

Özet:

Mimarlıkta bilimde olduğu gibi bir "gelişme" den bahsedebilir miyiz? Bilginin artması ya da bilişsel ve mantıksal gelişmenin mimarlığın sanatsal değeri arasında bir paralellik kurulabilir mi? Geleneksel mimarî bir yapıt son dönem teknolojik yapılardan sanatsal anlamda daha az mı değerlidir? Mimarlığın bilimsel (epistemolojik) niteliği onun değişen anlayışlarla yeniden ve yeniden yorumlanabilmesini ve farklı düzeyde anlayışlarla kavranmasına yardım eder. Yalnız, mimarlıktaki bu sürekli değişimi bilimsel nitelikteki gelişmelerle aynılaştıramayız. Gablik gibi bazı sanat eleştirmenlerinin pragmatik yaklaşımlarının (mantıksal algılama ile sanatsal değer arasında doğru orantılı bir ilişki olduğunu düşünmek) aksine Vico bir eserdeki sanatsal değerinin sanatçının öncelikle "şiişsel bilge" liğinin ürünü olduğunu ve bu alandaki değişimlerin "sanat ağacı" metaforunda belirttiği gibi bir "gelişim" olarak değil daha çok bir "dönüşüm" (transformasyon) olarak algılanması gerekliliğini savunur.

Summary:

Has art or architecture been moving forward like pure and applied sciences? Does the growth of knowledge and the change in the mental cognitive processing of man directly increase the "quality" and "value" of art works? The accumulation of knowledge in different fields, technological developments and their reflections in architectural production are usually considered signs of development or "progress". However, the "art value" in art and architectural works can not be evaluated with technical and theoretical knowledge alone. After a brief critical analysis of the idea of "progress" from different perspectives, the paper gives an emphasis to the understanding of the idea of "transformation" which particularly relates to Giambattista Vico's theory of "poetic wisdom" in art and architecture.

Anahtar Kelimeler:

Gelişme, Şiişsel Bilgelik, Dönüşüm

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Can we talk about progress in art and architecture

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Has art or architecture been moving forward like pure and applied sciences? Does the growth of knowledge and the change in the mental cognitive processing of man directly increase the "quality" and "value" of art works? Can we accept the change from iconic modes of representation to formal logical systems of abstract relations in art as a sign of "progress"? Does vernacular architecture have less value than that of high-tech buildings?

These are some of the possible questions which implicitly undergo in art and architectural critical writings where art works are evaluated according to pre-established images and values belonging to past.

The accumulation of knowledge in different fields, technological developments and their reflections in architectural production are usually considered signs of development or "progress". However, the 'art value' in art and architectural works can not be evaluated with technical and theoretical knowledge alone. It is obvious that the development of epistemological (theoretical consciousness) and technical (scientific conceptions) as well as

moral-practical knowledge (ethical awareness) play equally significant roles in every new attitude or change in art and architecture. There seems to be always two kinds of arguments in the mind of an artist concerning the relationship between "knowledge" and "art" as a critical issue in "progress" in art. First, if we perceive art and architecture as a form of culture which is essentially epistemological, why we can not mention the "progress" in art and architecture which is, as a form of culture, epistemological too? (1) The idea of 'progress', in this context, is related to the developing nature of knowledge and it has a historical significance in the continuous re-constructions of cultural works in different times and places. However, in the second case, beyond 'particular' realizations of art in different times and places, there is the idea of 'autonomy of art' which is 'universal' and significant in the appreciation of the value of art. The dialectical relationship between the ideas of 'universality' and 'particularity' in understanding works of art requires further scrutiny in order to clarify the issue of 'progress' in this field.

The idea of “progress”

There is no doubt that what we understand from the very notion of “progress” is very important before adapting it to the issues of “development”, “change” or “evolution” in art and architecture. In general, the idea of “progress” is associated with the intellectual development of human kind as well as the developments that are presented in the various products of people. According to Piaget's developmental psychology, men progress in parallel to the increase in their intellectual abilities (Piaget 1970). Although Piaget's empirical investigation mainly dwells on the cognitive development of children, he attempts to equalize cognitive development of children with the mental development of mankind. However, Piaget's theories are currently subject to criticisms (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978;239) and his equation raises critical questions in the minds of scientists as well as artists concerning the nature of the intellectual capabilities of man in the establishment of all kinds of knowledge which can be either scientific or human.

According to Thomas Kuhn's theory of paradigms on the other hand, “progress” in science occurs when there is a shift in paradigms (1962). Although however, the shifts in paradigms do not necessarily mean that all changes must be perceived in the sense of “more truth”. Kuhn's remark reminds us that it is difficult to talk about “absolute progress”, even in science.

The idea of “progress” in general has recently been a critical subject in the evaluation of “the Enlightenment Project”; not only in experimental sciences but also in medicine, economics, politics, anthropology and philosophy. Criticism of the idea of “enlightenment” has been one

of the central arguments in the critical theories of Frankfurt School (for example in the critical writings of Horkheimer, Adorno, Habermas, Benjamin) which have been directed mainly to the criticism of positivism in social science. This idea has also been challenged as being a modern cult of perception and has been criticised as a “metanarrative of collective mentality” (Marx and Mazlish, 1998;205). A central question in this critical argument is: has “humanity” really developed or is it the “human's power” that has steadily increased? Worldwide human deconstructive attitudes (Hiroshima and the Holocaust etc...) reinforce the scepticism and plausibility of the idea that “progress” is inevitable. In cultural anthropology, the intellectual development of the humanbeing is analysed referring to the idea of Europe and the idea of civilisation. However, the so-called “civilised man” and his ambition to get the power of control over the people, brings many questions to mind. Stocking (1998), after having summarized the progressive attitudes of man, from primitive to civilised one, recalls Rousseau's idea of the “human inequality” and underlines the “dark side of progress” in the nineteenth century, in order to explain historical misunderstandings in the conception of the idea of progress (1998). Moreover for him, the missing argument of “ecological concern” in the idea of progress in modern times is the source of shortcomings (1998, 65-81). The idea of “progress” as an exultant awareness of humanity's rapidly expanding power over “nature” (Marx and Mazlish, 1998; 202) has implicitly become influential in various attitudes and ideologies including art and architecture. The idea of power can be realised by means of the power of “knowledge” acting as a dominant ideology in the production of all cultural works, including art and architecture.

“Progress” in art

The idea of progress in art has been a subject of interest for several art critics. Among these, Gablik refers to Piaget and Kuhn and tries to explain the idea of “progress” in art as a kind of “evolution” from a simple mode of representation to a more complex one (1977, 42-45). Gablik believes that the change in styles in art, is related to the dynamics and structure of mental processes which evolve from primitive to logical thinking (Gablik, 1977; 10). In order to support her argument, she divides the history of art into three megaperiods: a) Ancient, b) Medieval and c) Renaissance and Modern. The critic gives examples of artworks from these periods which are, for her, produced either as a product of pure imagination, formal logic or abstract systems. For example, according to Gablik, the development of logical drawing techniques using perspectives is a reflection of progress not only in skill but also in intellectual perceptions of man as well as in art value (Gablik, 1977; 66-80). She makes an analogy between man's intellectual development and the progressive changes in art and claims that “What Piaget's theory helps us to understand is how artists finally did succeed in passing from simple intuitive spatial continuity to the conceptual or operational continuity of geometrical perspective, there is 'progress' in art, in this sense at least, that it reflects a progressive development in the cognitive processes and in the logico-mathematical structures of intelligence” (Gablik, 1977; 35,38)

Interestingly enough, Gablik (1991) in her later book “The Reenhancement of Art”, becomes highly critical about the modern social and cultural developments and their negative impacts on art. Similarly on the other hand, Doss in his critical analysis of Benton and Pollock's paintings, tries to

explain the style of paintings that have changed from “figurative narrative” expressions to a gestural art of “abstractions” in relation to the social, cultural and ideological changes in the world (1991; 3). Implicitly in his argument, Doss interprets the idea of “progress” in art related to the formalist development of styles parallel to the knowledge established through technical and ideological development of modernity.

However Herbert Read, art historian and critic, does not approach the problem of “progress” in art so hastily. In his book “Icon and Idea”, he tries to avoid using the term progress as “evolution” and claims that “one can say that there has been no progress that is specifically aesthetic between the art of the Stone Age and the art of today and he adds “by art we mean the skill or ability required to carry out the artist's intention, ... and ... in another sense art does evolve: aesthetic awareness has progressively increased in scope and depth” (Read, 1955;19). For Read, to compare the prehistoric artist with the modern child would not be sensible even though there are some striking resemblances between them (Read,1955; 23). By saying so, unlike Gablik's intention, Read gives emphases to the autonomous and universal nature of art independent of contextual factors such as, psychological and historical facts concerning human establishments in the cultural world.

Although, Popper's critical theory of culture (Popper,1979) reminds us that the act of “creativity”, in both science and art as the source of inspiration for the idea of “progress”, conflates in the mental world of man, the perception of the idea of “progress” in stricto sensu may cause some misunderstandings in these fields (2).

¹Ernst Cassirer emphasised the epistemological status of culture in the following studies. Cassirer, Ernst., 'Critical Idealism as Philosophy of Culture', *Symbol, Myth and Culture: Essays and Lectures of Ernst Cassirer 1935-1965*, ed. by Donald, P., Verene, Yale University Press, 1979. pp. 64-95. Cassirer, Ernst., *The Philosophy of Symbolic Forms: vol. I: Language, vol. II: Mythical Thought, vol. III: Phenomenology of Knowledge*, Yale University Press, 1955.

²Karl Popper addresses with this matter in many of his works including his 'Objective Knowledge: An Evolutionary Approach, Clarendon Press, 1979, and 'The Poverty of Historicism', Ark Paperbacks, 1985 (1957).

It is difficult to claim that an intellectually and cognitively more developed person is always better than others in resolving logical problems or issues of justice, better than others as a humanbeing;⁽³⁾ and, also better than others in artistic interpretation. Cognitive development, ethical development and aesthetic awareness are three different important dimensions in the mental and intellectual world of humanbeings. However, have these ethical, aesthetic and logical dimensions of mental perceptions been directly related to the cognitive development of the human mind in a hierarchical order?

Giambattista Vico and the idea of "poetic wisdom"

Giambattista Vico's book entitled "New Science" (Vico, 1740) and his ideas of "poetic wisdom" can bring clarity to the above questions not by giving a short-cut answer of "yes" or "no", but by disclosing the nature of art and the role of "poetic wisdom" in the development of mental process and the "multiparadigmatic becoming process" of art in the cultural world. Vico's concept of "common mental language" or "mental dictionary" is associated to the idea of "common sense" of mankind as "the presence of judgement without reflection that is shared by an entire class, a people, a nation, or the human race" (Verene, 1987; 60). The thought-form of common sense (epistemological and communally social) which is accessible by all people as not being a product of reflection but an art of memory or recollection is called "poetic wisdom" by Vico (Verene, 1978; 60). Verene also points out in his recent study that the role of "poetic wisdom" in the mutiparadigmatic becoming process of art is the source of objective self-knowledge as a form of civil wisdom (Verene, 1997) (4).

Vico's theory of three ages of human development, namely those of 'gods', 'heroes', and 'men' have often been used to conceptualize the mental development of mankind as independent of the psychological and historical facts in the cultural world. In this theory, the emphasis is often on the distinction between the three ages of human mental development, in which human perception of the world is assumed to move gradually from the more divine to the human one⁽⁵⁾. Implicitly in this argument, there lies an idea of "progress" of human mind which reflects a change from a more imaginary and spiritual perception of the world to the more cognitive and intellectual understanding. At first glance, it appears that creative imaginative act of art has been shifted from the imaginary mythical level to the conceptual intellectual level of presentation, particularly because of Vico's emphasis on the division of the ages of gods, heroes, and men and his examples from history of mankind and civilizations.

However, we must pay attention to Vico's idea of "simultaneity" or "concurrence" of all the stages of human mental development as one of the critical arguments in "New Science" or what is also called "Human Science". Vico states that gods, heroes and men as well as their languages started at the same time (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 241). It must be underlined as Giorgio Tagliacozzo and Margarita Fankel state in their study, that Vico's affirmation of the actual "simultaneity" of various stages in the three ages of mankind has often been overlooked and Vico's theory of three ages and his view of development of mankind's history as "diacronic" and "synchronic" at the same time are predominant (Tagliacozzo and Frankel 1978, 241).

³ This issue is noted in the Tagliacozzo and Frankel (1978; 240) study where they support Piaget and Kohlberg's hypothesis.

⁴ In order to avoid misunderstanding concerning the idea of reflection, referring to Verene we can note that 'the experience of reflection as an optical property is a universal phenomenon, but as a fundamental term applied to the mind's activity it is uniquely modern' (Verene, 1997; xvii) and 'Reflection presupposes recollection because recollection is required to have the thing before mind reality is tied to memory'(212)

⁵ One of the reasons why for perceiving the distinctive development of age is because of Vico's writing style.

As Tagliacozzo and Frankel quoted from Vico "We must trace the beginnings of poetic wisdom to a crude metaphysics. From this, as from a trunk, there branch out from one limb logic, morals, economics, and politics, all poetic; and from another, physics, the mother of cosmography and astronomy, the latter of which gives their certainty to its two daughters, chronology and geography - all likewise poetic" (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 242).

Tagliacozzo and Frankel evaluate Vico's metaphoric expression of 'Tree of Poetic Wisdom' as a sketch of the diachronic-synchronic conception of human knowledge and his conception of human civilization. They try to interpret the analogical representation of the tree and summarise that "...a-the three main branches representing respectively the three ages of mankind would start from the trunk at the same level, which would indicate that, as Vico said, "gods, heroes and men began at the same time" although at any given time, the characteristics of one age would predominate over those of the others; b-the three branches would all reach the same upper level through their multiple ramifications (*This would indicate that the "sciences", with their movements and trends represented by the ramifications, once born, would survive indefinitely through highs and lows of predominance and in a variety of combinations*),.....'(Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 242-243)

Referring to Vico's idea of poetic wisdom, Cassirer, in his book "Philosophy of Symbolic Forms" (Cassirer, 1955) replaced Vico's "divine", "poetic", "human" wisdom with five "symbolic forms" which are called "magic", "myth", "religion", "art", and "science". For Cassirer, it is the symbolic forms of the "poetic wisdom"

that are interpreted and re-interpreted as the multiple ramifications of art. Cassirer, like Read, but unlike Gablik, avoids interpreting the ramifications in art as a sign of "progress" and draws attention to the untime and autonomous nature of art. For him, through the perceptual process of becoming that gives rise to new art movements and works, the essential permanence and recurrence of all trends become possible (Tagliacozzo and Frankel 1978, 244).

Gillo Dorfles, a follower of Vico, in his various writings confirms the diachronic and synchronic nature of the "tree of knowledge" hence "tree of art". (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 247). Dorfles states that, 'it has been noticed more than once that-within one and the same historical period- there is the simultaneous presence of works of art belonging to different stylistic areas or even different historical periods and yet cooperating among them (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 247). Furthermore, for him, "works of past operated jointly with present works" (1978, 247).

Moreover, Dorfles emphasises the diachronic-synchronic character of art and claims that "beside a vitality and efficacy contemporary with its conception and realization, also a "posthumous", trans-epochal efficacy which reverberates in subsequent periods even far removed from those of its production. The work of art, though inscribed within a historical sphere which should not be disregarded, belongs first of all and by its own essence to 'mythic sphere' and as such, it often eludes the limits and parameters of an historical awareness" (Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 247).

While saying so, he emphasises his historical thesis and the universal nature of art which lends itself always in different particular stylistic formations and modifications. Dorfles's conception of art as a creation unconnected with 'historical time and space' is undoubtedly a patent Vichean thesis (*Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 248*).

As far as the metaphor of the "tree of art" is concerned, it is the universal nature of poetic wisdom of human mind and its particular modifications that create history and civilisations in different time and places and reveal the diachronic-synchronic realisation of art as well as architecture. Instead, advocating the changes in art as "progress" it can be claimed that art undergoes a continuous dynamic process generated by what Vico calls the "modifications" of the poetic wisdom of human mind which are the moving force behind the process of creation which are something comparable to the translocation of sap inside a tree (*Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 249*).

Relating metaphor of "tree" to human creative thought "some branch or subbranch may suddenly undergo an exceptional growth and in combination with other elements, become temporarily dominant within a certain area or, conversely, it may fall into a state of lethargy (and consequently, have a negligible influence on the on-going enterprise of art making) (*Tagliacozzo and Frankel, 1978; 249*). A new form in that sense can not be perceived as better or "more mature" or "advanced" which might imply "progress". Instead, "new" can be perceived as a new combination of the creative activity of poetic wisdom and the cultural nurturing of the human mind ●

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