

The Construction of Modern Aesthetics from A Historical Perspective and The Opportunity of Aesthetic Life Today

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Abstract

Aesthetics became a basic philosophy branch/discipline with the book *Aesthetica* published by Baumgarten in the 18th century. Although aesthetics as a term is based on the concept of *aisthanestai*, which means to perceive and to sense in Greek, and aesthetics was a subject of philosophical discussion in this period, the fact that aesthetics became an independent philosophy discipline was realized with modern philosophy. Along with modern philosophy, the relation between beautiful and good we encountered in the Greeks, the essential value of beautiful that encompasses the whole of life was shattered, and especially the ethics-aesthetics relation came to an end. Aesthetics is confined to an inquiry purely on beautiful in a sensual extent. The surprising thing is that with this limited point of view, aesthetics as the subject of beauty in pre-modern period, could not be deepened and seem primitive due to its ethical aspect extending to the whole of life. Modern aesthetics has progressed with conceptual analysis and evaluations to reinforce this understanding. However, as Hakkı Hünler tries to show in his original work, *Estetik'in Kısa Tarihi*, in this judgment of modern aesthetic life as a product of a period in which the self was fragmented, is one-sided and one-dimensional. On the contrary, aesthetics as a branch of philosophy in the modern and post-modern periods, has led beauty to lose its essentiality and gradually become instrumental in search of making everything new in a way that will break from its roots. We can only see this problem with a historical reading on aesthetics. In this context, the article aims to bring Hünler's impressive historical reading back to the agenda and to investigate the possibilities of a purely non-instrumental aesthetic life today.

Key Words: Aesthetics, Beautiful, Modern Aesthetics, Postmodern Aesthetics, Aesthetic Life

Tarihsel Bir Perspektiften Modern Estetik'in İnşası ve Günümüzde Estetik Yaşamın İmkânı

Öz

Estetik, 18. yüzyılda Baumgarten'in yayınlamış olduđu *Aesthetica* kitabıyla birlikte, temel bir felsefe dalı/disiplini haline gelmiştir. Terim olarak estetik, her ne kadar Grekçe algılamak, duyumsamak anlamına gelen *aisthanestai* kavramına dayansa ve estetik bu dönemde felsefi bir tartışma konusu olsa da estetiğin bağımsız bir felsefe disiplini olması modern felsefeyle gerçekleşmiştir. Modern felsefeyle birlikte Greklerde karşılaştığımız güzel iyi ilişkisi, güzelin yaşamın bütününe kuşatan özsel değeri sarsılmış, özellikle etik-estetik ilişkisi son bulmuştur. Estetik duyuşsal bir uzamda, salt güzele yönelik bir soruşturmaya sınırlanmıştır. Şaşırtıcı olanı ise bu sınırlanmış bakış açısı ile pre-modern yani modern öncesi dönemde güzelin konusu olarak estetik, yaşamın bütününe uzanan etik yönü nedeniyle derinleşmemiş, ilkel görünebilmiştir. Modern estetik bu anlayışı pekiştirecek bir şekilde kavramsal analiz, değerlendirmelerle ilerlemiştir. Oysa Hakkı Hünler'in özgün çalışması *Estetik'in Kısa Tarihi*'nde göstermeye çalıştığı gibi, modern estetik yaşamın, benliğin parçalandığı bir dönemin ürünü olarak bu yargılamasında tek taraflı, tek boyutludur. Aksine modern ve post-modern dönemler içerisinde bir felsefe dalı olarak estetik, köklerinden kopacak bir şekilde her şeyi yeni kılma arayışı içerisinde güzelin özselliğini yitirmesine, giderek araçsallaşmasına yol açmıştır. Bu sorunu görebilmemiz ancak estetiğe dair tarihsel bir okumayla mümkün olabilir. Bu bağlamda makale Hünler'in etkileyici tarihsel okumasını yeniden gündeme getirmeyi ve günümüzde salt araçsal olmayan bir estetik yaşamın imkanlarını soruşturmaya amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Estetik, Güzel, Modern Estetik, Postmodern Estetik, Estetik Yaşam

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Introduction

Philosophy of Art or Aesthetics appears as one of the most basic disciplines of the philosophy. Etymologically, the word aesthetic is based on the ancient Greek verb *aisthanestai* which means to hear, to sense, or to perceive (Arslan, 2009, p. 242). Although it is etymologically based on Ancient Greek, the use of the term aesthetic could be dated back to 18th century and later (Townsend, 2002, p. 12). The emergence of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline, as always emphasized, was with Baumgarten's book on aesthetics. As we shall see, Baumgarten used the term in relation to sensibility and art, which are on a different aspect from thought (Hünler, 1998, p. 29). After this important study, together with philosophers such as Kant, we see that aesthetics began to emerge more strongly as an autonomous, independent, self-sufficient discipline. The philosophy of art or aesthetics which has become historically independent more and more, is accepted as a philosophical inquiry of something "beautiful" brings pleasure to us (Arslan, 2009, p. 238). Philosophy of art basically searches issues such as aesthetic object, aesthetic subject reacting to this object, aesthetic experience, aesthetic pleasure, aesthetic judgment, aesthetic standard, subjectivity and objectivity of beauty, the relationship between beauty and good, and the place of beauty among politics, economy, society, and culture (See Arslan, 2009). However, the subject of examining the evaluations of these research from a historical perspective has been limited, and aesthetic studies have progressed more with an analytical analysis. In this strong analytical perspective and weak historical perspective, from the point of view of philosophy of art, the pre-modern period could be seen as weak, deficient, inadequate, immature within modern perspective.

We can say that there are two different readings in the discussions on aesthetics. In the first reading, from a modern point of view, aesthetics is a discipline specific to the modern period, and its independence is read with a spirit merely unique to this period. And this is the break from the old, the tradition, the rejection of the old, in search of making everything that is modern, new. Modern and Postmodern understandings of art progress along this line. The second reading is a reading that affirms and embraces the Greeks in aesthetics, as we would see in philosophers like Heidegger. In this line, which includes many strong readings of the modern period, Hakkı Hünler (1998) rightly problematizes the modern and postmodern understanding of aesthetics in favor of Greek philosophy in the most general sense and reads it from a critical point of view. Our aim in this article is to see how the formation of modern aesthetics or modern philosophy of art is possible from a critical point of view, and to draw attention to the MacIntyrean aspect of an aesthetic life today.

Modern Aesthetics and Its Character

Modern aesthetics seems to have emerged due to the transformation of life, human forms in the pre-modern period. When we look at the Ancient Greek culture, which is the source and beginning of philosophy, art emerges as a product of personal taste, moving away from a structure that is tightly connected to social practices and ties available to the community (Hünler, 1998, p. 9). Art, among the Greeks was closely tied to social practices in the inquiry into the good life. For example, Greek tragedies were not only an artistic activity that give pleasure to every citizen who came to see the plays, but also an inquiry into a practical *ethos* for the good of society. Because of this situation, Greek philosophers inevitably considered beautiful (*kalos*) in a close relationship with good, that is, *agathon* (see Mutlu, 2019). The name Plato gave to his ideal city, *kallipolis* (beautiful city) can be related to this situation. A holistic understanding of human nature did not allow for life to be treated with the fragmentation peculiar to moderns. Human nature and, accordingly, human life were not fragmented and atomic (Hünler, 1998, p. 11). As Hünler argues, it has become incredibly difficult to determine the position of aesthetics in culture where the grand narratives are abandoned, autonomous language games and small narratives are emphasized (Hünler, 1998, p. 12). Since many previously determined standards for life no longer exist, and there are endless consensuses and discussions about these standards, these grand narratives have been excluded under the name of plurality (Hünler, 1998, p. 18-19). In a life that abandons the understanding of truth, bases everything on self-consciousness by separating itself from what is external and abandons the projection of future and a certain understanding of *telos* (Hünler, 1998, pp. 20-21), the prevailing mechanism is the capitalist economic process. In this process, everything that is humane can be dehumanized very easily (Hünler, 1998, p. 20).

As Hünler states, aesthetics was born in such a period which he named as modernity, enlightenment, or new age (Hünler, 1998, p. 22). It undertook the task of preparing an intellectual ground for the turmoil in the modern world and tried to deal with the pieces from the past in a consistent way (Hünler, 1998, p. 24). However, this conceptual scheme that has lost its context means nothing more than a *simulacra* (Hünler,

1998, p. 24). In present catastrophic world, since they are historized in the world of the “now” (Hünler, 1998, p. 25), concepts have moved away from the context in which they emerged with an undated and descriptive reading, and reasonable arguments (Hünler, 1998, pp. 25-26). Such a world is a world where the magic of parody, pastiche has been broken, and its God is dead (Hünler, 1998, p. 26). Hünler adds that in a world like that, we can see that the language of art is inevitably fragmented, and that art was established by Baumgarten in the 18th century to put an end to its straying away from its contexts and frameworks that give meanings to it. He tries to give a harmonious and systematic unity to this aimlessness, which can also be encountered in the field of sensibility (Hünler, 1998, p. 29). Like whole philosophy, aesthetics also seeks ways to overcome the fragmentation of consciousness (Hünler, 1998, p. 30). In this respect, it constantly tries to connect the present moments with the modern “future” time project. With an understanding of history, especially starting from Hegel, a continuous present determined by the future and lived for the future is in question (Hünler, 1998, p. 34). As Hünler puts it via Lyotard, postmodernity focuses on “now” as “a past of future time” (Hünler, 1998, p. 37). While the modern consciousness integrates its own project, the future project, with a “now” that it derives from the past but somehow combines with the future, gives continuity, becomes active step by step and for which it struggles relentlessly, Postmodern consciousness makes us experience a time that will cause the “nows come one after another” to struggle with each other, as it “dynamites the future project of modern consciousness” (Hünler, 1998, p. 38). This postmodern consciousness not only doesn’t recognize a future, also it distorts the past as it wishes with the ease of forgetting. Therefore, there is no memory, no projection, that is, no past or future (Hünler, 1998, p. 38). In such a situation, they give up a heroic struggle typical of the modern. As Hünler impressively emphasizes, Lyotard and Derrida who are acting in an anti-heroic way, prefer to act within the grains of a “now” that does not act with a certain plan of future rather forgets this plan, and does not see the future time horizon and accept acting like that as a diversity, fortune rather than an absence (Hünler, 1998, p. 39). In such a consciousness, since a meaning and value are constantly postponed to the future and everything is doubted, postmodernism, as Lyotard puts it, appears as a constantly recurring modernism in a state of birth, rather than a modernism that has come to an end (Hünler, 1998, p. 39).

Hünler impressively states that this doubt leads to a thought in Descartes, but to a corruption, destruction in postmodern era. Postmodernism attacks the Enlightenment project’s understanding of subject, human, history, and art partly because of this corruption, and declares that this project can never be a solution for a culture, and in fact that it is something that should never be started (Hünler, 1998, p. 40). Obviously, this attitude of postmodernity is like the attitude of modernity towards traditional life in the 18th century (Hünler, 1998, p. 40). In this respect, Hünler rightfully says that postmodernity’s attack of modern masks the connivance of the two. These two political and philosophical processes perpetuate each other, because both emphasize a ground zero, a new white page. However, the future and the present are handled with *telos* for Aristotle, a *telos* determined by its present nature, and accordingly, the future shows an “inherent simultaneity of this nature and present” (Hünler, 1998, p. 41).

Polis, for example, is seen as something whose future have a *telos* which is inherent to itself, and this *telos* was assured by the continuing nature of *polis* from past to present. Thus, let’s say that *telos* of Athens was not something that took place indeterminately in future as the realization of an ever-absent project, but a democracy determined by the ever-present nature of site. That is, the present nature of *polis* and its future *telos* where one is walked on its way, were not two separate things separated by an indefinite distance of time, rather one and the same thing. By looking at the present nature of *polis* it was equally possible to see a certain way of its future *telos* and vice versa.” (Hünler, 1998, p. 41).

In this understanding, past and present are tightly interconnected. In modern consciousness, this very bond has been broken, and a *self* which is intrinsic to modern tries to build a bridge between this gap (Hünler, 1998, p. 42). However, since this bond is broken so that it can no longer come together, “the distinctions between universal and particular, subject and object, the sense/feeling and Reason, knowledge and morality, art and life, Science and Philosophy, identity and distinction, etc.” covered all over the place (Hünler, 1998, p. 42).

Hünler rightly states that the path to *Aesthetica*, which was established in accordance with these distinctions, started with Descartes (Hünler, 1998, p. 43 ff.). With this beginning, he is trying to regenerate the knowledge tree that he cut from its root (Hünler, 1998, p. 44). Establishing the lost connection between

art and life (Hünler, 1998, p. 47) is also related to such a motivation. In all aspects, social construction is built on free individuals (Hünler, 1998, p. 55).

So, for Hünler, Aesthetics is especially built on the Cartesian approach. Aesthetics, in a line that goes back to Leibniz, Wolff, Lambert and Baumgarten is a result of wishing to reach a clarity and perfection regarding sense-knowledge (Hünler, 1998, pp. 56-63). It tries to understand the particular with abstract and universal concepts without removing its own value. The birth of aesthetics in Germany is related to the development of alternative forms of resistance against the absolutist state that suppresses individuality in this way (Hünler, 1998, pp. 64-65). According to Hünler, Baumgarten's *Aesthetica* while acting with a gentle balance that sought to harmonize this individuality with power, also defended this individual freedom. Kant also distinguished "knowledge, morality and art", which stand side by side in a system but do not pose a threat to each other (Hünler, 1998, p. 66) via enlightenment which is a kind of *Aesthetica* project. Among these distinctions, aesthetics also works with what it calls beautiful, outside the concepts of logic, with sensory capacities such as looking and seeing, and with a certain law of reason that works at this level (Hünler, 1998, pp. 70-71).

In these explanations, as Hünler expressed regarding Ferry, there is a possibility for an autonomist reading. For, according to Ferry, Baumgarten, in a way making aesthetics autonomous, focuses on an aesthetic truth that considers beauty as a sensible perfection under a certain thought; he seeks consistency and stability in a certain intellectual level (Hünler, 1998, p. 73). For this reason, Baumgarten describes aesthetics as "the science of sensible cognition" (citing from Ferry, Hünler, 1998, p. 74). According to Baumgarten, as "a human being among human beings", we should try to grasp sensory particular, individual (Hünler, 1998, pp. 74-75). Ferry sees these arguments as an effort to give autonomy to the sensible (Hünler, 1998, p.75). The ability of *analogon rationis* is trying to grasp the tangible relations in sensible world (Hünler, 1998, p. 76). In this line, beauty is the "perfection of sensible cognition", or it is "conceptless legality" as Kant expressed it (Hünler, 1998, p. 77).² This perfection combines the tangible particular with sensory bonds by preserving its vitality and richness (Hünler, 1998, p. 79).

Hünler thinks that all these attempts which ensure the autonomous construction of modern aesthetics, are efforts to re-establish the detached ties between reason and sensibility (Hünler, 1998, p. 85). However, according to Hünler, due to the irreconcilable detachment of reason and sensibility, there is a great confusion in establishing relationships. This dilemma is an insurmountable struggle for the moderns. Aesthetics is at the center of the construction of "modern consciousness" by acting with the belief that it will provide possibilities to solve within this confusion (Hünler, 1998, p. 85). But failure is inevitable, for "practical conditions" that would allow a transitivity between these two fields have been removed. Every attempt in terms of solution will not go beyond merely conveying a theory (Hünler, 1998, p. 87). For Hünler, the importance of Baumgarten is that in this attempt intrinsic to modern, he created a "terminological vocal archetype" that allows theoretical discussion. (Hünler, 1998, p. 88). As Hünler rightly points out via Lyotard,

"... the whole history of postmodernity and postmodern thought is on the one hand, according to these terminological vocabulary, the history of the increasingly accelerating detachment of reason and sensibility, which are vitally integral in the ancient tradition; on the other hand it is the history of trying to make up for the damage that both sides have suffered from this detachment, by trying to suppress and keep under control in favor of or against the other one; or, in another way, it is the history of the desperation of unconditionally confirming the parallelism of two models of subjectivity—mental and sensual— without interfering with each other, that already cannot be theoretically restrained and run separately." (Hünler, 1998, p. 88).

As can be seen, Hünler's unique and striking evaluations, which we can call MacIntyrean and which he put forward in a very comprehensive and detailed way, have some justification in terms of aesthetic history. For today, we live a fragmentative life in every aspect. In this fragmentation, distinctions Hünler talks about such as particular-universal, emotion-reason, art-life etc. permeate all areas. Among these distinctions, a relation between art and life which we could encounter in Greeks, and therefore the meaningfulness of aesthetics within practices having a certain *ethos*, has not been adequately evaluated by someone who stay away from historical reading of aesthetics. Hünler via MacIntyre, looks from the window of this ancient

² As Hünler points out, there is also Terry Eagleton's Marxist reading of aesthetics of philosophers such as Baumgarten and Kant. From a Marxist perspective, Eagleton sees aesthetics as the penetration of the mind, which represents political power, into the sensible particulars, the world of perception (Hünler, 1998, p. 68-69), and the mind's reaching these particular vital areas (see Hünler, 1998, p. 70).

thought as much as possible and draws attention to the complicity of modernity with postmodern. According to him, just as modernity rejected traditional culture and its philosophy with its quest to make everything new, the postmodern made the same thing to modern. The understanding of time he dwelled on made it necessary to make everything endlessly new, in the name of plurality and freedom.³ As a result, today we really live in a postmodern phase that gives us the continuity of making everything modern. Our understanding of art will inevitably try to find a possibility on this ground. At this point, we would like to say something about these possibilities.

The Possibilities of Aesthetic Life

Hünler said that within his above-mentioned arguments, new aesthetics' proposal for a solution for the possibilities of beautiful life cannot be the "absolute superiority of mind over sensible" peculiar to the modern or the "absolute autonomy of sensible" peculiar to the postmodern. The solution is the existence of practical conditions providing a fine functioning of mind and sensible (Hünler, 1998, p. 88). Hünler is talking here about the schools, chess club-style communities that MacIntyre focuses on in *After Virtue* (see MacIntyre, 2007). The gains obtained in this way are not only staying at the level of external good (money, status, etc.) rather gaining internal goods, virtues that bring success, pleasure for the community and for oneself as a part of it about relevant practice, and that successfully enable this acquisition (see MacIntyre, 2007, p. 187 ff.). MacIntyre thinks that the virtues of justice, courage and honesty are fundamental among these practices (MacIntyre, 2007, p. 191). For only with these virtues, it is possible for practices to survive and to develop salubriously that will form a tradition. It is important for everyone to fulfill the role they deserve in the community that creates the practice, to be honest in the learning process of this practice, and to have the courage to protect this practice as being a part of it (See MacIntyre, 2007, p. 191 ff.) When we think about this situation, maybe by being a part of a community such as a painting, sculpture, or a cinema club, as MacIntyre mentioned, we can say that art can be a part of our *ethos* and that it can be shaped with our practical togetherness. However, at this point, the problem is the conflicts that may occur between communities that depend on different interests and profits. Among family, school, and such communities, being a filmmaker and performing this activity well can be accomplished in the community we are a part of. Acquiring virtues within a practice will certainly be effective in growing virtues within other practices. A person who learns honesty and justice will try to make these virtues functional in every practice.

When we consider this situation in terms of the functioning of practices, with the fact that today's capitalism has instrumentalized everything, it is inevitable that some conflicts may occur between practices; it may be difficult for a person to achieve a harmony in different practices. As capitalism encourages

³ When we look at it carefully, what makes the modern new in a way that tears it off traditional ties is, roughly speaking, that it depends economically on capitalism, and being politically liberal. Philosophically by starting from Descartes, it emphasizes self-consciousness, self-reference, building rules in itself (*autos/autonomy*). In this context what it emphasizes are reason, universality, freedom, equality, individual, individual choices, rebellion against tradition in search of making everything new, rejection of the old, mechanical understanding of science; accordingly, rejecting teleological thinking and understanding of nature. (When it comes to human beings, names such as Darwin, Marx, Freud, and Comte have been especially influential). The belief that conflicts and problems will be resolved with the development of mental capacities and the maturation of the mind based on the data of sciences, a social progress dependent on the increase of cultural and artistic sensitivities. Grand, systematic narratives. Here these characteristic features of modernity have also determined areas such as theater, cinema, sculpture, painting, architecture, and literature in every field of art.

On the other hand, postmodernism is a movement that emerged after the second world war, especially after the 1950s, and differs from modernism in some respects in various fields such as philosophy, art, architecture, criticism, history, etc. It is suspicious of and rejects modernism's acceptance of reason, progress, a certain reality, truth, and science. For further reading on realist and epistemic approach to scientific explanation models see (Tağman, 2013). For example, it accepts that there can be no objective reality in history, that history, subject, language is constructed, that the subject/individual/agent is not autonomous but a product of history. They give importance to "small narratives" over grand narratives (Lyotard). Eclecticism, irony, pastiche, relativism, metaphor, deconstruction, anachronism (for example, talking about Lincoln as he was on the phone, especially ironically), magical realism (fantastic, weird, labyrinthine, surprising, unexpectedly shocking narratives; Rushdie, Borges, Marquez), paranoia, minimalism, fragmentation, fragmentary structure, hybridlike against hierarchies and categories, dualism; hybridity, contingency, hierarchical, non-dualistic approaches, particularism/locality versus universality, and a complete rejection of universal acceptances of human nature, reason, language, and social development, objective reality, morality, truth. It also rejects the reason, rationalism, and scientific approach of Enlightenment. There is an emphasis on simulacrum, hyper-reality, diversity (Baudrillard). They proclaim the death of the author, of art (Barthes). Inter-textuality is in the foreground (Eco). Flux, flexibility, fragmentation, metafiction (where the author draws our attention from time to time), irony, dark humor, "playing" with the text, pastiche (using multiple literary components together: for example, combining the elements and components of science fiction and fairy tales such as Margaret Atwood); using fantastical elements from science fiction to myths in contrast to traditional mimesis elements, historiographic metafiction (constructing current historical events and persons) (for example, Marquez) dominates.

competition and increases ambition and power, the healthy development and preservation of virtues will not be easy. Partly because of this situation, Kantianism and Utilitarianism which are the dominant ethical theories today, gave more importance to legal functioning, duties, and rights rather than character formation. It is vital to act in accordance with the law and rights for the system to function well. Because of this situation, although the virtues have a certain place in our lives and practices, they don't have a central value. In this legal process, it is of special importance not to interfere in any way with the sphere of individuality. The role of individuals in practices is also shaped by the demands of the atomized society. It is economic success, the superiority of the status that prompts a person to have a role. These are the goods exactly what MacIntyre calls external goods. A person who acts with these external goods will be able to channel his skills progressing in this line which he developed with interests in childhood, very easily. Practices will also act accordingly. It will be secondary for children to acquire the virtues we have mentioned. Therefore, situations like being a good artist but not being a good person can be observed very easily.

When we think about this fact in terms of aesthetics and art, the connection of a person who tries to gain a skill with internal goods within practices, will remain at the level of pure pleasure in a way that can be manipulated very easily, and pleasure will always be far from an essential connection with the whole in which s/he has practiced. The person will always consider this skill within his/her own individual world. Bringing someone in this skill and the products s/he produces will appear as part of a material and instrumental exchange. Therefore, the artist, within the scope of his/her own projects, perhaps in his/her existential valued activity, will not take an activity, excellence, a certain practice in a context which will make them traditional, transformed and enriched; the essential bond between individual and practice will never develop at an aesthetic level. Therefore, child's development of the level of perceptual interests which is the result of his/her parent's guidance with curiosity and enthusiasm, will always remain at the level of atomized interests and develop in this way. In this process, it will be usual for impressive, original, and creative works to emerge and the mentality of modern and postmodern culture to make everything new is a very consistent desire. And this desire, within the atomized individual relations network we mentioned, is always strengthened in a supply-demand relationship for individuals who have developed an aesthetic sensitivity about the related desire. Within this new demand, everything is starting to take shape in a line that can be changed and transformed more quickly, more portable, and more easily. We see the fact we are talking about in postmodern aestheticians, for example in Danto's explanations, in a supportive way (See Danto, 1997). Frankly, the good of today's aesthetics, its *ethos* develops within this network of relations we mentioned. The "invisible hand" which provides the dominant value of the economic system, also seems to guarantee the functioning of the artistic field. Art progresses and transforms within these practices. Therefore, it is these tastes that also determine the social classes. As Bourdieu mentioned, what we consume determines us.⁴

Well, is there any way we can construct aesthetics along MacIntyrean lines for today? Another question is why would we want this change? The answer to the first question is about virtues. MacIntyrean practices can be established if we can put virtues that will resist to something instrumental in the presence of goods, which MacIntyre calls external goods, such as money and status to the center, if we can make these virtues the essence of our character. In this case, achievements which awarded us, give us pleasure, individual satisfaction won't remain at the level of external goods rather function as essential goods that cultivate practice. By this transformation, the necessary external good begins to be seen to have an instrumental value. Therefore, art gradually begins to transform, change the community itself. The *ethos* of art is not necessarily limited at the level of individual pleasure, these external goods rather it develops an aesthetic experience that enables them to relate to the community more closely. The connection between aesthetics and life also develops differently; the good of art does not remain at the level of individual feeling, pleasure, perception, and satisfaction. In this respect, the function of art can have a power that affects other practices of life.

When we come to the second question, that is, whether we want this change for now, it will not be an easy question. Today, art is more part of our daily lives than it has ever been. While modern art was in a more elitist position at the beginning, today it has ceased to be elitist and has become to reach masses. The sense of beauty plays a role in many of the items we use. Cell phones, the packages of the food we consume, our watches, our cars are not of purely functional value. The fact that these things are being designed beautifully can affect our decisions. This situation fits perfectly with the motivation to make everything new,

⁴ For an interesting discussion of this issue, see Bourdieu 1984, especially part 3.

the fast consumption demanded by the economic system. Originality, innovation, change, diversity have accelerated as never before. This situation is powerful enough to affect even a MacIntyrean. For example, when buying a car, the beautiful exterior surface of the car can also affect our choice. In the face of such situations that affect all of us, perhaps what we should pay attention to and look carefully is what kind of goods is associated with the satisfaction of this level of pleasure. These goods, in turn, are directly or indirectly linked to external goods MacIntyre speaks of. Therefore, the judgment of taste works exactly at the level of perception that Hünler mentioned about postmodern art and is connected to the political and economic process at the level of cognition. Art affects our happiness in such a way. This happiness is obviously not related to the virtues MacIntyre speaks of. In such a life, art will progress at the level of ordinary consumption we are talking about. In other words, art will ignore the effort that requires some of us to acquire skills and that can contribute to the harmony of our individual and social lives. In this arbitrariness and fragmentation, even the question of what makes something good will be unimportant. Hence, at this level, the touch of aesthetic understanding to our lives will be possible at the level of pleasure, consumption and it will be shallow. In such a life, it is impossible to expect the relation of art with truth, reality, and with the art in the Aristotelian sense. Just because of this fact, the truth seems to be dead in postmodern theory. In a culture where we are faced with the loss of truth and reality in every field and everything is reduced to a game, it is more difficult than ever to strive for the artistic transformation we are talking about.

Conclusion

Danto, in his book *After the End of Art*, says that philosophy can be roughly divided into ancient, medieval, and modern period (Danto, 1997, p. 6), and modernism, which started with Descartes, determines all philosophical activity of *self* (Danto, 1997, p. 6). He says that the transition of art from the premodern period to the postmodern period began with the change from mimetic to non-mimetic, where non-representational features began to gain more importance (Danto, 1997, p. 8). In the mid-1970s, postmodern art began between modern art and contemporary art, with the historical sensibility of the present is gaining importance and there is a loss of belief in a “grand narrative” (Danto, 1997, p. 5). Postmodern art, as Danto puts it, “post-historical art” means that everything can be done artistically, there is no paleness of history, it is a freedom where everything is allowed (Danto, 1997, p. 12), not merely sculpture or painting but also anything related to visible can be a “work of art”, (Danto, 1997, p. 13-14), the artist will realize his/her art for any purpose without feeling a historical responsibility (Danto, 1997, p. 15). Frankly, these statements of Danto are statements that declare the end of the modernist art. In this period, it gives people an unprecedented freedom that does not imprison them within certain limits. For my part, I must state that I enjoy such contemporary works of art very much, and that I could get an aesthetic pleasure as I see the traces of great creativity and freedom. However, the problem, as we have stated, is that taste can easily be manipulated, commercialized, materialized, and by acting within individual silences, preferences, and freedoms in the face of the brutal transformation of life, our problems, it leaves us memoryless at an intellectual level. The destruction of the total story of life can make the artist’s sensitivity problematic in such most vital and fundamental issues. One will still be able to make this process a product of aesthetic experience, and even undertake the aesthetic work needed in the functioning of this process very easily. So, in the face of such situations, we are compelled to look at the post-historical art period, not only at the level of artistic pleasure of the visible but also in terms of its historical functions. This problem leads us to turn to MacIntyre more seriously.

Ethical Declaration

In the writing process of the study titled “*The Construction of Modern Aesthetics from A Historical Perspective and The Opportunity of Aesthetic Life Today*”, there were followed the scientific, ethical and the citation rules; was not made any falsification on the collected data and this study was not sent to any other academic media for evaluation.

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TÜRKÇE GENİŞ ÖZET

Günümüzde siyaset felsefesi, etik gibi birçok felsefe dalı vardır. Estetik ya da Sanat Felsefesi de felsefenin en temel dallarından biri olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Etimolojik olarak Grekçe *aisthanestai* yani duymak, algılamak anlamına gelen bir kelimeden türemektedir. Ancak bu felsefe dalının varlığı, diğer birçok felsefe dalı gibi 18. Yüzyıl ve sonrasında ortaya çıkmıştır. (Townsend, 2002, s. 12). Özellikle Baumgarten'in *Aesthetika'sı* ile estetik bağımsız, otonom bir değer kazanmaya başlamıştır. Kant gibi filozoflarla estetiğin bu otonomluğu, bağımsızlığı tam anlamıyla pekişmiştir. Kısa bir zaman diliminde, estetik ilgili etkileyici bir literatür oluşmuştur. Bu literatürde estetiğe ve sanata dair soruşturmalar daha çok analitik, kavramsal olarak ele alınmış; tarihsel değerlendirmeler çok sınırlı kalmıştır. Tarihsel bakış açısındaki bu sınırlılıktan dolayı ve sanat felsefesinin modern öncesi dönemi, modern bakış açısıyla özellikle de "ilerlemeci" bir kabulde zayıf, eksik, yetersiz ve olgunlaşmamış görülebilmektedir. Estetik'in pre-modern-modern-postmodern ayrımları içerisinde pre-modern estetik, sanat, güzellik anlayışı "ilkel", gelişmemiş bir şekilde karakterize edilebilmiştir. Örneğin, modern bir okumanın sonucu olan bu değerlendirmede, Platon ve Aristoteles gibi klasik filozoflar güzeli iyi ile ilişkilendirebilmişler, güzeli bağımsızlığı içerisinde ele alacak bir derinlikten uzak düşmüşlerdir. Modern estetik, sanat bu gibi eleştirilerle geçmişten köklü bir kopuş gerçekleştirmiştir. Köklerden bu kopuş her şeyi "yeni kıl" kabulüyle şekillenmiştir. Modern kadar postmodern dönem de bu talep ile ilerlemektedir. Dahası bu talep ile birlikte modern dönemlerde ortaya çıkan başlıca sorun, estetiğin konusu olan güzelin iyiden koparılmış olmasıdır. Estetik, modern yaşamın parçalı yapısı içerisinde, özellikle Greklerde karşımıza çıkan etiğin konusu olan "iyi" kavramıyla ilişki kuramamaktadır. Bu durum, postmodern dönemde ise bambaşka bir sorun içerisinde evrilmiş, güzelin iyiye değdiği, tarihsellik ile ilişki kurduğu yerde iyi de estetik, bireysel bir perspektifin konusu olmaktan öteye gidememiş, salt yeni kurgu talepleriyle etiğe uzanmıştır. Bu da zaten iyiyi dolayısıyla etiği dönüştürme işlevi görmüştür. Bu dönemde estetik'in kültürle ilişkisi bir özsellik taşımaktan ziyade belli araçsal tüketim ilişkilerinin bir parçası olarak karşımıza çıkmaktadır. Tükettiğimiz birçok şeyin, örneğin sürdürdüğümüz arabalardan tutalım da su kaplarına kadar estetik, güzel ekonomik işleyişte, tüketim taleplerini büyütmede kilit rol oynamaktadır.

Estetik'in bu toplumsal rolünün ortaya çıkmasında, moderniteyle başlayan felsefi, kültürel, toplumsal kırılmalar ve dönüşümler etkili olmuştur. Bu yönüyle estetik Hünler'in ifade ettiği gibi, moderniteyle, aydınlanmayla doğmuştur. Kökensel olarak Antik Yunan'a gitse de, daha öncesinde estetik ile karşılaşsak da aralarında çok önemli farklar vardır. Modern estetik söz konusu olduğunda ortaya çıktığı yeni kültür içinde çok başat bir yere sahip olmuştur. Özellikle entelektüel düzeyde karşılaşılan kargaşayı yani modern öncesi dönemde mevcut olan kavramsal şemanın terkedilmesiyle doğan boşluğu ortadan kaldırmaya çalışmıştır. Modern estetiğin belki de en etkili öncülerinden olan Baumgarten'in çabası budur. O her şeyin bağlamlarından uzak, boşlukta dolaşmaya başladığı bir dönemde, özellikle duyu alan içerisinde kalacak ve onu düzenleyecek bir şekilde, sanatın dilini yeniden inşa etmeye girişmiştir. Estetik, bu döneme özgü felsefede var olan gerilimi taşımakta, bilincin parçalanmışlığını aşma yolları bulmaya çalışmaktadır. Bu yolda, tarihsel anlayış ise geçmişi tamamen terk ederek, akla ve bilimselliği dayanan umutlarla "gelecek" üzerinde durmaktadır. Bizler her alanda gelecek için tasarladığımız fikirler, yaşamlar için hareket etmekteyiz. Modern felsefenin bütünü dolayısıyla estetiği de yönlendiren bu tarih anlayışı, modernite sonrası yani post-modern ile birlikte değişmiştir. Postmodern anlayış, bilinç modern bilincin gelecek tasarılarına, umutlarına saldırmış, yerine mutlak bir "şimdi"yi koymaya çalışmıştır. Başarıyla sonuçlanan bu girişim ile aydınlanmanın yani modernin insan, tarih, estetik, sanat anlayışı değişmiş, dönüşmüştür. Modernin premodern döneme olan saldırısı gibi, postmodernin de moderne saldırısı sonucu gerçekleşen bu dönüşümde, dikkat etmemiz gereken konu, modern ve postmodern arasındaki ortaklıklardır. Çünkü her ikisi için de hep "yeni" isteği ön plandadır. Bu durum yaşamımızın her alanı dolayısıyla estetik için de geçerli olmuştur. Otonom, bağımsız olacak şekilde ilerleyen estetik, kendi kabullerini "yeni" yollarla dönüştürdüğünden ve yığılından ötürü, estetik

otonomisini kaybetmiřtir. Bu otonomi kaybının bugn iin en byk etkisi, estetiĐin tketimle olan sıklı iliřkisi olmuřtur. Ancak estetik bu iliřki ierisinde, řařırtıcı bir boyut kazanarak, tketim nesnesine indirgeyemeyeceĐimiz bir beĐeni duygusu geliřtirebilmiřtir. Sanatsal duyarlıĐı olsun ya da olmasın, insanı kendine eken bir “gzel” duygusu oluřturabilmiřtir. OrneĐin arabanın, evin, giydiĐimiz ayakkabıya kadar kimi řeylerin tasarımı hepimizin tercihlerini belirlemeye bařlayabilmiřtir. Byle bir radikal dnřm, postmoderne zg karakteristik zelliklerle beslenmiř ve gerekleřmiřtir. Bu kltrde grecelilik dzeyine varan bir yaklařım n plandadır. Felsefi olarak znenin ve tarihin inřa edildiĐinin, eklektik yapıların, pastiřin, ironinin, otonomi karřısında baĐımlılıĐın, kk anlatuların, dil oyunlarının nemsendiĐini grmekteyiz. Estetik de bu deĐerlere uygun bir yapıda geliřimini srdrmekte, her řeyin “gzel” ile iliřki ierisinde, estetik bir boyutta ele alınmasına imkan vermektedir. Tketim iliřkileri ierisinde her řeyin arasallařmasına baĐlı olarak bu deĐiřimin bireyin ve toplumun iyi yařamına ne bakımdan katkı saĐladıĐı tartıřmalıdır. Tm bu aıklamalar baĐlamında bu alıřmamızda amacımız, Hakkı Hnler’in rehberliĐinde, estetiĐin tarihsel dnřmleri zerinde durarak, bugn iin estetiĐin ve sanatın arasallıktan uzak “zsel” bir ynde zenginleřebilme imkanına dair dřnmektir.