkü romantik sanat anlayışı gerçeklik ile sanat arasında bir uçurum olduğunu kabullenmiştir. Sanat rasyonalizmin baskısından kurtulmuş, bağımsız bir alan olmuş ama aynı zamanda gerçeklikle ilişkisini de bir karşıtlık ilişkisine dönüştürmüştür. Sanat eserinden bekleyebileceğimiz tek şey bizi sembol yoluyla yaratıcı dehanın deneyimlerine götürmesidir. Bu da gerçeklikle değil, dehanın deneyimiyle ilişkiye geçmemiz anlamına geliyor. Sanatın kendi içinde bağımsız olması gerçekliğin tek gerçeklik, sanatın ise görünüş olarak anlaşılması ile sonuçlanır. Böyle bir anlayış sanat bağımsız olarak düşünülse bile sanatı gerçeklikten daha aşağı, hatta gerçekliği maskeleyen, örten bir etkinlik haline getirir. Romantizm bu durumdan sanatın mimetik yanını reddederek, sanatı yalnızca dışavurum üzerine kurarak, onu öznelliğin içine sıkıştırarak ve gerçeklikten kopararak kurtulmaya çalışmıştır. Dolayısıyla, Kantçı anlamda deha estetiği ve romantiklerin *Erlebnis* estetiği sanatın oluş kipini anlayabilmemiz için bize bir yol açmaz. Çünkü estetiğin gerçekliğe karşıt olarak kavramsallaştırılması sanat eseri deneyiminin gerçeklik deneyiminden farklı bir deneyim olduğu gibi bir sonuca götürür bizi.

Gadamer burada “estetik bilinç” kavramını ortaya atar. Bilimsel metodolojik anlayış, Kant'ı izleyerek, sanatın hiçbir doğruluk değeri olmadığını iddia etmiştir. “Estetik bilinç” bu iddianın kabulünün sonucudur. Bu bilinç sanatı hakikatten ve gerçeklikten ayırt etmeye çabalar ve sanat eserini yalnızca onun estetik özelliklerine bakarak değerlendirir. Gadamer bu soyutlama sürecini “estetik ayırım” olarak adlandırır. Gadamer estetik bilinci ve estetik ayırımı

kabul etmez çünkü bunların sanat eserinin doğruluk içeriğinin anlaşılmasına engel olduğunu düşünür. Dördüncü bölümde Gadamer'in neden estetik bilince ve ayırıma karşı olduğunu anlamak için Gadamer'in sanat anlayışının ayrıntılarını vermeye çalıştım.

Gadamer sanat eserini anlamaya giriş noktası olarak saf algı düşüncesini eleştirerek başlar, çünkü estetik bilinç saf algının olanağı üzerine kuruludur. Eğer saf algı olanaklıysa, yani nesnelerin özelliklerini tüm sosyal, politik ve psikolojik etkenlerden bağımsız değerlendirebiliyorsak, diye düşünür estetik bilinç, sanat eserini de estetik olmayan tüm özelliklerinden bağımsız olarak, yalnızca güzelliğine odaklanarak algılayabiliriz. Gadamer her algının bir anlama içerdiğini, ya da her algıya bir anlamanın eşlik ettiğini göstererek saf algının olanaksız olduğunu iddia eder. Bu girişten sonra, Gadamer sanat eserinin ontolojisine dair bir kuram ortaya koyar, çünkü Gadamer'e göre bu ontoloji olmaksızın sanat eserini anlama konusu her zaman bir tür çıkmaz içerisinde kalacaktır. Bu ontolojinin temel noktası sanat eserinin oluş kipinin bir nesnenin oluş kipinden farklı olduğudur. Bu farkı anlayabilmek için Gadamer önce "oyun" kavramına, ya da "oyun"un oluş kipine bakar. Çünkü oyun sadece bir örnek ve ipucu değil aynı zamanda sanatla yapısal olarak iç içe olan bir olgudur. Dördüncü bölümde oyun düşüncesinden yola çıkarak Gadamer'in sanat eseri ontolojisini nasıl kurduğunu anlatmaya çalıştım. Gadamer oyunun bazı özelliklerini şöyle özetler: Oyun ile oyuncular ve seyirciler arasındaki ilişki bir özne-nesne ilişkisi değil, bir temsil ilişkisidir. Oyunlar genellikle amacı olmayan ileri-geri hareketten oluşurlar, bu bir topun hareketi veya yalnızca oyuncuların hareketi de olabilir. İşte bu hareket oyuncuların iradeleriyle doğru orantılı bir hareket değildir; oyunun hareketi oyuncuyu yönlendirir, kontrol eder. Oyun kendi hareketini gerçekleştirmek için oyunculara ihtiyaç duyar, oyuncular ile temsile ulaşır. Oyun öz-temsildir, kendi özünü temsil etmek, gerçekleştirmek için oyuncuları kullanır. Dolayısıyla, oyun bir olay, bir oluşturma ve özne-nesne kutupsallığı içerisinde düşünülemez. Daha ziyade, oyunun oluş kipi "arada"dır. Işık oyunu, dalgaların oyunu gibi örneklerde görülebileceği gibi, insan oyunlarında da bu aradalık kendini gösterir. Bu aradalık seyirciyi de içine alan

bir aradalıktır. Oyun oyuncularını ve seyircileri içine alan kendi içinde bir dünya oluşturur; bu dünya içinde oyuncular da seyirci de öznelliklerinden sıyrılmış bir şekilde varolurlar. Özne-nesne ayrımı hem oyunun aradalığı, hem de oyuncu ve seyircilerin öznelliklerini unutmaları anlamında oyuna uygulanamayacak bir ayrımdır. Oyun öyle bir oluş kipine sahiptir ki, oynanmadığı zaman yok olmaz, fakat oynandığı zaman varolur. Bu paradoksal varoluş biçimi oyunun ideal bir oluş kipine sahip olmasından kaynaklanır.

Gadamer oyun analizini “yapıya dönüşüm” kavramını ile sanata uygular. Bir oyun eğer bir sanat eseri olarak kendini ortaya koymuşsa öyle bir yapı ortaya çıkar ki yaratıcı, icra eden ve izleyicilerin öznellikleri yok olur, ancak ortaya çıkan şey kalıcı ve hakikidir. Örneğin, bir tiyatro eseri sahnelendiğinde o eser kendi temsilini oyuncular ve seyirciler ile gerçekleştirir. Ama eser oyundan önce de vardır, sonra da olacaktır, ancak bu varlığını sürekli kendini temsilde ortaya koyarak sürdürür. Oyuncu ve izleyiciler ancak kendilerini ve hatta dünyayı unutacak derecede kendilerini oyuna verdiklerinde oyunu anlarlar ve onun etkisinde kalırlar. Yani, sanat eseri yapısının içine dâhil olan her şeyi dönüştürerek varolan bir şeydir. Bu öyle bir dönüşümdür ki, oyuncu da izleyici de bu kapalı yapıdan çıktığında dünyayı başka bir gözle gördüklerini söyleyebilirler. Aslında bu sanat eserinde gördüğümüz yapısal dönüşümün dünyayı da içine alacak kadar kapsamlı ve güçlü olduğunu gösterir. Sanat eseri gerçekliği kopyalamaz, gerçekliği dönüştürür ve biz ancak sanat eserinin yapısının içine girdiğimiz zaman gerçekliğin bu dönüşümüne tanık olabiliriz. Gadamer’e göre *mimesis* gerçekliğin taklidi anlamına gelmez. *Mimesis* sanat eserinin kendini temsil etmesidir, ideal varlığını olgusal dünyaya yansıtmasıdır. Bu yüzden *mimesis* olarak sanat dediğimizde gerçekliği kopyalamaya çalışan bir sanat değil gerçekliği dönüştürmeye çalışan bir sanat ya da kaçınılmaz olarak dönüştüren bir sanat anlaşılmalıdır. Bu anlamda *mimesis* olarak sanat hem gerçekliğe tabi, onu kopyalamaya çalışan bir sanat anlayışının, hem de gerçeklikten kopuk, saf bir estetik anlayışının eksiklerini bize gösterir.

Gadamer oyunun oynandığında ya da bir sanat eserinin icra edildiğinde ya da izlendiğinde varolması durumunu “bütüncül dolayım” olarak adlandırır.

Bu durumunun en iyi örneği varolmak için her zaman icra edilmeye ihtiyaç duyan müziktir. Gadamer'in bütüncül dolayım düşüncesinin orijinalliği sanat eserinin belli bir yer ve zamanda icrasını sanat eserinin kendisine ait, dâhil bir şey olarak kavramsallaştırmasıdır. Yani, sanat eseri ile onun icrası iki ayrı şey değildir. Zamana ve yere bakmasızın sanat eserinin tüm icraları sanat eserinin bizzat kendisine aittir. Sanat eserinin orijinali yoktur. Gadamer'in "eşzamanlılık" (*contemporaneity*) olarak adlandırdığı sanat eserinin zamansal yapısı burada tartışma konusu olur. Sanat eserleri sıradan zamansal ardı ardınlık içerisinde varolmazlar, onlar eşzamanlılık içinde yaşarlar. Yani sanat eserleri farklı zaman ve yerlerde gerçekleşen temsilleri ile birliğini ve kimliğini korur; bu birlik zamansız, değişmeyen orijinal bir eseri varsaymaz. Çünkü eserle onun dolayımı arasında hiçbir ayırım yoktur; eserin dolayımı eserin oluş kipinin kendisidir. Her icra orijinaldir, bir orijinalin tekrar edilmesi değildir. Her icra şu ya da bu açıdan farklıdır ancak tüm icralar aynı esere aittir. Gadamerin bütüncül dolayım ve eş zamanlılık ile ne demek istediğini anlamakta kullanılan en önemli örnek festivaldir.

Burada Gadamer için çok önemli olan bir nokta ile karşılaşırız: Eşzamanlılık sanat eserinin doğruluk içeriği ile ilişkilendirilir. Bir sanat eserini eşzamanlı yapan sanat eserinin içerdiği iddiadır, çünkü bir iddia her zaman savunulabilecek bir şeydir. Sanat eserinin iddiasının kalıcılığı eşzamanlılığının temelidir; bu yüzden, bir sanat eseri her sunuluşunda varolur. Sanat eserleri bizden burada ve şimdi bir talepte bulunurlar, sanat eserinin iddiası ve talebi tamamen şimdiye aittir. Bu anlamda, sanat eseri bize başarılması gereken bir görev sunar: Eşzamanlılık kendi başına olagelen bir şey değildir, bizim tarafımızdan başarılması gerekir. Öznelliğimiz dışına çıkarak, sanat eserinin üzerimizde kurduğu egemenliğe teslim olarak, kendimizi sanat eserinin varlığına tamamen vererek eşzamanlılığı başarabiliriz.

İcraya dayanmayan sanatlar Gadamer'in iddiaları için bir sorun yaratmazlar ve Gadamer resmi de temsili bir sanat olarak inceleyerek bu ontolojinin resme de uygulanabileceğini göstermeye çalışır. Sanat eserlerinin hakikat içeriği açısından resim mükemmel bir örnektir, çünkü, Gadamer'e göre,

bir şey resmedildiğinde, o ontolojik olarak taşar. O kendisini resimde öyle bir şekilde sunar ki, basit bir bakma eylemi ile görülemeyecek ve anlaşılamayacak bir şey ortaya çıkar. Resimlerde bulunan her temsil gizli olan, bilinmeyen, düşünülmeyen, daha önce hiç tasarlanmamış bir şeyi ortaya çıkarır. Edebiyat da okuma eylemi ile ilişkisinden dolayı temsili bir sanattır. Okumada her zaman bir icra, bir sunum ya da bir dolayım vardır. Okuma süreci, temelde, yapıya dönüşüm iddiasının bir örneği olarak anlaşılmalıdır. Edebi eserler okundukları zaman varolurlar; okuma sürecinde metin icracısını ve izleyicisini aynı anda bulur; yukarıda söylediğimiz gibi izleyici sanat eserinin oluş kipine aittir. Ancak, metinlerin diğer sanat eserlerinden ayrı bir özelliği vardır. Metin tamamen dile dayalıdır. Bu sadece edebiyatta görebileceğimiz biricik ve karşılaştırılmaz bir özellik oluşturur: metinlerin yabancılığı. Metinler bize yabancıdır çünkü anlaşılacak için bir tür tercüme gereksinim duyarlar. Metin “dolaysız olarak kavranabilir” bir şey değildir, kendini sözcüklerle sunan bir aklın ya da ruhun izlerini taşır. İşte metinler okunduğunda bu ruh kendini temsil etmiş olur.

Son bölümde, Gadamer’in hermeneutik tarihini ele alışının ayrıntılarını incelemeye çalıştım. Gadamer bu tarih üzerine çalışırken, bu tarihi eleştirel bir gözle görüşünü de bu tarihin içine dâhil eder. Bu sonuç bölümünde, bu tarihsel çözümlemenin bir özetini vermeyeceğim, daha çok bu tarihi daha önceki üç bölümle ilişkilendirmeye çalışacağım, çünkü beşinci bölümü tezime dâhil etmemin sebebi Gadamer’in hümanist kavramları, Kantçı estetiğin eleştirisi ve sanat eserinin ontolojisini hermeneutik ile ilişkilendirebilmektir. Beşinci bölümdeki hermeneutik tarihi çözümlemesi bu alandaki sorunların anlama sorununa ait olduğunu bize gösterir. Anlama sorunu ve onun değişik filozoflar tarafından ele alınışı filozofun eğilimlerinin bu sorunla ilgilenirken ne kadar önem kazandığını gösterir. Aydınlanma rasyonalizmi ve onun takipçisi metodolojik doğa biliminin bu tarih üzerinde büyük etkisi olmuştur. Schleiermacher anlamayı yazarın, eserin yaratıcısının ya da bir eylemi gerçekleştirenin niyetini anlamakla ve hatta daha iyi anlamakla özdeşleştirir. Bunun yöntemi olarak da eseri, eserin yaratıldığı ortamı yeniden kurmaktan bahseder. Bunu Gadamer’in sanat eserinin ontolojisi ışığında ele alırsak eserin

oluş kipinin eşzamanlılığının eserin yaratıcısını ve yaratıldığı zamanı aşmasını sağladığı için böyle bir yeniden kurmanın onu anlamak için tek yöntem olamayacağı ve yaratıcının niyetinin eserin oluş kipinin yalnızca çok küçük bir parçası olduğunu gösterir. Sanat eserin kendine has bir varoluşu vardır. Dilthey insan bilimlerinde anlamayı doğa bilimlerindeki bilimsellik seviyesine çıkarmak ister, bunun için son derece değerli katkılarda bulunur. Ancak, Dilthey anlamının ontolojik temellerini göz ardı edip epistemolojik sorunların içinde kaldığı için metodolojik bilimin sınırlarından kendini kurtaramaz. Bu sınırlardan bizi kurtarma konusunda en büyük adımı Husserl atar. Doğa biliminin yaşam dünyasının içinde olduğunu ve bize onun üstünde nesnel bir bilgi sunamayacağını göstererek metodolojik bilimi ciddi biçimde eleştirir. Husserl ise kendisini kartezyen özne düşüncesinden kurtaramadığı için bu eleştiri hermeneutik bir düzeye ulaşmadan kalır. Bu noktada Gadamer bizim için en iyi yol göstericinin Heidegger olduğunu düşünür. Anlamanın *Dasein*'in en temel ontolojik kategorisi olduğunu göstererek Heidegger epistemolojik ve kartezyen çerçevenin dışına çıkan bir açıklama getirir. Anlama epistemolojik ve metodolojik bir kategori olmanın öncesinde bizim dünyayla kurduğumuz en temel ilişkidir.

Hermeneutik tarihi içerisinde ve tarih biliminde, aynen estetikte karşımıza çıkan estetik bilinç gibi, “tarihsel bilinç” kavramı ile karşılaşırız. Bu kavram Ranke ve Droysen ile başlayan Tarih Okulu tarafından geliştirilmiştir. Tarihsel bilinç insanın tarihin hem bir parçası hem de onun yaratıcısı olduğunun bilincidir. Tarihsel bilinç tarihselliğinin bilincindedir ve bu bilinç ile tarihi değerlendirir, tarihin yalnızca tarihin içinden ve tarihin kendisine başvurarak anlaşılabilirliğini iddia eder. Nasıl estetik bilinç tüm estetik dışı özellikleri değerlendirmesinin dışında bırakıyorsa, tarihsel bilinç de tüm tarih dışı kavramları, kategoriler ve ölçütleri reddeder. Örneğin, Tarih Okulu’na göre Hegel tarihi usun devinimi olarak görerek tarih dışı bir kategori olarak usu tarihe uygulamış olur. Buna karşıt olarak, Tarih Okulu tarihi bir metin olarak düşünülür ve tarih de Schleiermacher’i edebi hermeneutiği izleyen bir hermeneutik parça-bütün döngüsü içerisinde, yalnızca kendisine bakılarak yorumlanmalıdır.

Dilthey da bu geleneđi devam ettirir ve insan bilimlerinin insanın tarihselliđi, tarihin hermeneutik yapısı ve “yaşam” kavramının esas veri olarak tarihin temeli yapılması ile nesnel bilgiye ulaşılabileceđini iddia eder. Gadamer öncelikle tarihin metin ile ortak özellikleri olsa da farklı özellikleri de olduđunu söyleyerek eleştirisine başlar. İnsan bilimlerindeki nesnel bilgi sorununun tarihsel bilinç ile çözülemeyeceđini, bu idealin Dilthey’in yaptığı gibi insan bilimlerine uyarlanmaktan çok eleştirilerek aşılması gerektiđini düşünür. Tarih hakkındaki bilgimiz her zaman tarihsel olarak kalacaktır, çünkü Heideggerci anlamda, tarih, aynen sanat gibi, *Dasein*’ın oluş kipine sahiptir. Tarihsellik bizim ontolojik belirlenimimizdir, dünyaya atılmışlıđımızdır. Bu insan bilimlerinin öznel değerlendirmelerle dolu bilim dışı bir alan olduđu anlamına gelmez. Bu bizim hümanizmin *Bildung*, *sensus communis* ve beğeni kavramları ile temellendirilmiş, sanatın doğruluk değerine hakkını veren, *Dasein*’ın oluş kipini göz önüne alarak doğa bilimleri dâhil tüm bilimleri, yöntem ve nesnellik ideallerini, insanın dünyayı anlamasının, ya da Husserlci anlamda yaşam dünyasının, bir parçası olarak gören yeni bir doğruluk anlayışını oluşturmamız gerektiđini gösterir.

APPENDIX B

CURRICULUM VITAE

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BS	METU Political Science and Public Administration	2000
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2001-2008	METU Department of Philosophy	Research Assistant

FOREIGN LANGUAGES

Advanced English

PUBLICATIONS:

Articles:

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