

AESTHETICS AND POLITICS: CRITICISM IN ART

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Abstract

This thesis intends to investigate the relationship between art and politics in contemporary practices from a historical perspective. In this historical analysis, it considers the kind of relationship modern art has established with the avant-garde as well as the reasons motivating this relationship and the way it has collapsed. It then examines the points of differentiation in the contemporary artistic practices within the framework of the concept of biennial. This research attempts to reveal how the constituents of the art field such as the artist, the artwork and concepts have been formed and transformed since modern art by taking the International Istanbul Biennial as an example.

The thesis specifically follows a Foucaultian nominalist approach and considers art as a field of knowledge which is constituted under the characteristics of certain discourses. Accordingly, it focuses on the historical transformation of the art field in terms of discontinuities through an “archaeological analysis”. Within the transition from modern art to contemporary art, the end of master narratives based on the end of art thesis by Hegel provides the key point to the claim that the work of art does not necessarily depend on master narratives but exists in its singularity. Finally, the thesis seeks an alternative conception of the political in contemporary practices on the basis of the notion of “community”.

Özet

Bu tez tarihsel bir perspektifle güncel pratiklerde sanat ve politika arasındaki ilişkiyi araştırmayı amaçlamaktadır. Bu tarihsel analizde, modern sanatın avangardla nasıl bir ilişki kurduğu ele alınırken, aynı zamanda bu ilişkinin arkasındaki dinamikler ve başarısızlığının nedenleri tartışılmaktadır. Araştırma daha sonra bienal kavramı çerçevesinde güncel sanat pratiklerindeki farklılaşma noktalarını incelemektedir. Bu araştırma Uluslararası İstanbul Bienali’ni bir örnek olarak alarak sanatçı, sanat yapıtı ve kavramlar gibi sanatın alanının bileşenlerinin modern sanattan bu yana nasıl oluştuğunu ve dönüştüğünü tartışmaktadır.

Bu tez spesifik olarak Foucaultcu nominalist bir yaklaşımı takip ederken, sanatı belli söylemler bağlamında oluşan bir bilgi alanı olarak ele almaktadır. Böylece, süreksizlikler açısından sanat alanının tarihsel dönüşümüne odaklanırken, bunu “arkeolojik” bir analiz üzerinde ele almaktadır. Modern sanattan güncel sanata geçişte Hegel’in sanatın sonu tezinden hareketle büyük anlatıların sonu ve sanat yapıtının büyük anlatılara bağlı kalma zorunluluğu olmadan kendi tekilliği içinde var olabileceği savı çıkış noktasını oluşturmaktadır. Son olarak, bu tez “cemaat” fikri temelinde güncel pratiklerde politik olanın alternatif bir kavramsallaştırmasını tartışmaktadır.

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1. Introduction

In the last two hundred years at least, the relationship between art and politics has taken place in numerous theoretical debates as well as artistic practices. Why has this relationship been intensified and has been increasingly a subject of debate since then? Although art and politics have existed as two separate realm since Antiquity, it had not been emerged in the artistic practices as such anterior to modernity. Therefore, I intend to investigate this relationship throughout my thesis with a historical background. In this investigation my problematization will be that art has no essence because it is seen that it changes throughout history, therefore what kind of relationship can be conceived between art and politics today, especially after the failure of avant-garde art. Furthermore, I will question the relationship between art and politics in present with the example of a biennial, specifically International Istanbul Biennial. In associating art to politics, or vice versa, I will follow a different path rather than conceiving the artwork as being completed and charged with a political mission. However, I must admit from the beginning that there is no precise criteria to establish an appropriate correlation between art and politics.

Before starting the historical investigation, the *corpus* of art will be a question for me. I will argue that there is no such thing as Art. Art with a capital A has no existence. When we look at the field of art, we find various objects called works of art in art history. Besides the variety of objects called works of art, there also different theories on art. Where do these differentiations derive from? I will relate such differentiations in art history to the historicity of conception of art. While an object is called an artwork, it may not be called so under different historical conditions. If the classification of works of art is subject to change, one cannot claim a corpus because this universe is always in motion. Moreover, any work of art taken into consideration represents a mere example. An example, by definition, never gives the generic. Thus, what gains importance is the formation of historical conditions in order to understand what is called a work of art in the general system of art. Consequently, my investigation will revolve around the formation of historical conditions. Historicity can be described in the widest sense as the emergence of a situation under certain conditions at a certain time. Therefore, time and space appear as the two dimensions of historicity. I will approach art with a historical and nominalist view throughout my thesis.

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Later, I will look into the categorization of art in history after the question of whether art has a *corpus* and trace it back to Antiquity. I will start with considering two different classifications in Antiquity which are “tekhnè” and “ars”. They appear as the first classifications of art although these two terms do not have the same meaning exactly. The important point is that the modern word “art”, belonged to the realm of “tekhnè” in ancient Greek language and to the Roman “ars”. However, these terms do not correspond what is called “fine arts” today. They had a broader meaning than what the modern art system distinguished as “art” and “craft”. They basically represented a human production that does not exist in nature and referred to a wide range of human skills. Thus, “tekhnè” and “ars” referred less to a class of objects than to the human ability to make and perform in this old system of art. Furthermore, the category of art in Antiquity was referred as the “liberal arts” (*artes liberales*).

To go on roughly, I will consider the classification of art in the Medieval age that the category of “liberal arts” was extended and divided into two main groups. While the one of the groupings was called the “Trivium” and consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, the other was named the “Quadrivium” and included mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy. Thus, the “Trivium” and “Quadrivium” together constituted the seven “liberal arts” of the Medieval Age. In addition to the seven “liberal arts”, there emerged the category of “mechanical arts” in the Medieval Age. According to the classification of Hugh of St. Victor, It consisted of weaving, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, and theatics. It was a medieval concept of ordered practices or skills and juxtaposed to the traditional seven liberal arts which were also called "servile" and "vulgar". Hugh made the mechanical arts an equal partner with the theoretical arts (philosophy, physics) and practical arts (politics, ethics). However, the important point is that in this classification, the subject in the modern sense of it had not appeared yet. The classification of “mechanical arts” modified the old system that remained from Antiquity and extended it with a new category.

The reason I will get into such a historical categorization is to show that painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and music were not treated as if they belonged to a single and distinct category as referred today under the category of fine arts, nor it had the same norms. It is a formation that is not more than two hundred years old. In other words, the system of “fine arts” as used and referred today is a product of recent history. It emerged in the modern episteme that also made the relationship between art and politics possible. Therefore, it will be

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comprehensive for my analysis to briefly argue, first of all, the formation of modern system of art with its constituents such as the subject and the object within the frame of modern episteme as well as the peculiar conditions of modern episteme.

The advent of fine arts required three things needed to come together in order to spread through strategies and gain wide acceptance: a limited *set* of arts, a commonly accepted *term* to easily identify the set, and some generally agreed upon *principle(s)* or criteria for distinguishing that set from all others (Shiner, 2001: 80). Therefore, the new grouping of fine arts needed some new principles to be able to emerge as a discipline. I will go over a combination of four principles in question. Two of these principles are “genius” and “imagination” and the other two are “pleasure” versus “utility” and “taste.” While the former group is about the production of works of fine arts, the latter shapes the aims and mode of reception of the fine arts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with genius and imagination was usually used to distinguish fine arts from the mechanical arts or crafts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with taste was used to distinguish fine arts from the sciences and from other liberal arts such as grammar and logic.

After this point, I will turn Michel Foucault’s archaeological analysis and consider the system of art as “event”. I will analyze emergence of new system of art, namely fine arts, in terms of both discursive and non-discursive formations. In this analysis, I will approach the formation of fine arts in four levels which are respectively, the formation of objects, the formation of subjective positions, the formation of concepts and the formation of strategic choices. According to Foucault, those correspond to the four domains in which the enunciative function operates. Furthermore, I will consider the formation of modern art system from the point of discontinuities rather than continuities on the contrary of art history. In order to conceptualize the idea of discontinuity, I will follow Foucault’s analysis of the epistemic break. Although his analysis focuses on the specific field of epistemology, I believe it remains relevant when considered and transposed to the field of art, since it is also a matter of knowledge and narrative at issue. The former categorizations of art system are, therefore, important in arguing the epistemic break led by modernity in order to show differentiations of system of fine arts. Consequently, I will critically consider the epistemic formations and epistemic breaks of modernity in the domain of art. In doing so, I will focus on the work of art in terms of

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“statement” as the primary unit of discourse by distinguishing it from language and mere performance.

First of all, I will consider the formation of the subject in the system of fine arts. Certain characteristics were attributed to the modern artist such as genius and imagination in this epistemic formation. Art history has been written and narrated by the decisions of conscious subjects as if they intended to do so. On the contrary, I will argue that an ‘author’ is not identical with the subject of the statement and the relation of production that he has with the formulation is not superposable to the relation that brings together the enunciating subject and what he states. Hence, I will approach the subject in a field of art within the set of relations in which the artist emerges as the sovereign subject. Consequently, the description of a formulation through “statements” will not derive from analysing the relations between the author and what he says, but rather in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it. In this matter, I will examine the set of relations in which the modern artist was born.

The formation of objects in the fine arts will constitute the second level of my analysis. I will look into the origin of the conception of artwork back in the history. This does not mean that I search in history as if I intend to find the first artwork made in history. But I rather critically argue that the definition as well as the categorization of works of art change within time. While something is called an artwork, its status is always subject to change. Any artwork appears in its historicity. The transfiguration of the commonplace appears to be crucial in the transformation of an object into a work of art. It is a good example in terms of showing explicitly and implicitly that the status is gained in a set of relations. Therefore, it is about the relations in which object is situated rather than an immanent quality of the object. In fact, It is a status given by the present “episteme.” From this point, I will lead to the “surfaces of emergence” in order to understand the status of artwork. I intend to argue the individual differences according to which the degrees of rationalization, conceptual codes, and types of theory will be accorded the status of artwork, may emerge, and then be designated and analysed (Foucault, 1972: 41). The “surfaces of emergence” are not the same for different societies, at different periods, and in different forms of discourse. For instance, the museum occupied a pivotal role in transforming the objects into works of art. Or, as I will consider later, biennials can be taken as a powerful example to this in the present.

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Nevertheless, “enunciative analysis”, as described by Foucault, requires more than relating objects to the “surfaces of emergence” in field of exteriority. Concepts appear as another influential level in this analysis. Certain characteristics were ascribed both to subject and to object in modern episteme. This new formation was also established and sustained by the concepts. In the field of aesthetics, we see the conceptualization of art, its reception as well as its production. This conceptualization approximately begins in the mid of eighteenth century with Baumgarthen and continues with the German tradition led by I. Kant and German Romantics. Concepts such as taste, genius and pleasure played an important role in the formation fine arts. As a result, the new system of art gained validity with the help of various theories and spread through the strategies emerged from the relations among institutions, subjects, object and concepts in different levels. However, it is important to emphasize that they all belong to the same “episteme”.

Undoubtly, there has been a historical shift that occurred in the art paradigm since the 20th century; a shift that can be observed through the status, changes of the institutional structures of the art world such as galleries, museums and art schools as well as biennials. Therefore, they provide a basis that enables us to trace the institutional character of art which is one of the major characteristics of art today, as it will be dealt with in this study. For instance one can realize the institutional value more explicitly in addressing the issue of what makes M. Duchamp’s *readymades* artworks and, on the other hand, why a *Brillo Box* that is available in the supermarkets is not sold as an artwork. However, this should not be understood as if I will follow an institutional theory of art. The issue has gained an importance especially since Duchamp’s *readymades* brought the definition of art into question and made an “enunciative analysis” in the field of art necessary. Thus, one of the questions with which this thesis will be dealing is the way an object acquires the status of art. This question is more likely to find an answer in a set of relations in which an artwork emerges in the field of exteriority. A social and an institutional approval of an art object is crucial to be accepted as an artwork but is that sufficient? Can anything be turned into an artwork once it enters through the doors of a museum or any other institution which functions as a “surface of emergence”, by considering the fact that Duchamp couldn’t achieve this a century ago? I would like to claim there is a supplementary meaning since A. Warhol’s *Brilloboxes* wouldn’t carry the same meaning and importance for art history if they were set forth by someone who was not familiar with the artworld. Of course, this doesn’t mean that someone unfamiliar with the artworld cannot create

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an artwork; I would rather want to emphasize the fact that the artistic position, just like the status of artwork, requires a set of relations in order to emerge.

When the modern system of art was established, autonomy of art appeared to be a question. That is why I said in the beginning the relationship between art and politics has taken place in numerous theoretical debates as well as in artistic practices. Before the modern system of art was established, art existed as a part of social life and was not conceived as autonomous; not even in theoretical level. It was an integral part of society when its function was honoring the dead, serving the Church, ornating bourgeois interiors, placating taste. However, artists could act (relatively) freely once they were liberated economically from these realms with the changing social structure. This should not be seen only as the relative economic independence but also the transformation of entire field in parallel to the society.

Once I will bring the autonomy of art into question, I will relate the condition of art to the modernity. In this attempt, two notions created by and in modernity will be substantially important in my argument. Those notions will be “development” and “evolution”. I will consider them in relation to the formation of the “avant-garde”. While these two notions were influential in politics, they also guided the artists both to acting in the field of art progressively and to acting in society progressively for a better life. At the end, the progressive understanding went hand to hand in politics as well as in art.

Firstly, I will problematize the relationship between art and politics in terms of artistic avant-garde in reference to the theory of Thierry De Duve and analyze his following formulation: Is artistic activity able to maintain its critical function when it is severed from an emancipation project? I will argue that the notion of avant-garde art was carried by history as long as the Enlightenment was believed to be the emancipation of humanity. I will argue the failure of of avant-garde art in relation to the demise of the Enlightenment and will define the first side of the artistic avant-garde in terms of its engagement in politics. I will further argue that the avant-garde art established a transitive link between art and politics in this engagement. This sort of connection between the two realms gave the avant-garde art its critical role by exerting critical vigilance over the realm of politics. On the contrary, I will consider a reflexive and analogical relationship in art rather than a transitive and ideological one. I will argue the reflexive relationship around Kant’s notion “sensus communis.” Afterwards, I will turn to a different critical aspect in the work of art which has its roots in Kant’s aesthetic theory. It is

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called in Kant's terminology "the quickening of imagination and understanding in their free play". That is to say the artwork evokes thoughts that cannot be expressed with concepts determined by words.

After this point, I will have stated my view concerning the historical formation of the modern category of fine arts and the relationship it established with politics. This political role is carried by the artistic avant-garde. First, I will define the problem in terms of artists as vanguards and pionners and then in terms of work of art as a political tool which eventually leads to ideological content. Following my problematization, I will turn to the present situation of art after arguing the historical relationship between art and politics. However, I do not intend to sum up today's state of art nor to represent certain tendencies in contemporary practices.

In the fourth section, I will turn to the debate of the end of art and art history through A. Danto and H. Belting who both refer to G. W. F. Hegel in their theories. Hegel's thesis of End-of-Art concerns our relationship to art. Its questions go together with the one of the autonomy of art. Art has been an integral part of society before its (relative) autonomy. Hegel goes over this transition and outlines three different stages in the history of art which are namely symbolic, classical and romantic. Each period involves a different kind of relationship between vehicle of art and its meaning. Once it stops being such a part of society, it is not obliged to correspond to any particular form. Therefore, the End-of-Art Thesis proclaims that neither artists nor artworks should be depending on a master narrative, so that any form of art can be legitimate anymore. While this approach negates manifestos, it also deconstructs the art history as a sort of narrative. Once art is freed from such structural obligations, it became possible to think about what art is and should be. In fact, that has been the precondition of entire tradition of modern art and avantgarde art.

While this artistic rupture happened during the 20th century as a breaking from –in the same sense- the way artworks were defined and conceived until then, it also appears as a differentiation from the aesthetic theory that Western philosophy had foreseen. Thus, It was necessary for philosophy to reconsider art and aesthetics. This is one of the other reasons why I have chosen to problematize this specific topic in my thesis. Aesthetics gains a new meaning with the transformation of work of art due to the rupture that occurred during the 20th century. This transformation has caused a two-sided transformation related to the way an artwork produced and to the way it was perceived as the modern art theory had conceptualized it, since

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Kant and Hegel. I will therefore refer in my study to the theories of Kant and Hegel in order to evaluate the notion of art though sometimes it will be necessary to go back earlier in history and in the history of philosophy in order to better comprehend the notion of art in a more general perspective. But these references won't be widely included in my arguments since my subject is not the modern aesthetic theory. Nevertheless, I would like to briefly point out that these figures are paradigmatic cases in the study as well as in the history of aesthetics for they provided two major ways of understanding aesthetics. While Kant defined aesthetics as a theory of subjectivity, perception and judgement, Hegel provided a different perspective by considering aesthetics as a theory of art, history and culture.

In his periodization of art history, Danto defines this era as the one of the "end of art" in the sense that a work of art does not depend on master narratives anymore. It is to say that an artwork does not have to follow certain processes in order to be accepted and conceived as an artwork. Besides accepting it as a feature of this period, when we look back in the history to the categorization artworks, "modern" does not only imply the closest time to the present. In philosophy as well as in art, the term, modern, implies a strategy, style, and subject. If that was only a temporal or chronological concept, we would call the period of Kant and Descartes entirely modern philosophy and the period of E. Manet and P. Cézanne as being entirely modern art. Therefore we should keep in mind that it is us who create the categories by putting certain figures and works together. Just like in the same sense that we cannot consider the term 'modern' as a temporal concept, we can neither define what is "contemporary" as encompassing everything that occurs in the present. This era is the regime in which all forms can coexist although they are still defined by a specific aesthetic experience. However, today's contemporary art is basically the regime of coexistence, as defined by Danto in his thesis of "end of art."

I will arrive at a point where no art is any longer historically mandated as against any other art and nothing is more true as art than anything else, nothing especially more historically false than anything else. The idea of modernity has affirmed that there would be only a single meaning and direction in the history whereas the temporality specific to contemporary art presumes the co-presence of heterogeneous temporalities (Rancière, 2007: 26). The criticism in art is still at stake. I will not further develop my study with the critical function of the work of art after stating that quality and critical function in art cannot be defined except by pointing at

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particular works and by judging them to have quality in part two of section three. However, the role of the artist will still be in question in part one of section four. I would like to emphasize that I don't intend to prescribe the artist such and such role. The leading role of the artist and his/her attributed intellectuality in the avant-garde art will consist the argument in this questioning. Departing from Foucault's comparison between the "universal intellectual" and the "specific intellectual", I will further develop my argument in rejecting the ideology that no one has the legitimate ground to act on the behalf of all. While such a role was represented by "universal intellectuals" in history, similar role was observed with "genius" artists in avantgarde art. To be intellectual, just like being an artist, meant something like being the consciousness and conscious of all. When the artists were exalted to the level of liberators, it failed and intellectuals shared the same fate with them by prescribing themselves a leading position in the process of social transformation. Therefore, the position of intellectuals and that of artists go hand to hand in this sense if it is accepted that no one can act on the behalf of others and forego from the rest of others for whom he is representing. According to Foucault, what must now be taken into account in the intellectual is not the "bearer of universal values." Rather, it should be seen as the person occupying a specific position but whose specificity is linked to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth. To go on over the position of artist, his specific struggle may have critical effects. The artist as well as the intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of the "regime of truth" which is fundamental to the structure and functioning in the society. However, resistance should take place in the "specificity" of the field. In other words, if the artist is to take a critical attitude that should be performed by artistic means. However, I will not argue only the declining position of artist regarding the "universal intellectual" although I will start with it. The important point for me will be the positionings regarding truth and power. In this matter, the reason I will mostly consider the case of the artist is that artist appears as such a figure in history. Therefore, the "specificity" of the position should not be seen peculiar to the artists. It can be extended to the other actors in the field of art such as curators. It should be noted that no any sovereign role can be found in the art system today. Consequently, I will not limit my argument of positionings to a single subject as the artist.

In my last section, I will argue the criticism in art with the example of a biennial, namely the International Istanbul Biennial. It represents a mere example rather than a model for my thesis. I have chosen a biennial, and more specifically this biennial, for several reasons. It will

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help me to distinguish certain characteristics of contemporary art, or call it however, through a different structure. It can be conceived as a “surface of emergence” in present like a museum. However, it differs from the classical notion of museum because it may hold a critical attitude for the system. This does not mean that museums cannot be critical or all the biennials have such a critical dimension. In fact, starting from the early 1980s, a new discipline, named Museum Studies, “shifted the focus from the canonizing model of art-historical adoration of *the painting* to a postmodernist critique of institutions and representatitons...” (Pollock, 2007: 2). However, I have chosen the International Istanbul Biennial and particularly two editions of it which have been held in 2005 and in 2007 in order to argue how criticism can be expressed in art today from a specific point that there is no single and formalized correlation for it.

Admittingly what I will argue is not the ultimate critical expression in contemporary art today. Before coming to this section, I will have considered the role of the artist or the conceptualization of the artist in modern episteme and then I will have claimed that the superior role of the artist is in decay. At least, the relationship between artist and society cannot be as the former’s dominant guidance. Moreover, art’s role in society has changed as well. If I should roughly say, art is one of the weakest fields in the social transformations in terms of its demands and results. There are much more effective fields such as politics in reaching the ends. Therefore, I will avoid myself from arguing the artist’s role further particularly in the structure of the biennial and limit myself with the position curator occupies as the “authority of delimitation.” The reason that I will make such a transition is that it will help to understand the “surfaces of emergence” and emergence of different positions in the field of art. It also shows the critical aspect of contemporary art in terms of discursivity. I will also argue that the curator as well as the artist should use the means of the field in which s/he stands. That’s where the “specificity” of the critical position lies to my point of view.

Afterwards, the locality of the biennial will be my second point. I will use this characteristic of the biennial against the universal conception of art in the modern episteme whose prototype is found in the classical the museum structure. As long as one believed in the idea of universality, it was also thought that the exhibitions in the museum were neutral. However, an exhibition always includes an ideological aspect. Exhibitions entangle the audience in the exhibition space not only physically and intellectually, but also ideologically. The narratives created in the museums through the exhibitions are the best proof. Thus, we must

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always consider the context in which an artwork is presented to audience. It is also the case for biennials as well. The point is to use the space in creating a discourse rather than merely showing the works of art next to each other, a discourse that can be critical. Discursive criticism will be directed towards the “regimes of truth.” I will take the example of the 10th International Istanbul Biennial in this debate when I argue its curatorial statement and exhibition format in terms of the existing “regime of truth.” In doing so, the discourse should not pose a true consciousness or aim to change people’s ideas but rather to present them alternative ways of thinking. This is achieved by means of active participation rather than participation determined with a gaze in the exhibition space. I will develop my argument in this sort of structure in relation to the 9th International Istanbul Biennial. It will emphasize that the success lies in combining both the exhibiting the works of art and organizing parallel events which contribute to the production of knowledge such as conferences or publications. Because, knowledge does not represent art by itself and aesthetics or experience of the artwork is an essential part of art. Art addresses both sense and thought. The work of art in the exhibition space becomes a threshold that leads to the encounters and various experiences. Those experiences deriving from such encounters may not be permanent material but their influence lasts in the sense that they create an alternative way of communication. After here, I will relate such a way of communication to the notion of community based on conception of Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben. The politics of such a community and communication will be beyond that of identity.

2. The Aesthetical Ruptures of the Modern

When we look at the conceptualization of Aesthetics since its first usage by Baumgarten in the 18th century, we can observe that it has been gradually transformed by subsequent philosophers, art historians and artists. The narrative had started with the definition of the concept of beauty that has grounded the tenets of modern aesthetics with Kant. After a certain time, the question of the concept of beauty has been replaced by the one of art itself and the matter has turned out to be what art “is” (its essence). Duchamp’s ready-mades, especially his work *Fountain* (1917) has had a significant role in this shift of aesthetical matter. Further on, after going through many arguments, the need to distinguish good and bad art has been at stake and the crucial question has concerned the distinction of what was “good art” -the instance of pop art and Warhol is significant here. Why do approaches to art vary in the history? Why do people attribute new meanings to art and already existing objects called artworks? Gombrich asserts in the introduction of his book *The Story of Art*:

There really is no such thing as Art. There are only artists. Once these were men who took coloured earth and roughed out the forms of a bison on the wall of a cave; today some buy their paints, and design posters for hoardings; they did and do many other things. There is no harm calling all these activities art as long as we keep in mind that such a word may mean very different things in different times and places, and as long as we realize Art with a capital A has no existence. For Art with a capital A has come to be something of a bogey and a fetish. (Gombrich, 1995: 15)

As Gombrich points it out, there is no static way of production or reception of art. Something may not be called an artwork while it can be named as art under different historical conditions. “Art”, in the sense it is understood today, is a Western invention which is only two hundred years old. Before that, it was preceded by a broader, more utilitarian system of art which lasted more than two thousand years. Indeed, the ancient Greeks had no word for what is called “fine arts” today. The word, “art”, belonged to the realm of the *techne* in ancient Greek language and to the Roman *ars*. On the contrary of the modern distinction, these terms had a broader meaning and did not distinguish “art” from “craft”. They designated a human production of what is not produced by nature (*phusis*) nor exists in nature and referred in that sense to human skills including a wide range of making things such as carpentry, poetry, shoemaking, and sculpture. In this system of art, *techne* and *ars* referred less to a class of objects

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 than to the human ability to make and perform (Shiner, 2001: 19). Therefore, the opposite of art was not craft in that old system but nature and the category of art, in the sense of *techne/ars*, was not treated as if painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and music belonged to a single and distinct category as it is referred today under the category of fine arts. Neither Plato nor Aristotle saw it that way. However, this does not mean there didn't exist categories and subgroups at all, but none of them exactly matches to the modern division of art into fine arts versus craft. The ancient practice, always cited as foreshadowing our idea of fine arts, is the treatment of painting, epic, and tragedy as arts of imitation (*mimesis*). The only general classification of the arts in the ancient world that significantly resembled modern ideas was the late Hellenistic and Roman division of the arts into the liberal and vulgar (or servile) arts. The "vulgar arts" were those that involved physical labour and/or payment, whereas the "liberal" or "free arts" were intellectual and those appropriate to the highborn and educated individuals. Poetry was generally treated as a subdivision of grammar or rhetoric and music was included to the category of liberal arts because of its educational function and its mathematical nature, as expounded by the Pythagorean tradition of the harmony of octave, soul and cosmos. Yet the "music" envisaged as a liberal art was primarily the *science* of music, which explored theories of harmony (Shiner, 2001: 20-22).

Besides having the meaning of *techne/ars*, as stated above, category of art was referred as the "liberal arts" (*artes liberales*). These arts were considered essential in classical antiquity for a free citizen to study. Although Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic were the core of liberal arts, this category was extended and divided into two main groups during the Medieval Age. While the former group was called the *Trivium* and consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, the latter was named the *Quadrivium* and included mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy. Hence, the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* together constituted the seven *liberal arts* of the Medieval Age. I will consider the medieval categorization of art further on (Table 1: Liberal Arts, p.20).

However, during the 18th century, a crucial division in the traditional concept of art has been made and has given birth to a new category of fine arts consisting of poetry, painting, sculpture, architecture, and music as opposed to crafts and popular arts. Moreover, this division has not only caused the idea of art versus craft but also a parallel division between the artist and the craftperson. This has become one of the first steps in the attempt of creating a new subject in the field of art. Fine arts became a matter of inspiration and genius. This categorization also

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had characteristics regarding the relation of the audience to the artwork such as enjoying art for itself in the moments of refined pleasure, whereas the crafts and popular arts require only skill and rules and are meant for mere use or entertainment.

Table 1: Liberal Arts

the <i>Trivium</i>	the <i>Quadrivium</i>
1. Grammar	4. Arithmetic
2. Logic	5. Geometry
3. Rhetoric	6. Music
	7. Astronomy, often called astrology; both modern senses were covered

I don't want to polarize these two systems simply into two categories like modern and pre-modern, yet differences between these two systems are enormous and they imply a long process of transformation. I will try to underline the grouping and the regrouping of art in the history throughout my thesis. In doing so, I aim to briefly consider it step by step following the order of antiquity, medieval and modern art categories. When indicating these categories and groupings, I will follow the theory of Foucault in the historicity of a field in general, and that of art in particular I will also consider how a system is constituted, exists, transforms itself and collapses within time. Therefore, the problematization of this thesis in this section will be that art has no essence because it is seen that it changes in history, and that it is rather "historical".

In the simplest sense, historicity means the emergence of a situation under certain conditions at a certain time. Therefore, time and space appear as two main dimensions of historicity. It doesn't matter whether that is history of art or any other field, breaks in the

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periodizations of history comes with a radical change in form as stated above. Every period sets up its own rules; on the other hand, innovation always implies the collapse of already existing rules and the reorganization of the game. Thus, an artwork that a period accepts as an artwork is always subjected to a re-evaluation and may not be recognized as art later in history. All we know is that there is a system called art and some objects fall under this name. Before starting to analyze how a system is organized and transformed, I want to briefly consider the question whether art has a *corpus*.

How does a system organize and transform itself? One can start the problematization of historicity of art by questioning the corpus. When we look at the currently so-called corpus of our time at least, it seems extremely heterogeneous. We find images, sounds and written texts as art but not all the images, sounds and texts. We observe all this in different forms. What we see is also a kind of history of styles that people call art over the course of time, so art appears as a cultural heritage. Cultural heritage consists of various objects but at the same time these objects may have a relation with each other, influence on each other, a classification, breaks and new beginnings. There may appear the need to give the word *art* an ontological status to find its definition and it can be said that: ‘art is everything humans call art’ in the variety of all these objects since we are going over a cultural heritage as stated by Gombrich above.

However, once a theory of art is based on ontology, it is trapped in the distinction between ontology and epistemology which gives a priority to the first as in the case of analytical philosophy. Consequently, the question “under what conditions is something considered art?” precedes the question “under what conditions is the knowledge of art possible?” In the search of a such an ontological status, first, common properties to what is called painting, music, sculpture or any other field should be determined and then the properties common to all the arts should be isolated when they are taken into consideration together, and lastly the properties that are also present in things not called art at all should be eliminated. Such an attempt would be endless in the name of classifying artworks and never gives an idea on the ontology of art. Thus, we arrive either to the point where nothing is art, or to the point where everything can be art. Furthermore, while we try to evaluate all the objects called art, we also find different theoretical approaches to it in the history of thought such as Aristotle’s theory saying that art is imitation; Tolstoy’s saying that art is the communication of feelings; or Wittgenstein’s saying that the ontological status of the work of art is only a family resemblance that all the attempts

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to define art must end in either a solipsism or tautology and that the concept of art is undecidable (De Duve, 1996: 18).

If we go back to the statement that art is everything humans -or we- call art, De Duve points out that there appears a problematized consensus, not with a given corpus because we is not given here (De Duve, 1996: 19). We consider the same cultural heritage, but it is constituted of practices rather than things. When we look at the history of art, the art of past interests, only insofar as it holds out a promise for the future. It doesn't exist as a corpus although art as a word exists and it makes history when it is only in conflict. Its meaning is transformed and destroyed as much as it is created. From the point of a historian of art, what is recorded is the history of styles, but attention is paid only to the leading edge where a style is destroyed to make way for another, and where the becoming-art occurs through the negation and the breaking of the consensus (De Duve, 1996: 19).

If we approach the case from the point of a historian of avant-garde, what becomes important are attitudes and practices, hopes and conquests, programs and achievements, excesses and failures of artists and artworks. All this mobilizes us, and this mobilization is in the end, always political. (De Duve, 1996: 20) Avant-garde projects the heritage of the past into the future in order to contradict it. "When this process is called art, it is meant that we, humans, don't need to agree about what art is. On the contrary, we need to struggle what art should be. When you identify art with avant-garde art and with the avant-garde exclusively, you imply that conflict and contradiction are the very fabric of art." (De Duve, 1996: 21)

The attention given to the agreements or disagreements on what is called or not called art leads to a conclusion where *we* or *us* becomes an abuse and an alibi (De Duve, 1996: 30). Each thing to be found in the domain of art can never become more than an example of what art is. None of them amounts to a definition, a concept or a theory. Because 'the example' is a concept that escapes from the antinomy of the universal and the particular. It is characterized by the fact that it holds for all cases of the same type and at the same time it is included among these. It exists in its singularity. However, it stands for each of them and serves for all. While each example is treated as a real particular case, it cannot serve for all in its particularity. As Agamben states, an example is purely a linguistic categorization. The word, "artwork" designates all artworks indifferently, insofar as it posits the proper universal significance in place of singular ineffable artworks. Agamben says:

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In other words, it (example) transforms singularities into members of a class, whose meaning is defined by a common property (the condition of belonging). The fortune of set theory in modern logic is born of the fact that the definition of the set is simply the definition of linguistic meaning. The comprehension of singular distinct objects *m* in a whole *M* is nothing but the name. Hence the inextricable paradoxes of classes, which no "beastly theory of types" can pretend to solve. The paradoxes, in effect, define the place of linguistic being. Linguistic being is a class that both belongs and does not belong to itself, and the class of all classes that do not belong to themselves is language. Linguistic being (being-called) is a set (the tree) that is at the same time a singularity (*the tree, a tree, this tree*); and the mediation of meaning, expressed by the symbol *e*, cannot in any way fill the gap in which only the article succeeds in moving about freely." (Agamben, 2007: 9)

Therefore, showing a single work can only be a quasi-definition. It cannot be generalized. At the end, what is claimed only shows a personal collection and what should be said is that 'It is everything I call art' rather than *people* or *we*, as De Duve emphasizes. The sentence, art is everything I call art, is reflexive and not tautological, since the generic *art* only adds up the singular cases that have been named so in judging them. From the sum of these cases, the generic is constituted; but from the generic, the singular cannot be deduced (De Duve, 1996: 51). Art with a capital A, or name it however, is just an illusion that the western idea of art has believed to be universal, like anything else that emerged from the Enlightenment period.

As it is argued by De Duve, in calling something art in ways such as "This is art", the word "art" becomes a linguistic sign. But it is not a logical concept. Hence, it is only a common noun although it is still common to everything called art. However, this communality derives from the namings which someone brings through his/her judgements. It is not prior to judgements. It follows the same order as that which assembles all the Peters, Pauls, or Harrys. They have their name in common, but their name is not a common noun; it is a proper name. Communality of their respective names here comes from the act of baptism through which they were named. Otherwise, not from any mysterious property or meaning they supposedly share (De Duve, 1996: 52). Obviously, proper names cannot simply be turned into a pure and simple reference.

Therefore, what is called art is regulated by an idea of art, whatever it might be, and not ruled by such and such a criterion of art, this genealogy in its totality must have as its regulative idea nothing but the idea itself of art as proper name. However, as pointed out by De Duve, we should avoid any confusion between the *idea* of "art as proper name" and the *concept* of art as

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"art as proper name." The latter operates on the level of theory. It expresses the conceptual knowledge acquired through the theorem that defines the word "art" by the concept of the proper name or rigid designator. But the idea of art as proper name, on the contrary, operates on the level of practice, that is, of judgment, of the aesthetic usage of the word "art." The *concept* is either true or false, the *idea* is either just or unjust (De Duve, 1996: 74). Besides distinguishing art as a proper name in terms of idea and concept, the tense of the statement is also another important aspect. "Art is a proper name" provides a conceptual or theoretical definition of art since it is generalizing the statement in the form of a universality.

Nevertheless, "Art was a proper name" is not a definition of art. It points out the beginning of the tradition regulated by the idea of art as proper name which is particular to a certain historicity. As it will be explained in detail in the subsequent sections, it appeared with the history of the avant-garde, and therefore with the history of modernity (according to a certain categorization and periodization of avant-garde and modernity which I've already started to establish). By the periodization of modernity I mean the period of Western history during which aesthetic practice was regulated by the idea of art as proper name. It began when the idea emerged that art was autonomous and when the practice of art entrenched itself in its autonomy and alienated itself from society at large. And the history of avant-garde goes parallel to that of modernity.

I don't postulate that art has an essence that remains permanent throughout the changes in style, form, taste, ideology, and their underlying socio-historical conditions. However, there is still the fact that the name "art" transmitted through reevaluations making up the jurisprudence and that is what constitutes tradition. The name of art may possibly disappear from the surface of culture someday, just like Foucault saw the figure of Man being collapsed. Now, I turn to the way that how transformations occur in the history according to Foucault's archaeological analysis and look for correspondances in the domain of art.

2.1. Episteme and Discursive Formation of a Field

Episteme in its Greek origin refers to knowledge or science. The questions raised in this field of philosophy were approached differently by different philosophers throughout history.

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In relating episteme or namely knowledge to art, I follow Foucault's conceptualization of the term. Foucault basically uses the term "episteme" to designate historicity of *a priori* that grounds knowledge and its discourses, and therefore represents the condition of their possibility within a particular epoch. To depart from this point, it is seen that the system of knowledge or any other field of human activity forms itself under certain conditions with determined historical characteristics. This, to my point, can also be adapted to art which is itself a field of human activity with certain components such as subjects, objects, institutions etc. Thus, I will try to draw the general structure of the field in the pursuit of Foucault's approach to epistemology and consider the terms such as "episteme", "epistemic break" and "historicity" in this section. In my analysis of domain of art, I will deal with this domain in the level of "event" and mainly will approach it from Foucault's "discursive" and "non-discursive" formations.

When focusing on the phenomena of rupture and discontinuity, we can observe the displacements and transformation of concepts. The history of a concept is not entirely that of its progressive refinement or its continuously increasing rationality, but that of its various fields of constitution and validity, that of its successive rules of use, that of many theoretical contexts in which it develops and matures. Therefore, when we look back at history from the present, it appears that historical descriptions are ordered by the present state of knowledge. I will consider the case of classical and neo-avant-garde art later in detail, but the most radical discontinuities, as L. Althusser pointed out, are the breaks actualized by a work of theoretical transformation "which establishes a science by detaching it from the ideology of its own past and by revealing this past as ideological" (cited in Foucault, 1972:5). Any art movement we come across in art history claims its own truth and conception of art by negating the preceding ones. Thus, the main concern is not to trace a line to the past or tradition but to determine the divisions and limits. It is the search for the transformations that serve as a new transformation and the rebuilding of foundations. Hence, we encounter with the emergence of a whole field of questions. How can we specify the different concepts that enable us to conceive discontinuity (threshold, rupture, break, transformation)? Which criteria can enable us to isolate the unities we are dealing with? In the instance of field of art such questions arise: What is art? What is an *oeuvre*? What is an artwork? What is a theory? What is a concept?

Historians, including art historians in particular, build the narrative by questioning documents; yet, as Foucault asserts, the questioning of a document and each of the questions

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asked above point to one and commonly shared end: the reconstitution of the past from which they emanate and which has now disappeared far behind them, on the basis of what the documents says, or sometimes merely hints at. (Foucault, 1972:6) However, in opposition to this approach, we can argue that the document is not an inert material for history anymore. It tries to reconstitute what people have done or said, the events of which only trace remains:

History is now trying to define within the documentary material itself unities, totalities, series, relations... history is the work expended on material documentation (books, texts, accounts, registers, acts, buildings, institutions, laws, techniques, objects, customs, etc.) that exist, in every time and place, in every society, either in a spontaneous or in a consciously organized form.
(Foucault, 1972:7)

In the opposition between continuity and discontinuity, the former is sought by historians whereas the latter is sought by archaeologists. For a long time discontinuity was thought to be the historian's task to remove and establish a narrative but discontinuity has become one of the basic elements in the historical analysis. Art history can be conceived in terms of discontinuities as well, because our understanding of modernity and the uncertainty whether we still live in also apply to the argument of written art history which is itself a product of modernity as an object of scholarship. As the recurring title 'Art History' indicates, it begins "with a concept of *history* and extending it to the concept of style. While the concept of history was a legacy of the nineteenth century, that of style materialized in the early twentieth century. Style was that quality of art for which a logical evolution was to be traced (Belting, 2003: 26). Thus, the task of the historian of modern art, whatever their intellectual sympathies, was "one and the same objective: to maintain the integrity of a single art history, regardless of difference between old and new (Belting, 2003: 26). When approached from an archaeological analysis, a work of art in consideration belongs to the field in which the questions related to human being, consciousness, origin and the subject emerge, intersect, mingle and separate off. These questions eventually lead to a point where the problem of structure arises as well.

When we address the past from the point of an archaeological description, there are two influential notions of modernity which are *development* and *evolution*. Both of them have affected the notion of art as well as the whole history of modernity. These two notions made it possible to gather dispersed events, to relate them one to another as well as to the same organizing principle in general and to discover a principle of coherence and the outline of a

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 future unity when looked back in history from the present. These two notions have been highly effective in art history to the extent that they eventually led art's purism as a progressive reduction to art's necessary and sufficient conditions. The question of representation was, for instance, problematized in the line of Realism, Impressionism, Cézanneanism and Cubism. And we know that this so called progress or evolution ended up with the idea of pure colour in painting. Consequently, it arrived at both the idea of art's autonomy and the idea of art's alienation, into that of art as a proper name. Yet, it doesn't matter what rules modern artists have followed or abandoned; or what conception of art they have supported. What has happened at the end is that we today read the names of those who somehow managed their works inscribed in the history by the name of art. Therefore, when one speaks of the "history of the history of modern art," he has come to accept written history, not lived history, as the frame of reference (Belting, 2003: 17). However, in any case, as Foucault points it out, these divisions are always themselves reflexive categories, principles of classification, normative rules and institutionalized types. They are facts of discourse that should be analyzed beside others. This doesn't mean that the complexity of their mutual relations should be denied; rather that they are not intrinsic, autonomous and universally recognizable characteristics (Foucault, 1972: 22). Therefore, they are subject to change within time. The pre-existing forms of continuity do not come about themselves but rather derive from the construction of rules, and from justifications. They require a theory and this theory cannot be constructed if the field of discursive facts on which those facts are grounded appears in its non-synthetic purity (Foucault, 1972: 26). Therefore, discursive and non-discursive conditions appear and intersect spontaneously. This relationship is more explicitly observed when a different style in the medium is introduced to that field. For instance, Cubism of Braque and Picasso emerges from its so-called hermetic phase in 1912 and the same year *papiers collés* introduces a heterogeneous element into painting that would upset its relation to sculpture and to art in general. Cubism also gains its institutional triumph in the Salon des Indépendants in 1912 and the book, *Du cubisme*, by Gleizes and Metzinger appears as the first theorization as well as the first academization of the movement (De Duve, 1991: 16). This chain of events does not mean that they happened all of a sudden. It was a lasting process ended up so, but what this shows us is that statements, and the works of art in this case, require certain formations both in the level of practice and theory.

If forms of continuity in a field are suspended, the whole field is set free because the relations between divisions which display the continuity itself disappear. And this field is made

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of an entirety of statements, which are spoken and written at once in their dispersion as events and in the occurrence that is proper to them. Before approaching novels, or the oeuvre of an author, or even a single artwork, the material with which one is dealing is an amount of events in the realm of discourse in general. One is led therefore to the project of a *pure description of discursive events* as the horizon for the search of the unities that form themselves within it (Foucault, 1972: 27).

Foucault distinguishes this description from an analysis of language. A language (*langue*) is still a system for possible statements. It is a finite body of rules which authorizes an infinite number of performances. On the contrary, the field of discursive events is a grouping that is always finite and limited to the linguistic sequences that have been formulated. They form a finite grouping. The question raised by language analysis of some discursive fact is that: According to what rules has a particular statement been made, and consequently according to what rules could other similar statements be made? However, the description of the events of discourse raises a quite different question: How does one particular statement appear rather than another? (Foucault, 1972: 27) Transposed to the art field, this problematization leads to the fact that a certain work of art or style appear in history of art rather than another. It also establishes a relationship between the work of art and the discourse of art which can be a theoretical approach that has the capacity to legitimize the work in the field of art and make sense of it. From this perspective, although there is much more that can be said about this work, we can think about the case of Duchamp's work, "Fountain" (1917) and certain aspects of its historicity. First of all, it is important to underline the fact that "Fountain" was exhibited in an institution which was created by practice of art. The artist, at least partially, had the legitimate grounds to put the object into the set of already established relations in the field of art. Nobody would attribute such an interpretation to it and consider it as a work of art if it remained in the studio of the artist, although this proposition shouldn't be understood in a way that I'm claiming an institutional theory of art. Secondly, the exhibition space could not be any institution. We can think of the "Salons" that took place during the 19th century in Paris. There had to be institutions primarily and then these institutions should have set forth their rules. After that, there had to be counter-exhibitions to these institutions, in this case, with the slogan was "no jury, no prize", so that anything produced by any one who calls himself an artist could be displayed in the exhibition. These are just a few of the necessary historical conditions for the appearance of "Fountain" in art history.

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The analysis of the discursive field is oriented in a different way that the statement should be approached in the exact specificity of its occurrence and determines its conditions of existence by establishing its correlations with other statements and show what other forms of statement it excludes. To the contrary of this archaeological analysis, the paradox of art historians is that when they apply a theory or research method, they must trim its generality to the singularity of the case they apply to it (De Duve, 1991: 18). Nonetheless, this occurrence of the statement or event should not be treated only in relation to language and thought. This occurrence is not linked with synthesising operations of purely psychological kind such as the intention of the author, the form of his mind, the rigour of his thought, the themes that obsess him, the project that leads to his existence and gives meaning to it. If the representation had not been problematized at the outset by Cézanne, would Duchamp's "Fountain" possibly have the same importance or meaning? In other words, even a person decides to become an artist, more specifically painter or composer from the divisions of modern art, that decision is shaped, rendered specific, possible or impossible by the historical conditions in which it is taking place.

Therefore, transformations or discontinuities in art history should not be conceived merely in terms of conscious subjects who rationally think and enact. His position should be related to the conditions of history. For instance, technical invention of the tube of paint had an enormous role in the development of modern painting, as well as art in twentieth century if one takes Duchamp as one of the epistemic ruptures of it. As De Duve claims for Duchamp as for Kandinsky, "the tube of paint is the locale of an initial choice in which the making of a painting is grounded. But where for Kandinsky it is an origin, for Duchamp it is a given. For both artists the tube of paint refers to pure color. But for Kandinsky, pure color is the elementary signifier of a pictorial language reduced to its essence; for Duchamp, it is the unmixed pigment whose purity has been determined by the manufacturer, not by the painter" (De Duve, 1996: 164).

Arististic discourse is my primary concern in describing the works of art similar to the statements in the field of discourse and the relations they are capable of. This raises certain questions, such as the ones pointed by Foucault: What, in fact, are *artworks*, *aesthetics*, or *art*? "Are they forms that have become established once and for all and have gone on developing through time? Do they conceal other unities? And what sort of links can validly be recognised between all these statements that form, in such a familiar and insistent way, such an enigmatic mass?" (Foucault, 1972: 31) Statements form a group if they refer to one and the same object

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even though they are different in form and dispersed in time. All the objects of aesthetic discourse have been modified from Kant and Hegel to the present. The same aesthetics are not at issue in each of the cases, not to mention the fact that we are not dealing with the same artists or artworks. The unity of discourses would be the interplay of the rules that make possible the appearance of objects during a given period of time: objects that are shaped by measures of discrimination and repression. There are, for instance, impressionist paintings and Cézanne's which created a different style in terms of the existing object and perceiving subject. They questioned the relationship of the mind to the outer world. This sort of phenomenology of vision that elsewhere in the same period was in the process of being theorized by E. Husserl, yet it would be applied only much later to Cézanne and to the painting followed as in Merleau-Ponty.

Moreover, the unity of the discourses on art would be the interplay of the rules that define the transformations of these different objects, their non-identity through time, the break produced in them, the internal discontinuity that suspends their permanence. What must be described at this point is the coexistence of these dispersed and heterogeneous statements; the system that governs their division, the degree to which they depend upon one another, the way according to which they interlock or exclude one another, the transformation that they undergo, and the play of their location, arrangement, and replacement (Foucault, 1972: 34). Furthermore, what remains important is the relation between statements and discourse.

Whenever one can describe, between a number of statements, such a system of dispersion, whenever, between objects, types of statement, concepts, or thematic choices, one can define a regularity (an order, correlations, positions and functionings, transformations)... We are dealing with a *discursive formation* - thus avoiding words that are already overlaid with conditions and consequences, and in any case inadequate to the task of designating such a dispersion, such as 'science', 'ideology', 'theory', or 'domain of objectivity'. The conditions to which the elements of this division (objects, mode of statement, concepts, thematic choices) are subjected we shall call the *rules of formation*. The rules of formation are conditions of existence (but also of coexistence, maintenance, modification, and disappearance) in a given discursive division (Foucault, 1972: 38)

Rules of formations are conditions to which elements of discursive formations are subjected. When we consider the modern category of art, we observe that a division has occurred in its discursive formation during the eighteenth century. Following this division, pleasure in the arts has been defined as a special, refined pleasure appropriate to the arts and distinguished from the ordinary pleasures that we take in the useful or entertaining. The refined contemplative

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pleasure has been called by the new name “aesthetic”. By the early nineteenth century the previous idea regarding art’s function has also been distinguished, with the fine arts which have been granted with a transcendent spiritual role in revealing the truth. After this, art has already achieved to create its own subjects and objects with certain components such as theory, production and reception of art, and institutions. I have attempted to outline the historicity of the category of a field, particularly the field of art in relation to statement, discourse and event as used by Foucault. Now I would like to turn to the formation of modern system of art in detail and argue the underlying historical conditions.

2.2. Aesthetic Episteme and the Status of Objects in Fine Arts

After having taken into consideration the discursive formations, I intend to examine the formation of the objects which appear as the objects of certain discourses. What rules their existence as objects of discourse? First, we must map the *surfaces* of their *emergence* and show where these individual differences, which, according to the degrees of rationalization, conceptual codes, and types of theory will be accorded the status of artwork, may emerge, and then be designated and analysed. These surfaces of emergence are not the same for different societies, at different periods, and in different forms of discourse (Foucault, 1972: 41). If we go back to Antiquity, we see that what is strikingly absent in the ancient Greek view of the artisan/artist is the modern emphasis that is made on imagination, originality and autonomy. In a general way, imagination and innovation were appreciated and estimated as being part of the craftsmanship of commissioned production for a certain purpose but not in their emphatic modern sense (Shiner, 2001: 23). Although the ancients were “confronted with excellent works of art and quite susceptible to their charm, [they] were neither able nor eager to detach the aesthetic quality of these works of art from their intellectual, moral, religious and practical functioning or content, or to use such an aesthetic quality for grouping the fine arts together” (Kristeller, 1990: 174). Aristotle believed that the artisan/artist takes a particular raw material (human character/leather) and uses a particular set of ideas and procedures (plot/shoe form) to produce a product (tragedy/shoes). Of course, neither Plato nor Aristotle simply equated every human product to art (*techne*), as if tragedies were situated no higher than farm tools or statues

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were no better than sandals (Shiner, 2001: 21). However, as L. Shiner points it out, hierarchy is not a polarity.

In the formation of objects, we must also describe the authorities of delimitation: during the twentieth century, the museum (as an institution that possesses its own rules, as a group of individuals constituting the art profession, as a body of knowledge and practice) has become the major authority in society that “delimites, designates, names, and establishes” objects as artworks; (salons, academia, museums). However, these “planes of emergence” and “authorities of delimitation” as Foucault designates them, do not provide objects that the aesthetic discourse would then merely have to list, classify, name, select, and cover with a network of words and sentences. In other words, the emergence of aesthetic theory did not follow a process according to which theorists went to the museums and saw the objects called works of art by the authorities of delimitation and then wrote about it. Boris Groys approaches the relationship between the artwork as an object and the museum as an institution, for instance, from a different point when he says that “we can even say that, under the conditions of the modern museum, the newness of newly produced art is not established post factum, as a result of comparison with old art. Rather, the comparison takes place before the emergence of the new artwork—and virtually produces this new artwork. The modern artwork is collected before it is even produced” (Groys, 2008: 28). The new system of fine arts was not only tied to behaviors and institutions, it was also part of a more general network of power and gender relations. The key factor in splitting of the old art system was the replacement of patronage by an art market and a middle-class art public. When writers such as F. Schiller and K. W. F. Schlegel challenged the new ideas of the self-contained work of art and the need for a special aesthetics to respond to it, they were specifically reacting to their own frustrations with the art market and new public (Shiner, 2001: 7). The question is how to decide what made the emergence of this sort of artworks possible, and how these 'discoveries' could lead to others that took them up, “rectified them, modified them, or even disproved them” (Foucault, 1972: 43). Similarly, it would be irrelevant to attribute the appearance of these new objects only to the norms of the nineteenth-century bourgeois society. No doubt, all these processes were at work, but they could not by themselves form objects for aesthetic discourse. Hence, we can infer a certain number of remarks and consequences about the formation of objects as follows.

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First of all, “The conditions necessary for the appearance of an object of discourse, the historical conditions required if one is to ‘say anything’ about it, and if several people are to say different things about it, the conditions necessary if it is to exist in relation to other objects, if it is to establish with them relations of resemblance, proximity, distance, difference, transformation” (Foucault, 1972: 44). Therefore, before an object is accepted as an artwork, *readymades* are good historical examples to this condition; it requires a set of relations in order to be talked about and to be the object of a discourse. These discursive relations are established between institutions, economic and social processes, behavioural patterns, systems of norms, techniques, types of classification and modes of characterisation. It is important to note that these relations are not present in the object. The object of discourse is exposed to these relations in the field of exteriority. “Therefore, what enables the object to appear, to juxtapose itself with other objects, to situate itself in relation to them, to define its difference, its irreducibility, and even perhaps its heterogeneity, is its position in the field of exteriority” (Foucault, 1972: 45). Andy Warhol’s “Brillo Boxes” (1964) exactly emerged in its field of exteriority since it had nothing to distinguish itself from the other brillo boxes sold in the supermarkets. The relations in this field involved different actors such as artists, art critics, curators and certain discourses stated by them as well as institutional support. Consequently, discursive relations must be distinguished what Foucault calls primary relations which derive from the language and secondary relations which are described between institutions, techniques, social forms, etc. This means that while an object of discourse (let’s think of a work of art) is produced in the level of primary relations such as the theory of art, it is also produced in the level of secondary relations such as museums or academies. Thus, “a space unfolds articulated with possible discourses: a system of *real* or *primary relations*, a system of *reflexive* or *secondary relations*, and a system of relations that might properly be called *discursive*. The problem is to reveal the specificity of these discursive relations, and their interplay with the other two kinds” (Foucault, 1972: 45-46). As a result, we can say that discursive relations are not internal to discourse because they do not connect concepts or words with another. Yet these relations are not exterior to discourse either. They might limit the discourse, or impose certain forms upon it, in certain circumstances, to state certain things. “[A]t the limit of discourse... these relations characterise not the language (*langue*) used by discourse, nor the circumstances in which it is deployed, but discourse itself as a practice” (Foucault, 1972: 46). Therefore, the artistic discourse should be analyzed as a practice with primary and secondary relations it gets into.

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What is sought in the unity of discourse is what is given to the speaking subject and it is all about setting-up relations which form discursive practise itself. What has been seen is that it is neither a configuration, nor a form, but a group of rules that are immanent in a practice and it should be defined in its specificity. Moreover, these rules do not define the existence of a reality, or the canonical use of a vocabulary but the ordering of objects.

In the next level, I aim to consider the formation of enunciative modalities in order to discover the law that operates behind all these diverse statements, or say artworks, and the place from which they arise. First of all, in considering the formation of enunciative modalities, it is necessary to locate the subject among the set of relations in which he appears. I will consider the position of the subject in detail in the subsequent section but I'd like to mention here as a part of enunciative modalities. Thus, the first question is who is speaking. Why is a person accorded the right to speak and use language (*langage*)? The speaking subject or acting subject in the case of an artist who has the status which involves the criteria of competence and knowledge, systems and norms that legitimize his actions. The status of a modern artist as an acting subject clearly shows this legitimizing position. Duchamp's *ready-mades* or Warhol's *Brillo Boxes* are the primary instances to this. It also involves a system of differentiation and relations with other individuals and to society as a whole. "A condition does not determine an order of consequences; it delimits a field of possibilities. It does not force anything to happen; it does not permit everything; but it specifies what will be permitted, or, better yet, it will have specified what it permitted" (De Duve, 1991: 66). In conceiving of conditions in this way, we can easily understand the reality of artistic creation without mythifying the freedom of the creator.

As the second dimension of enunciative modalities, there are institutional sites in which the subject makes his discourse and derives its legitimate sources with its specific objects and instruments of verification. Thus, the role subject plays in his position is created and sustained by a number of relations.

The positions of the subject are also defined by the situation that it is possible for him to occupy in relation to the various domains or groups of objects: according to a certain grid of explicit or implicit interrogations, he is the questioning subject and, according to a certain programme of information, he is the listening subject; according to a table characteristic features, he is the seeing subject, and according to a descriptive type, the observing subject. (Foucault, 1972: 52)

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It can be said that the relations between different elements are effected by aesthetic discourse after the second half of eighteenth century. It establishes, as a practise, between them a system of relations that is not given or constituted a priori. However, the institutional site should not be conceived as homogenous. The tension in this site is also influential on the emergence of artist and artwork. It effectively establishes relations of resemblance, proximity, distance, difference and transformation. Whoever possesses concretely and politically the power to include and exclude, he possesses, at the same time, the conceptual mastery of the notion of art. We can look into the late 19th century France for this tension. The function of the Salon was critical to appoint a painting as painting. If a painting matched the norms of painting determined by the Salon, it was accepted in the exhibition. However, once an institution sets forth determined rules, it cannot involve a painting that transgresses these rules. And those artists who were rejected from the exhibitions had to find alternative ways to show their paintings. Eventually what appeared was *Société des Artistes Indépendants* in 1884 in Paris with the slogan "No jury nor awards" (*Sans jury ni récompense*). The artists in the new institution announced their purpose as that the reason they abolished admission jury was to allow artists to present their works to public judgement with complete freedom. Therefore, innovative styles of painting such as Pointillism by G. Seurat and P. Signac had the possibility to be exhibited. Indeed, what we read today in history mostly consists of the painters appeared in this institution, otherwise not the official Salon though this does not mean that the artists exhibited paintings in the official Salon are not mentioned in the history. Nevertheless, it would be a simplification of things to localize the bearers of this mastery uniquely on the side of instituted power, the conservators of the museum or the members of juries, for example. It would seem, rather, that the power of the artists, or at least of those whose names have been retained by the movement of history, were of no less importance than the institutions that were in place (De Duve, 1991: 87).

In the proposed analysis, the subject can occupy or be given to the various statuses, the various sites, the various positions when making a discourse. From this point, discourse is not the unfolding manifestation of a thinking, knowing or speaking subject. It is a totality in which the dispersion of the subject and his discontinuity with himself may be determined. In the structure of discourse, concepts play an important role which forms the objects as well as the way they are perceived regarding their position in the network of relations. In the history of thought, one finds numerous concepts. A concept may invalidate another despite deriving from it

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or attributes it another meaning and coexist, but the history of concepts is not simply a construction. One must describe the organization of the field of statements in order to grasp the relation between discourse and concepts. Consequently, what separates the discourse and the position of subject in the new or modern formation of art is that the particular characteristic of the modern system of art has resulted from the conjunction of many factors, some of general scope and gradual development, others more restricted and immediate, some primarily intellectual and cultural, others social, political, and economic. This conjunction has been gradual, uneven, and contested, but it can certainly be said that prior to the eighteenth century neither the modern ideas of art, artist, and aesthetic, nor the set of practices and institutions we associate with them were integrated into a normative system, whereas after the eighteenth century, the major conceptual polarities and institutions of the modern system of art were largely taken for granted and have been regulative since then (Shiner, 2001: 14). In order to understand this normative system and its discourse which is also created by certain concepts, we can look at the way they are organized.

When looked at the field of art, or that of aesthetics to be more specific, at the end of twentieth century, the 19th century's art field does not use the same concepts as in the 18th century; some of the older concepts (taste, beauty, sublime) are not used or used in different way; new concepts (like the one of "conceptual art") appear; and others (like the one of creativity) are formed later. However, what has changed is the general arrangement of the statements, their successive arrangement in particular wholes. It was the way in which one wrote down what one observed and recreated a perpetual process by means of a series of statements. During the 18th and 19th centuries, aesthetics was not simply a form of knowledge that gave a new definition to concepts; it was rather a set of rules for arranging statements in series, an obligatory set of schemata of dependence, of order, and of successions, in which the recurrent elements that may have value as concepts were distributed.

A dispersion characterizes a type of discourse. It defines forms of deduction, derivation, and coherence between concepts, but also of incompatibility, intersection, substitution, exclusion, mutual alteration, displacement, etc. Such an analysis concerns a kind of preconceptual level (Foucault, 1972: 60). And this preconceptual level does not refer to an ideality. Foucault says:

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The 'preconceptual' level that we have uncovered refers neither to a horizon of ideality nor to an empirical genesis of abstractions... It is not an inexhaustible a priori at the confines of history, set back both because it eludes all beginning, all genetic restitution, and because it could never be contemporary with itself in an explicit totality... Instead of outlining a horizon that rises from the depths of history and maintains itself through history, the 'preconceptual' thus described is, on the contrary, at the most 'superficial' level (at the level of discourse), the group of rules that in fact operate within it. (Foucault, 1972: 62)

Next step is to go over how discourse is distributed in history. Discourse, aesthetics in our case give, rises to certain organizations of concepts, certain regroupings of objects and certain types of enunciation. According to their degree of coherence, rigour, and stability, they form themes or theories. Whatever their formal level may be, Foucault calls these themes and theories 'strategies.' He takes the task of discovering how they are distributed in history (Foucault, 1972: 64). Apart from the modern category of (fine) arts, we can consider how art was approached in the medieval age in order to see how the 'strategies' spread and change in history before going over the model of fine arts. For this, one can look at several discourses and relations of mutual delimitation, each giving the other the distinctive marks of its singularity by the differentiation of its domain of application. For instance, art and craft were virtually not distinguished from one another before the end of the eighteenth century, and established from that moment a gap that has since characterized them.

Foucault emphasizes that strategies are not anterior to discourse. They are both preliminary and fundamental. If we look at the categorization of arts in medieval age, it appears that the assumptions of the old art system continued to regulate most practices despite the appearance of new ideas. Early Medieval system kept the late Greco-Roman divisions of the arts into "liberal" versus the "vulgar" or "servile" and, divided the liberal arts into the *trivium* (logic, grammar, rhetoric) and the *quadrivium* (arithmetic, geometry, astronomy, and music theory) for the educational purposes. In addition to the separation of liberal arts as the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*, there appeared the category of the mechanical arts. It was a medieval concept of ordered practices or skills and juxtaposed to the traditional seven liberal arts which were also called "servile" and "vulgar", from antiquity they had been deemed unbecoming for a free man, as ministering to baser needs.

Hugh of St. Victor set forth argument for replacing the terms "vulgar" or "servile" with the term "mechanical arts". Hugh made the mechanical arts an equal partner with the theoretical

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arts (philosophy, physics) and practical arts (politics, ethics). Just as the theoretical arts were given by God as a remedy for our ignorance and the practical arts as a remedy for our vices, according to Hugh, so the mechanical arts remedy our physical weakness (Shiner, 2001: 28-29). By the end of the twelfth century, the term “mechanical arts” had become standard in the West, although Hugh’s particular list was often modified. With the advent of the category of mechanical arts, the new system of arts is categorized as below (Table 2: Medieval Classification of the Arts, p.38).

Table 2: Medieval Classification of the Arts

Liberal arts (vs. servile arts): Trivium: Grammar, Rhetoric, Logic Quadrivium: Arithmetic, Geometry, Astronomy, Music Mechanical arts (Hugh of St. Victor): Weaving, armament,* commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatrics** *Includes arms, forging, architecture, and so on. **Includes wrestling, racing, dances, epic recitals, puppet plays, and so forth.
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In this classification, subject in the modern sense had not appeared yet. It modified the old system that remained from Antiquity and extended it with a new category. Insofar, discourse has been related to the rules of its formation in itself rather than to the primary ground of experience or to the apriori authority of knowledge. A relation has been established between statement and discourse as the statement is the elementary unit of discourse. the description of enunciative level can be performed by the analysis of relations between the statement and the spaces of differentiation, in which statement itself reveals the differences. Consequently, the analysis of art history should not be done at the level of language and theory but it should be approached according to the enunciative modalities. One should consider the relations among constituents of the field as a whole. These relations emerge both in discursive and non-discursive levels, so an analysis requires revealing them in their totality. From now on, I will

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turn to the formation of the subject in the discursive and non-discursive levels and relate it to the statements in particular.

2.3. Modern Episteme and the Position of Subject in Fine Arts

After going over the statement and discursive formation in terms of the work of art and the general system of art, I intend to consider them in relation to the formation of the subject. A statement differs from any series of linguistic elements by the fact that it possesses a particular relation with a subject in Foucault's analysis. It has a crucial importance in the field of art for my argument that the subject of modern art was created in modernity in both discursive and non-discursive levels through the category of fine arts (*beaux-art*). Therefore, such questions arise: Does art really have a subject? Can a novel, a symphony or any other art work be attributed to a single subject as its author?

The words in a book, symbols in a music score or an artwork in visual arts can be evaluated as signs. There can be no signs without someone or something to send them out and there must be an "author" or transmitting authority for a series of signs to exist. However, an "author" is not identical with the subject of the statement and the relation of production that he has with the formulation is not superposable to the relation that brings together the enunciating subject and what he states. What is usually conceived is that the subject of the statement is the one who produces the various elements with the intention of conveying meaning. This idea is even more dominant in the modern paradigm of fine arts. Similar to this approach to the position of "author", we can look at the relationship between artist and artwork. In the preceding systems, for instance, making art was usually a cooperative affair, with many minds and hands involved, whether in painting frescoes (the case of Raphael), in the multiple authorship of theater productions (the case of Shakespeare), or in the free borrowing of the melodies and harmonies among composers (the case of Bach) (Shiner, 2001: 6). However, later what we encounter is the domination of a subject with attributed characteristics in modernity. It also presupposes the way that how the reception of meaning is received. Even apart from those authorities of formulation that are not identical with the individual, author or artist, the statements do not

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presuppose the same characteristics for the enunciating subject; they do not imply the same relation between this subject and what is being stated.

The conditions of individualization of the subject are, in fact, very strict and numerous. They authorize in this case only one possible subject. Presentation of such artworks as stated above necessarily involves the works of art in precise contextual conditions that were not implied by the preceding formulations. The position is then fixed within a domain constituted by a finite group of statements. It is localized in a series of enunciative events that must already have occurred. As Foucault states, it is determined by the prior existence of a number of effective operations that need not to have been performed by one and the same individual (he who is speaking now), but which rightfully belongs to the enunciating subject, which are at his disposal, and of which he may avail himself when necessary. Foucault continues:

The subject of such a statement will be defined by these requisites and possibilities taken together; and he will not be described as an individual who has really carried out certain operations, who lives in an unbroken, never forgotten time, who has interiorized, in the horizon of his consciousness, a whole group of true propositions, and who retains, in the living present of his thought, their potential reappearance. (Foucault, 1972: 93-94)

Thus, the creation of the subject is far beyond an individual author or artist. It is determined by the historical conditions that the dominant norms of the modern system of fine arts are, for instance, quite different than that of Antiquity and Medieval era. In the modern category, the ideal is not inventive collaboration but individual creation. The works are seldom meant for a specific place or person and exist for themselves. The separation of artworks from a functional context leads to the ideal of silent and reverential attention in concert halls, art museums, theaters and reading rooms. In such a case, the enunciating subject brings into existence outside himself an object that belongs to a previously defined domain, whose laws of possibility have already been articulated, and whose characteristics precede the enunciation that posits it. In other words, a condition in which the subject finds himself is less than a cause and fact more than an effect. A condition does not determine an order of consequences. It delimits a field of possibilities. It does not permit everything but it specifies what will be permitted or will have specified what it permitted. The connections of the work of art or object to its context to everything whether economic, social, ideological, personal, that constrains the subject are not the connections of an effect to its causes but of a fact to its conditions.

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Therefore, the subject of the statement should not be regarded as identical with the author of the formulation – either in substance, or in function. According to Foucault's "archaeology", It is not in fact the cause, origin, or starting-point of the phenomenon of the written or spoken articulation of a sentence; nor is it that meaningful intention which, silently anticipating words, orders them like the visible body of its intuition; it is not the constant, motionless, unchanging focus of a series of operations that are manifested, in turn, on the surface of discourse through statement.

It is a dimension that characterizes a whole formulation qua statement... If a proposition, a sentence, a group of signs can be called 'statement', it is not therefore because, one day, someone happened to speak them or put them into some concrete form of writing; it is because the position of the subject can be assigned. To describe a formulation qua statement does not consist in analysing the relations between the author and what he says (or wanted to say, or said without wanting to); but in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it. (Foucault, 1972: 95-96)

Accordingly, the statement is divided into an enunciative field in which it has a place and a status, and this specific condition constructs its possible relations with the past and opens up a possible future for it. Therefore, epistemic breaks in the history of art did not occur with the actions of certain conscious subjects nor they emerged as the subjects when they decided to become an artist. The reason that art history is written over those specific subject is that their position both in discursive and non-discursive levels can be analyzed. For instance, James Joyce or Kafka would not be read today if these relations around the position they occupied were not constituted. These relations may not be suddenly established. We know from the history that there are many artists regarded as master long after their death although it should not be understood as the cliché that history is the court that determines quality and reveals the real artworks within time. The quality of the artwork may also be important but the establishment of the discursive relations around object, subject, or any other position, has the primary role in this. A statement is never free, neutral or independent. It always belongs to a series or a whole and always plays a role among other statements. There is no statement that is not surrounded by a field of coexistences, effects of series and succession, a distribution of functions and roles (Foucault, 1972: 99). Hence, the birth of the subject in art should be conceived in its historicity with the distribution of functions and roles. Accordingly, it is important in this analysis to

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examin how the artist became individualized in Western culture, what status he has been given and when authenticity and attribution began.

In the beginning of eighteenth century, the category of old liberal arts was undergoing a reorganization that would eventually lead to the separate categories of fine arts, science, and humanities. Before the modern category of fine arts could be established with its specific subjects and objects, three things needed to come together in order to spread as strategies and gain wide acceptance: a limited *set* of arts, a commonly accepted *term* to easily identify the set, and some generally agreed upon *principle(s)* or criteria for distinguishing that set from all others (Shiner, 2001: 80).

The traditional core of the liberal arts included the *trivium* and the *quadrivium*. In the modern fine arts, poetry had long been taught as a subdivision of rhetoric, and by the beginning of the eighteenth century, music was seen closer to rhetoric than to mathematics, and painting, sculpture, and architecture were also widely accepted as liberal arts. Before the modern category of fine arts could be constructed, however, painting, sculpture, and architecture not only had to join poetry and music as liberal arts, but these five then had to be separated from the other liberal arts of grammar, rhetoric, logic, mathematics, and astronomy and regrouped under a new name (Shiner, 2001: 79-80). This name has been, what we today call the French term “*beaux-arts*” (fine arts). Therefore, the categorization of fine arts can be approached through ‘enunciative analysis,’ as proposed by Foucault. It presupposes that enunciative domain refers neither to an individual subject, nor to some kind of collective consciousness, nor to a transcendental subjectivity, but that it is described as an anonymous field whose configuration defines the possible position of speaking subjects. Statements shouldn’t be situated in relation to a sovereign subjectivity, but recognize in the different forms of the speaking subjectivity effects proper to the enunciative field (Foucault, 1972: 122).

In order to construct the new category of fine arts, the final intellectual requirement was the principles which would justify uniting the visual, verbal, and musical arts under a single head, but also distinguish them from the other liberal arts as well as from the sciences and the crafts. In such a case, principle of mind over body in the ancient liberal arts was too broad since it would not by itself account for separating painting, poetry, and music as a group from the arts of grammar and history. Another long-established principle, imitation, was also too broad, since it included activities such as embroidery, pottery, or birdcalls that might also imitate nature

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(Shiner, 2001: 82). Therefore, new some new principles were needed to base the new grouping of fine arts. In this formation, talent was emphasized against skill and became an admiration in the accomplished artist. The justifying reason was that skill could be acquired while talent could not, because talent was conceived as a gift of nature. However, it could not develop or express itself “outside the rules, conventions and codes provided by the tradition” (De Duve, 2005: 19). Consequently, a combination of at least four other principles was invoked. Two of these principles “genius” and “imagination” that concerned the production of works of fine art; the other two which are “pleasure” versus “utility” and “taste” concerned the aims and mode of reception of the fine art. The combination of pleasure versus utility with genius and imagination was usually used to distinguish fine arts from the mechanical arts or crafts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with taste was used to distinguish fine arts from the sciences and from other liberal arts like grammar and logic (Shiner, 2001: 82). From this historical organization of concepts, we can say that the analysis of statements, therefore, operates without reference to a cogito. It does not pose the question of the speaking subject, exercises his sovereign freedom, or who, without realizing it, subjects himself to constraints of which he is only dimly aware. Nevertheless, what must be understood by it is the totality of things said, the relations, the regularities, and the transformations that may be observed in them, the domain of which certain figures, certain intersections indicate the unique place of a speaking subject and may be given the name of author. ‘Anyone who speaks’, but what he says is not said from anywhere. It is necessarily caught up in the play of exteriority (Foucault, 1972: 122).

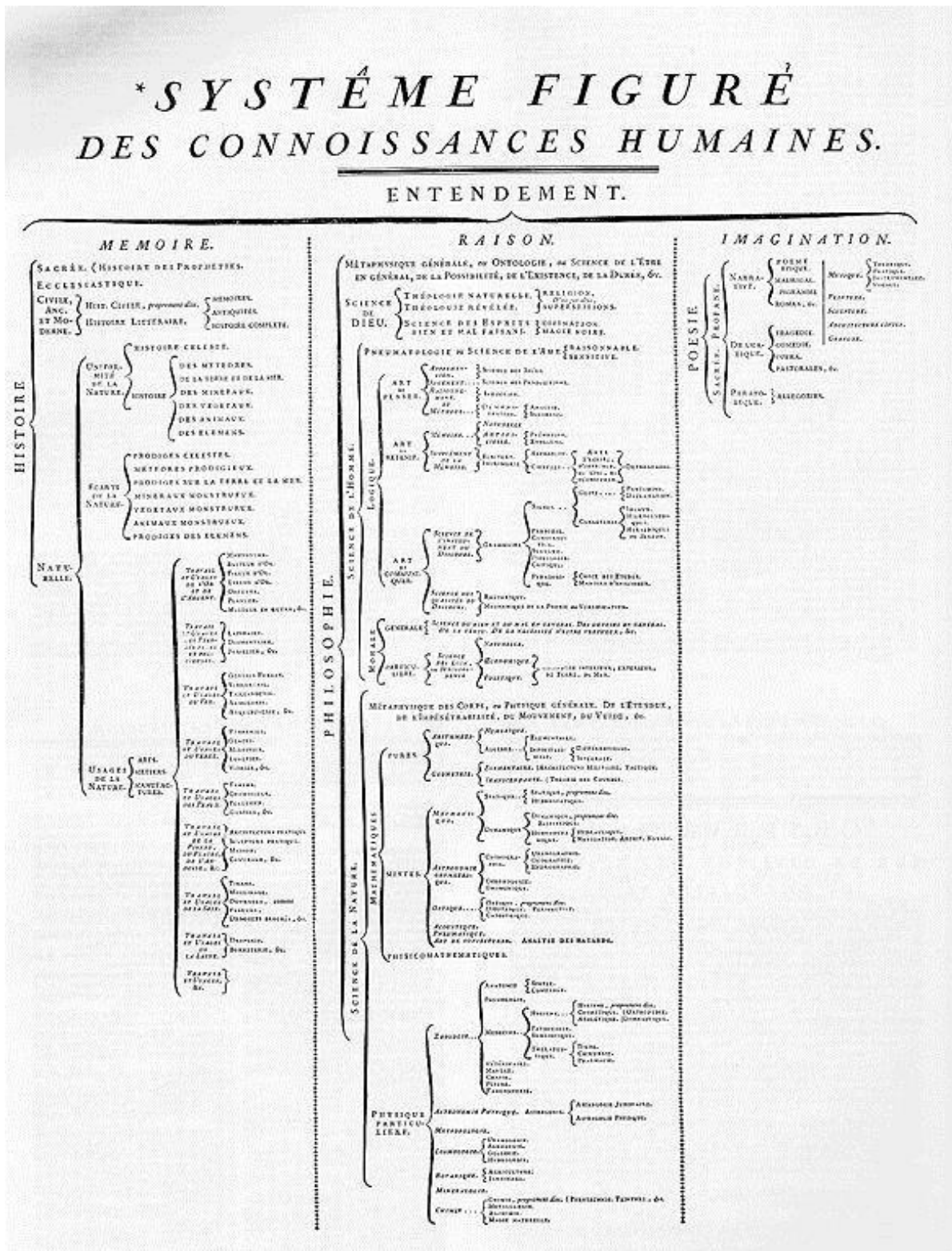
One must admit that such a historical cultural formation or *episteme* as broad as the construction of the modern category of fine arts cannot be tied to a single individual or event but we can look at the *Encyclopédie* for the classification of system of knowledge. Diderot and d’Alembert presented a more fully articulated case for this new category which had already been moving for some time. On the top of the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot placed a comprehensive table of all knowledge based on Bacon’s division of human faculties into memory (history), reason (science), and imagination (poetry). The *Encyclopédie* now grouped all five fine arts (poetry, painting, sculpture, engraving, and music) under the faculty of imagination as one of three main divisions of knowledge, isolated from all other arts, disciplines, and sciences (Table 3: Figurative System of Organisation of Human Knowledge from the *Encyclopédie* by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d’Alembert, p.44).

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D'Alembert's "Preliminary Discourse" in the *Encyclopédie*, justifying the new tree of knowledge, announced that some of the liberal arts had been "reduced to principles" and "called Beaux-Arts primarily because they have pleasure for their aim" (cited in Shiner, 2001: 84).

D'Almbert's list of the newly classified and baptized beaux-arts included poetry, painting, sculpture, music, and architecture. In the schema of knowledge in the *Encyclopédie*, d'Alembert explained why he and Diderot used the term "poetry" for "beaux-art" in their table of knowledge: "Painting, Sculpture, Architecture, Poetry, Music and their different divisions, make up the third general distribution that is born of imagination, and whose parts are included under the name Beaux-Arts. One could also include them under the general title of Painting, since all the Beaux-Arts can be reduced to painting, and only differ by the means they employ; finally, one could relate them all to Poetry, taking that word in its natural signification, which is nothing else than invention or creation" (cited in Shiner, 2001: 84).

Although the content of "fine arts" and the term itself were established in the second half of the eighteenth century, there were variations in the criteria of this category. There emerged concepts such as genius, imagination, or taste but there were also controversies about which criteria were most important, or more importantly what they explicitly meant. This situation lasted for a couple decades at least until these concepts were more clearly described by philosophers at the end of the eighteenth century. However, in any way, all the critical and theoretical discussion of the criteria concerning the new category revolved around either the production of the fine artwork (genius vs. rule) or its reception (pleasure vs. utility). Thus, what we can conclude from this formation is that enunciative domain presupposes that, in its transformations, the field of statements does not obey the temporality of the consciousness as it has model. One must not hope to be able to write a history of things said that is legitimately, in its form, in its regularity and in its nature, the history of an individual or anonymous consciousness, of a project, of a system of intentions, of a set of aims. The time of discourse is not the translation, in a visible chronology, of the obscure time of thought (Foucault, 1972: 122).

Table 3: Figurative System of Organisation of Human Knowledge from the Encyclopédie by Denis Diderot and Jean le Rond d'Alembert



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More precisely, Foucault calls the statement as the modality of existence that is proper to a group of signs and accordingly, discourse is constituted by a group of sequences of signs. Since they are statements, they can be assigned particular modalities of existence. The law of such a series is what Foucault calls *discursive formation*. It is the principle of dispersion and redistribution of statements rather than formulations and propositions. The term, discourse can be defined as the group of statements that belong to a single system of formation (Foucault, 1972: 107). Hence, when one seeks statement in the discourse itself, it is neither visible nor hidden. The enunciative level emerges in its very proximity.

Now turning to the second group of questions: how can the description of statements, thus defined, be adjusted to the analysis of discursive formations, the principles of which outlined above? In examining the statement what has been discussed, in the pursuit of Foucault, is that it is a function which requires if it is to operate: a referential. He does not relate it to a fact or to a state of thing or even to a object, but to a principle of differentiation:

A subject (not the speaking consciousness, not the author of formulation, but a position that may be filled in certain conditions by various individuals); an associated field (which is not the real context of the formulation, the situation in which it was articulated, but a domain of coexistence for other statements); a materiality (which is not only the substance or support of the articulation, but a status, rules of transcription, possibilities of use and re-use). Now, what has been described as discursive formations are, strictly speaking, groups of statements. (Foucault, 1972: 115)

The principle of differentiation is an important dimension of modern art, because history of art, especially modern art, is written with breaks from the tradition. This narrative is more easily observed in painting though it can be generalized to other fields of art. Therefore, innovation, and differentiation were the main characteristics of artistic practice in modernity.

This innovation led to a radical differentiation in the notion of artistic quality that had been perviously linked to technical mastery, talent and style which was almost unchanging. Of course, innovation has always been a part of art history, but what had changed was the inevitable and accelerated character of innovation in modernity, specially after the second half of nineteenth century when all the characteristics of modern artist and concepts of modern art had already been defined. As a result, innovation triggered by the characteristics of modern artist such as genius and imagination meant astonishment and transgression of current taste. An artistic innovation was found significant only if it was rejected. Hence, every significant artistic innovation can be seen as a failure according to prior artistic criteria in use and considered

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successful according to the criteria that this innovation itself establishes. Before considering the political attitudes attributed to the figure of the artist as the sovereign subject in modern episteme, I would like to consider the dispersion of the discourse through strategies in order to comprehensively understand the development of the category of fine arts.

2.4. The Dispersion of Discourse through Strategies

What Foucault calls ‘discursive formation’ divides up the general plane of things said at the specific level of statements. He analyses it in four directions which are formation of objects, formation of the subjective positions, formation of concepts and formation of strategic choices. They correspond to the four domains in which the enunciative function operates (Foucault, 1972: 116). A system of art should be analyzed in terms of its discursive formation, so that whatever emerges in the domain of art as one of its constituents such as artist as the subject, or artwork as the object, its position is shaped, rendered specific, possible or impossible, fertile or sterile, by the historical conditions in which it is taking place.

What Foucault calls ‘discourse’ is a group of statements that belong to the same discursive formation. He doesn’t describe discourse as an ideal, a timeless form that also possesses a history. Therefore, he raises the question and asks how and why the particular statement was able to emerge and become embodied at this point in time. It is historical – a fragment of history, a unity and discontinuity in history itself, posing the problem of its own limits, its divisions, its transformations, the specific modes of its temporality rather than its sudden irruption in the midst of complicities of time (Foucault, 1972: 117). From this point, ‘discursive practice’ can be defined more precisely that it is a body of anonymous, historical rules, always determined in time and space that have defined a given period, and for a given social, economic, geographical, or linguistic area, the conditions of operation of enunciative function (Foucault, 1972: 117).

Later on, Foucault deals with the *positivity* of a discourse before relating it to the historical a priori and archive. He has described a group of statements as discourse though a statement is not simply elementary unit of a discourse and described them as incomplete,

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fragmented figure and not with reference to the interiority of an intention, a thought, or a subject, but in accordance with the dispersion of exteriority. He says:

To describe a group of statements, in order to rediscover not moment or the trace of their origin, but the specific forms of accumulation, is certainly not to uncover an interpretation, to discover a foundation, or to free constituent acts; now is it to decide on a rationality, or to embrace a teleology. It is to establish what I am quite willing to call a *positivity*. To analyse a discursive formation therefore is to deal with a group of verbal performances at the level of the statements and of the form of positivity that characterizes them; or, more briefly, it is to define the type of positivity of a discourse. If, by substituting the analysis of rarity for the search of totalities, the description of relations of exteriority for the theme of the transcendental foundation, the analysis of accumulations for the quest of the origin, one is a positivist. (Foucault, 1972: 125)

From Vico and Shaftesbury to Baumgarten and Kant, aesthetics was born, first as an appendix to moral philosophy and a reflection on taste, then as a theorization of the kind of perfection that is accessible to the senses, finally it took the form of a critique of judgment. The eighteenth century gave birth to many of the modern positions that we now look back onto in order to construct their archaeology, fully aware that they are neither facts of nature, nor facts of theory, but facts of history (De Duve, 1996: 76). This archaeology is based on the historical *a priori* and the archive as described by Foucault.

The positivity of a discourse characterizes its unity throughout time and it cannot be reduced to any individual oeuvres, books, and texts. It defines a limited space of communication. A relatively small space, since it is far from possessing the breadth of a science with all its historical development, from its most distant origin to its present stage; but a more extensive space than the play of influences that have operated from one author to another, or than the domain of explicit polemics (Foucault, 1972: 126). Foucault claims that all the various figures and individuals we see in history do not communicate only by a logical succession of propositions that they advance, nor by the recurrence of themes, nor by the obstinacy of a meaning transmitted, forgotten, and rediscovered. If it were so, it would simply be an accumulation of knowledge in the level of rationality. However, they communicate or relate one's knowledge and thoughts to the others' by the form of positivity of their discourses.

This form of positivity (and the conditions of operation of the enunciative function) defines a field in which formal identities, thematic continuities, translations of concepts, and polemical interchanges may be deployed. Thus positivity plays the role of what might be called a *historical a priori*. (Foucault, 1972: 127)

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Of course, Foucault does not mean a condition of validity for judgements by the term *a priori*. What he means is a condition of reality for statements. He rather focuses on freeing the conditions of emergence of statements, the law of their coexistence with others, the specific form of their mode of being, the principles according to which they survive, become transformed, and disappear by it. Otherwise, it is not the question of finding what can legitimize an action. Apart from Kant's conceptualization of it, Foucault employs the term *a priori* that is not of truths that might never be said, or really given to experience; but the *a priori* of a history that is given, since it is that of things actually said. Therefore, one must consider the fact that discourse has not only a meaning or a truth, but a history, and a specific history. In addition to this, an *a priori* is always caught in its historicity. It does not constitute an atemporal structure. It is defined as "the group of rules that characterizes discursive practice, but these rules are not imposed from the outside on the elements that they relate together; they are caught up in the very things that they connect; and if they are not modified with the least of them, they modify them, and are transformed with them into certain decisive thresholds. The *a priori* of positivities is not only the system of a temporal dispersion; it is itself a transformable group" (Foucault, 1972: 127). In relation to *a priori* as defined by Foucault, the epistemological function of the work of art can be questioned. It is accepted by many that work of art does not give a verifiable knowledge on the contrary of concepts, but at the same time, one would accept that it contributes something to knowledge. Accordingly, next questions become where does this something come from, and what is the field in which it deploys its efficiency? The essentialist conception of art, as it was time idea of modernity and whole tradition it built by disentangling the former system of art, sees that great artist reveal in their works a truth which is concerning the essence of art and it is mostly linked with the essence of Man whose prediction was an eternal humanity that the work of art never ceases to reveal. However, today we can say that the conception of Man was constructed by the Enlightenment and the discourse of humanism. Throughout the analysis I have gone so far, it can be said that the contribution of work of art does not come from Man and does not refer to Man as if it was intemporal. That kind of knowledge offered by the work of art is as historical as is Man to the Enlightenment and its episteme. Thierry De Duve explains this:

In this sense, it is part of the epistemological framework but sometimes goes beyond it, not because it transcends the historical state of thought to move toward an Absolute, but because it works for its transformation. That certain works stay in force or seem to stay in force (they

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become “classicals,” which implies that they participate in a becoming) has to do with the fact that history is not only action but also a memory: as with any memory, it is vulnerable to lacunae and so bears a virtually unlimited potential for reactualization. (De Duve, 1991:59)

Following historical *a priori*s, the domain of statements is, therefore, articulated and characterized by different types of positivity, and divided up by distinct discursive formations. There are systems in the density of discursive practices that establish statements as events (with their own conditions and domain of appearance) and things (with their own possibility and field of use). They are all these system of statements (whether events or things) that Foucault propose to call *archive* (Foucault, 1972: 128). He does not use the term what is simply understood by it. He doesn't mean the sum of all the texts that a culture has kept upon its person as documents attesting to its own past, or as evidence of a continuing identity, nor does he mean the institutions, which, in a given society, make it possible to record and preserve those discourses that one wishes to remember and keep in circulation. He suggests that:

The archive is first the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events. But the archive is also that which determines that all these things said do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents; but they are grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time... It is that which defines the mode of occurrence of the statement-thing; it is *the system of its functioning*. Far from being that which unifies everything has been said in the great confused murmur of a discourse, far from being only that which ensures that we exist in the midst of preserved discourse, it is that which differentiates discourses in their multiple existence and specifies them in their own duration. (Foucault, 1972: 129)

The archive occupies a particular level than the language (*langue*) and the corpus. It is that of a practice which causes a multiplicity of statements to emerge. It reveals the rules of a practice that enables statements both to survive and to undergo regular modification. It is “*the general system of the formation and transformation of statements*” (Foucault, 1972: 130). The archive cannot be described in its totality. It emerges in fragments, regions, and levels. The analysis of the archive requires a privileged region: at once close to us, and different from our present existence, it is the border of time that surrounds our presence, which overhangs it, and which indicates it in its otherness; it is that which, outside ourselves, delimits us (Foucault,

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1972: 130). In this sense, Foucault's analysis does not establish the fact of an identity by the play of distinctions. What it establishes is that "we are difference, that our reason is the difference of discourses, our history the difference of times, our selves the difference of masks. That difference, far from being the forgotten and recovered origin, is this dispersion that we are and make" (Foucault, 1972: 131).

Archive is never entirely completed. One can never achieve to uncover it completely. It forms the general horizon to which the description of discursive formations, the analysis of positivities, the mapping of the enunciative field belong. In this endless search, Foucault uses the term *archaeology* to describe it. This term designates the general theme of a description that questions the already-said at the level of its existence: of the enunciative function that operates within it, of discursive formations, and the general archive system to which it belongs. Archaeology describes discourses as practices specified in the element of the archive (Foucault, 1972: 131). I have been attempting to follow this conception of archaeological approach in my thesis.

So far, in the preceding sections I have argued the transformation of the modern system of art, namely fine arts, and how it has been constituted with its specific subject and object as well as any other conditions of emergence in its historicity. The formation of the subject has been my primary concern in this. From now on, I will consider the history of modern art in relation to the avant-garde art. Modernity and avant-garde art are indissociable since their histories go parallel one to another. First, I will analyze what kind of ties avant-garde art and artists have established with politics. Then, I will discuss what kind of relationship art may have with politics in the new regime of art today. I don't claim the modern system of fine arts has totally collapsed but it is declining. It emerged in its historicity and ended up in a situation where art itself became only self referential and had been isolated or alienated by the society to the contrary of old systems. I won't propose the old system of art for today, because it is obvious that history may not be linear, but it never repeats either. In this attempt, I will continue to follow a nominalist methodology which can roughly be described as the doctrine that only individuals or, say artists as quoted from Gombrich, and disparate things exist and that our classification of them are only contingent and changeable inventions. The aesthetic of such nominalism is the one that opens these ideas to our judgement. It is an aesthetic not of taste or beautiful appearance, but of the invention of new sensibilities, new concepts, new techniques

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and ideas of technique in response to those incommensurabilities that question our practices and that eventualize our relation to them.

3. The Critical Function of Art and the Politics of the Avant-Garde

As the category of “beaux-arts” emerged in France, the term “avant-garde” also has an older history in France. “Avant-garde” – or advance guard, or vanguard- connotes a military meaning and is encountered in the language of warfare. However, the modern notion of avantgarde is more related to the language, theory, and practice of a comparatively recent kind of warfare, the revolutionary civil war. In this sense, it can be dated back to French Revolution. It is not by coincidence that the use of avant-garde in a literary-artistic context was directly derived from the language of revolutionary politics. The early project of art history and the enterprise of modernism are connected in a willful and almost paradoxical way. The true physiognomy of modernism can be seen in the conceptual pair of history and style. Today, it is accused of having a one-sided picture of history and a tyrannical will to style, a charge that is beyond dispute. “The great political movements designed the future, just as the arts did, by their own different means. Both movements were inspired utopian ideals they hoped to realize in the future. Social and aesthetic intentions were closely linked. Both movements felt the need for liberation from the historicism of the nineteenth century, where their roots lay, and proclaimed the advent of a ‘new history’ or a ‘new art’” (Belting, 2003: 27-28).

Insofar, the idea of modernism implied a radical criticism of the past, a definite commitment to change and a projection into the future. It is not difficult to understand why the moderns, especially during the last two centuries, favored the application of the metaphor of the avant-garde to various domains such as literature, arts and politics. Historically, the avantgarde started by criticizing certain constitutive elements of the idea of modernity and by making them into cornerstones of a revolutionary ethos. Thus, during the first half of the nineteenth century and later, the term, “avant-garde” – both politically and culturally – was little more than a radicalized and strongly utopianized version of modernity (Calinescu, 2003: 95). Later, by the second decade of twentieth century, avant-garde, as an artistic concept, had become comprehensive enough to designate not one or the other, but all the new schools whose aesthetic programs were defined, by and large, by their rejection of the past and by the cult of the new.

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“The modernists swallowed the values, which modern mentality hallowed and modern society swore to serve; they also firmly believed in the vector-like nature of time, convinced that the time-flow has a direction, that whatever comes later is (must be, ought to be) also better, while everything receding into the past is also worse - backward, retrograde, inferior” (Bauman, 1997: 96).

From the start of modernity art has begun to manifest a certain dependence on theory (Groys, 2012). Followingly, the idea of artistic avant-garde appears twofold. It defines the type of subject suitable to the modernist vision and appropriate, according to this vision, for connecting the aesthetic to the political. Its success is due less to the convenient connection it proposes between the artistic idea of innovation and the idea of politically-guided change, than to the more convert connection it established between two ideas of the avant-garde (Rancière, 2007: 29).

For the first characteristic of the avant-garde, it can be said that the appearance of avantgarde historically connected with the moment when some socially “alienated” artists felt the need to disrupt and completely overthrow the whole bourgeois system of values, with its philistine pretensions to universality (Calinescu, 2003:119). The construction of new category of art in modernity suggested an autonomous art and disinterested artworks, so that art could relatively have a liberty from the other domains of human activity. It was theorized by leading philosophers in history of thought such as Kant, Schiller and Schlegel. In regard to this artistic discourse, this condition was also supported in non-discursive level such as institutions. As a result, there happened a distance between social life and the art, or at least it was believed to be. That was the main reason that directed so-called avant-gardes to act against the system in which it existed. It should be recalled that the story of art in the last two centuries has been dismantling the tradition in form. Therefore, it was separating itself from the social life by questioning the notion of art. It was a journey to find the essence of art. In this search, one characteristic of the avant garde art has been criticism of this distance between art and social life by certain art movements, so the avant-garde does not announce one style or another; it is in itself a style, or an anti-style. Accordingly, this attempt revolved around the questions; for example, to what degree does expressionism fulfill the avant-garde’s role of producing a fundamental re-thinking of the artist’s social practice, together with a full-scale interrogation of the social and institutional conditions of art? To what extent does it remain caught within modernism’s

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predilection for aesthetic autonomy and its drive for purely technical and formal progress? According to P. Bürger, it is the particular character of the avant-garde's response to aestheticism that is important (Bürger, 2002). However, this distance could never be restored to the condition as it were before modernity and this purpose of avant-garde art failed when it was included by the system to which it was opposing. In that sense, Roland Barthes says:

(Avant-garde is) a product of that moment in history when to certain of its writers the bourgeoisie appeared as an aesthetically retrograde force, one to be contested. For the artist, most likely, the avant-garde has always been a means of resolving a specific historical contradiction: that of an unmasked bourgeoisie which could no longer proclaim its original universalism except in the form of a violent protest turned against itself; initially by an aesthetic violence directed against the philistines, then, with the increasing commitment, by an ethical violence, when it became the duty of a life style to contest the bourgeois order (among the surrealists, for example); but never by a political violence. (Barthes, 2000:67)

Barthes gives the reason of avant-garde's death by its recognition as artistically significant by the same class whose values it so severely rejected. This aim of avant-garde art has been to attack the existing social system and to remove the distance between art and social life. It failed because it was neutralized by the inclusion of the system. However, this is not the aspect of avant-garde art I want to consider in relation to politics.

3.1. The Avant-Garde Art and the Critical Function

Another dimension of avant-garde has been its will to accompany social movements and its critical function in its engagement to politics. In this engagement, the idea of the avant-garde was also linked to the ideology of progress which was the core notion of modernity. While it was in active use and carried by history, it meant in the simplest sense that art had to accompany the project of social, political, or ideological emancipation. Therefore, art was conceived with a critical function organically linking the aesthetic domain with the ethical, or, in concrete "infrastructural" terms, the artistic with the political. Accordingly, Thierry De Duve formulates the mission of the avant-garde art in a single question: Is artistic activity able to maintain a critical function if it is cut off from an emancipation project? (De Duve, 1996: 428). There can be found many resources and different conceptualizations of the avant-garde. However, I will

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basically follow the avant-garde theory of De Duve since he relates the history of avant-garde theoretically and practically to that of modernity and the Enlightenment, which is my primary concern in the thesis. De Duve's study is unique in trying to define the nature of the avant-garde not only by relating it to the literary-historical context but with regard to certain transformations in the formation of the social function of art. Hence, I intend to follow the perspective of the avant-garde as suggested by De Duve and analyze the constitutives of the question formulated above.

In such a question, De Duve finds two assumptions that when artistic activity is not cut off from an emancipation project, it has a critical function; and secondly, that artistic activity might be cut off from it. Moreover, De Duve sees a prejudice in the formulation that artistic activity should have a critical function which would set the true value of art or define the quality in art. Thus, it is necessary to reformulate it by going over both the assumptions and the prejudice.

When looked at the given question, two terms are caught in attention in this context: the "emancipation project" and the "critical function". Emancipation connotes liberation but it means more than that especially in the sense that modernity has ascribed to it. The word is used to indicate the premature granting of legal, civic, or political (De Duve calls them ethical in general) majority to a minor. De Duve further explains what "granting" means: you have not yet reached adulthood, which would be the fully rational and autonomous subject of the Enlightenment. "However, I consider you to be mature enough to be able to morally anticipate your majority, and as a consequence I grant you autonomy, in other words, the right to free selfdetermination" (De Duve, 1996: 429). After that, the expression "critical function" in this context refers to a vigilance that also operates in the ethical domain. De Duve infers that artistic activity would function as judge, guardian, and guarantor of the achievement of an ethical or political project of emancipation. This is approximately the meaning of the first assumption for him.

When continuing to analyze this content, another question appears: "Given that one has as a project the premature granting of ethical majority to minors, who is this 'one,' and who are these minors?" Obviously, this "one" cannot be anyone except someone who is already in his majority, otherwise how could he decide who deserves emancipation? And he could not be anyone but someone who is already in power, otherwise how could he grant autonomy? Thus, it can be said that it is a major minority acting on behalf of and for the benefit of a minor

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majority. As caught in attention, the idea that artists are endowed with visionary powers, that they are indeed “mirrors of futurity,” and as such in advance of their time, was supported by the idea of progress. M. Calinescu points out Victor Hugo and his enthusiastic approval of a broadly defined intellectual avant-garde in *Les Misérables* (1862):

The encyclopedists, led by Diderot, the physiocrats, led by Turgot, the philosophers, led by Voltaire, and the utopists, led by Rousseau – these are the four sacred legions. They are the four avant-gardes of mankind as it marches toward the four cardinal points of progress – Diderot toward the beautiful, Turgot toward the useful, Voltaire toward truth, Rousseau toward justice. (Calinescu, 2003: 108)

While the term was being developed intellectually in politics, two conditions were basic to the existence and meaningful activity of an properly named avant-garde (social, political, cultural) : First, the possibility that its representatives be conceived of, or conceive of themselves, as being in advance of their time (obviously this does not go without a progressive or at least goal-oriented philosophy of history); and secondly, the idea that there is a struggle to be fought against an enemy symbolizing the forces of stagnation, the tyranny of the past, the old forms and ways of thinking, which tradition imposes on us like fetters to keep us from moving forward (Calinescu, 2003: 121-122). As the term itself indicates, the avant-garde is in advance. Its advance lies in the adult status which derives from the self-consciousness of the avant-garde. It enjoys sooner than the “minors” who are to be emancipated. Who are they?

Ethics—whether based on the representativity of the people's elected officials, or rooted in Rousseau's notion of the general will, or articulated in Hegelian or Marxist dialectics, or justified by the democratic centralism within the proletarian party—requires the emancipation of all humanity: all men and women, universally, with no restrictions of class, race, or sex. Consequently, it appears...that emancipation rhymes with revolution, peace with progress, power struggles with the direction of history, and the motto that summarizes the project—Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité— with universality. (De Duve, 1996: 430)

In this direction of history, artists linked their activity with such an emancipation project anticipated by the Enlightenment or were invited to such leading roles by philosophers. Back in history, Saint Simon and his followers are first to systematically give this role to artists. The very term “avant-garde” was first used figuratively to designate radical or advanced activity in both the artistic and social realms. The clarity of Bauman’s description justifies quotation in full:

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Literally, "avant-garde" means the vanguard, an advance post, a spearhead or the first line of a moving army: a detachment which moves in front of the main body of the armed forces--but remains ahead only to pave the way for the rest of the army ... The avantgarde gives the distance which separates it from the bulk a temporal dimension: what is being done *at present* by a small advance unit will be repeated *later* by all. The guard is seen as "advanced" on the assumption that "the rest will follow suit." It goes without saying that we know for sure on which side is the front and where is the rear, where is "before" and where "behind." (We know too that the stretch between them does not stand still--the front line itself is on the move.) The concept of the avantgarde conveys the idea of an essentially orderly space and time, and of an essential co-ordination of the two orders. In a world in which one can speak of the avant-garde, "forward" and "backward" have, simultaneously, spatial and temporal dimensions. (Bauman, 1997: 96)

It was in this sense that it was first employed by the French Utopian socialist Saint-Simon who regarded artists, along with scientists and industrialists as the elite leadership of the new social order. The principle of social organization which made the artists prominent elements in the leadership of a new kind of society had already been formulated by Saint-Simon himself and elaborated upon by him and his disciples in early 1820s. To Saint-Simon, the artist is the "man of imagination" and as such, he is capable not only of foreseeing the future but also of creating it. In *De l'organisation sociale* (1825), Saint-Simon envisions the artists as opening the "march," the triumphant march toward the well-being and happiness of all mankind (Calinescu, 2003: 102).

Olinde Rodrigues who was a Saint Simonian invites artists in his essay, *L'artiste, le savant et l'industriel* (1825), to "serve as [the people's] avant-garde" insisting that "the power of the arts is indeed the most immediate and fastest way" to social, political, and economic reform (cited in Calinescu, 2003: 103). Rodrigues argues that if artists have previously performed only a secondary role in social life that was due to their lack of a "common impulsion" and "general idea":

It is we, artists, that will serve as your avant-garde; the power of the arts is indeed the most immediate and the fastest. We have weapons of all sorts: when we want to spread new ideas among people, we carve them in marble or paint them on canvas; we popularize them by means of poetry and music; by turns, we resort to the lyre or the flute, the ode or the song, history or the novel; the theatre stage is open to us, and it is mostly from there that our influence exerts itself electrically, victoriously. We address ourselves to imagination and feelings of people: we are therefore supposed to achieve the most vivid and decisive kind of action; and if today we seem to play no role or at best a very secondary one, that has been the result of the arts' lacking a

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common drive and a general idea, which are essential to their energy and success. (cited in Calinescu, 2003: 103)

There is the fact that the use of avant-garde in the early nineteenth century in artistic context by political thinkers has very strongly military connotations. Calinescu pays attention to the fact that this is why we find such military or quasi-military notions as: “march” “power”, “arms”, “victorious”, “decisive action” etc.

The main difference between the political and the artistic avant-gardes of the last one hundred years consists in the latter’s insistence on the independently revolutionary potential of art, while the former tends to justify the opposite idea, namely, that art should submit itself to the requirements and needs of the political revolutionists (Calinescu, 2003: 104). The priority of the radical revolutionary implication of the term “avant-garde” rather than the purely aesthetic one more usually applied in the twentieth century, and the relation of this political meaning to the artistic subsidy art one, is again made emphatically clear in this passage by the Fourierist art critic and theorist Laverdant, in his *De la Mission de l’art et du role des artistes* of 1845:

Art, the expression of society, manifests, in its highest soaring the most advanced social tendencies; it is the forerunner and the revealer. Therefore to know whether art worthily fulfills its proper mission as initiator, whether the artist is truly of the avant-garde, one must know where Humanity is going, know what destiny of tuman race is... (cited in Nochlin, 1989: 2)

The subject in the realm of artistic avant-garde was, therefore, also supported in the discursive level by such philosophers and art critics. The set of relations in which the artistic subject emerged established his enunciative position theoretically as well as practically. It is a historical fact that modern art has considered its critical function as the guarantor of an ethical emancipation project aligned with history, anchored in the political field, and in ideological solidarity with revolution. De Duve gives the following examples to this: David and the French Revolution, Géricault and the one of 1830, Courbet and the one of 1848, Tatlin and the one of 1917, and so on. Therefore, De Duve sees it as the phenomenon defining the very notion of an artistic avant-garde and defines its essential ideological purport to be the transitive link it establishes between ethics and aesthetics (De Duve, 1996: 431). If this characteristic of avantgarde art is related to the first assumption stated in the beginning, it can be said that the statement “when artistic activity is not severed from an emancipation project, it has a critical

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function” is based on similar historical sequences. At issue is whether it is also rooted in the supporting ideology, in other words, in the prejudice also mentioned earlier—that it is good for artistic activity to have a critical function and that this defines quality in art. If one replies “yes”, then the presence or the absence of critical function would work simultaneously as a criterion of periodization and of value.

It is also important to outline the entwined relationships of the avant-garde and modern society that have validated the possibility of its existence. Until now, I have considered the history of avant-garde art with regard to that of the Enlightenment and modernity. If this critical function is attributed to artistic avant-garde in this certain period of history, it had to be absent from artistic production prior to the historical emergence of the project of humanity's emancipation. As I have pointed out in the previous chapter, the system of art, namely fine arts or modern art, was not normative nor autonomous before modernity (the question of the autonomy of art is a complicated debate as it was already Adorno's dilemma but it can at least be said that the autonomy of art had not even emerged in discursive level). Therefore, the function of art before the Enlightenment rises as a question. Art was a part of social life before it has been transformed into the category of fine arts and if I should roughly say again, its function was to honor the dead, serve the Church, ornate bourgeois interiors, placate taste, and so on, but its function was never—at least, never programmatically—to exert critical vigilance over the ethical realm as emphasized by De Duve. Once the transformation occurs, the function of critical vigilance radically severs artworks from their pasts and also presupposes the same break on their own. As a result, the only modern art of significance and quality becomes avantgarde art, and any art that is satisfied with exerting functions that predate modernity (placating taste, for instance) loses its value as well as its critical function simply by being retarded, retrograde. To depart from this idea, De Duve defines the problem twofold and as the product of disenchantment:

We easily see the problem that is our legacy, and we are all aware of it. It is twofold, and it is the product of disenchantment. On the one hand, the political has betrayed the ethical; on the other, the ideological has hijacked the aesthetic. In the political sphere, revolutions have bred the Terror and the Gulag, and their emancipation project can no longer be trusted. In the artistic sphere, the very idea of the avant-garde no longer has much currency; revisionism rules the day. (De Duve, 1996: 432)

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It should be noted here that before art could gain a critical function as well as its autonomy, first of all, it should be separated from the previous conditions such as the role it played in rituals regarding the religious domain. Art could not engage politics actively while it was a part of social life as it was before because it was not an independent field of activity. An art that is integral part of ritual cannot be harnessed because it does not exist as an independent sphere. Here, the work of art is part of the ritual. Only an art that has become (relatively) autonomous can be harnessed. The autonomy of art is thus simultaneously the precondition for the later heteronomy (Bürger, 2002: 41). It could only act so as far as it gained its autonomy (relatively at least). Hence, autonomy of art was a historical condition of emergence for the critical function of art.

Later, De Duve turns to the second assumption underlying the question: it might be true that artistic activity, from now on, is severed from the emancipation project. It may not be true for everyone, especially if one thinks of modernity as an unfinished project like Habermas. The chances are that the emancipation project is no longer tenable, for having generated disillusionment and degenerated into totalitarianism. Hence, the new question turns out to be: "Is artistic activity capable of maintaining a critical function, granted that it is now indeed severed from an emancipation project?" (De Duve, 1996: 434)

Thierry de Duve develops the possible answers from both sides. The revisionists say "no" and they base their argument on the idea that modernity is over which means a break has certainly happened. The terms "postmodernity" and "postmodern" would show that break. In such a case, they would claim "to abandon the emancipation project", which would also imply the reinstatement of premodernist values as De Duve concludes (De Duve, 1996: 434). If critical function and quality in art do not run together any longer, then placating taste, ornating bourgeois interiors, or even (replacing the Church) exalting multinational companies again become permissible. This is precisely the reproach expressed by the last partisans of the avantgarde, who reply: "Yes, even cut off from a project of emancipation, art can and must keep its critical function." However, De Duve says that "they do periodize as well, proclaiming the advent of postmodernity, since they give to the term "critical function" a meaning that is no longer modern, or is so only negatively" (De Duve, 1996: 434).

On the contrary to such a claim shifting the context of critical function, let's put it once again what the critical function fundamentally was as long as modernity lasted or as long as the

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avant-garde was carried by history. It implied transitivity from aesthetics to ethics, from art to politics, or vice versa. Hence, it was obligatory for it to deny any kind of autonomy to the aesthetic or artistic field in relation to the ethical or political sphere. When looked at from the artist's side, "the freedom to make forms –or anti-forms- could never be simply formal and autonomous (as in art-for-art's-sake), but it had at least to stand for an incitement to take similar steps toward freedom in the social and historical realms. Art would be considered revolutionary and emancipatory only to the degree that it actually acted on "life" which is civic life." When looked at from the position of audience, "the delight in the forms created by the artist had to avoid reabsorption into the private space of merely subjective personal pleasure; at the very least, it had to work as a stimulus for desires for change which, in some future time, would subvert the social order" (De Duve, 1996: 434). As long as artistic activity is not severed from emancipation project, critical function and utopian function go together. They are one the same. In other words, utopia represents the ends and critique represents the means. "Utopia is a promise, a projection into the future, an anticipation, a daydream; and critique is the vigilance watching over the conditions that make the dream possible, translating itself into the rejection of the past and the negation of the present, and implementing a strategy for change" (De Duve, 1996: 434-435).

How can a critique be evaluated after the loss of the project of emancipation and the collapse of utopias from the point of the last defenders of avant-garde, or namely neo-avantgardes? De Duve counts a number of evaluations: "By turning utopian critique into the critique of utopias. By accusing the "historical avant-gardes" of having been recuperated, autonomized, and subsequently betrayed by the neo-avant-gardes that followed. By applying critical vigilance not so much to the conditions of the dream but rather to the conditions of its failure. By showing this through artworks that manage to negate both existing social reality and the flight into utopia, works that no longer anticipate but rather state the fact that anticipation was premature. Thus artistic activity maintains its critical function. The freedom enjoyed by the artist within a free-market society should only be used to show how it is alienated or illusory, to reveal that such freedom is only an alibi for oppression or a privilege acquired at the expense of the others' freedom. Critical function is still maintained. From aesthetics to ethics, from the artistic to the political, the implication remains transitive, and this is what matters" (De Duve, 1996: 435). While avant-garde art established this kind of relationship it found with the

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acceptance in modernism, it became, in turn, a victim of history rather than that a Victory who would force his own laws upon history (Belting, 2003: 168).

In the beginning, the question was: is artistic activity able to maintain a critical function if cut off from an emancipation project? The answer to this can be affirmative or negative. I have considered the two different standpoints above: the affirmative answer from the point of revisionists; and the negative answer from the point of the defenders of the avant-garde. The former pays by relinquishing all ethical ambition for art, the latter with a sense of despair. I have attempted to reformulate the question in the path of De Duve who claims that there are two assumptions and a prejudice in the formulation stated in the first instance and that he does not agree. The second assumption shared by both sides -that artistic activity might very well be cut off from an emancipation project- is also agreed by De Duve himself which is also a crucial point for my thesis. Indeed, following De Duve's analysis of the avant-garde, I would like to argue that artistic activity should be cut off from an emancipation project.

3.2. The Critical Function without the Avant-Garde Art

In the previous section, I have considered the idea of avant-garde art with its dilemmas in its historicity. Avant-garde art's engagement with politics in relation to the emancipation project is problematic because the ideology of the movement is supported for everyone in such a case. This ideology namely has been humanism for centuries though it is too supple and too diverse in itself. Foucault distinguishes the Enlightenment from humanism. To him, the former is "an event, or a set of events and complex historical processes, that is located at a certain point in the development of European societies. As such, it includes elements of social transformation, types of political institutions, forms of knowledge, projects of rationalization of knowledge and practices..." and the latter "is a theme or, rather, a set of themes that have reappeared on several occasions, over time, in European societies; these themes, always tied to value judgments, have obviously varied greatly in their content, as well as in the values they have preserved. Furthermore, they have served as a critical principle of differentiation. In the seventeenth century, there was a humanism that presented itself as a critique of Christianity or of religion in general; there was a Christian humanism opposed to an ascetic and much more

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theocentric humanism. In the nineteenth century, there was a suspicious humanism, hostile and critical toward science, and another that, to the contrary, placed its hope in that same science. Marxism has been a humanism; so have existentialism and personalism; there was a time when people supported the humanistic values represented by National Socialism, and when the Stalinists themselves said they were humanists” (Foucault, 1984: 43-44). As Foucault indicates, the conception of humanism changes in history but it still remains the same in the sense that it acts on behalf of all. That is what matters regarding the subject I have been considering.

The question asked in the beginning should be revised now. After having been decided that artistic activity should be severed from an emancipation project, it can be said that in the term “emancipation project”, the problematic word is not “emancipation” but “project”. If it is analyzed separately, emancipation means the premature granting of a legal, civic or political (De Duve calls them ethical in general) majority status to a minor. Furthermore, “emancipated humanity is not an adult humanity; it is a humanity that is allowed to anticipate its adulthood, in spite of the fact that it has not reached it, but *as if* it had reached it” (De Duve, 1996: 437). De Duve refers to Kant in this statement. Here “as if” is the regulative term. After the demise of the Enlightenment and its “project,” it can definitely be said that humanity will never be ready for adulthood in the sense of the entirely rational and autonomous state of the enlightened subject. Humans are and always will be in the need of social existence in order to not only survive but also have a “good life”. At this point, it is important to remember that the idea of “good life” was the main concern in Antiquity. It is a notion on which the entire Greek philosophy was grounded. Aristotle’s premise that “good life” can only be reached in the city. He argues in *The Politics* that it is part of the nature of human beings that they are political or adapted for life in the city-state. This condition forces humans to an ethical behavior instead of an instinctual one. Consequently, what follows this is progress in civilization, democratic freedom, and international political order which could be seen as humans’ “nature.” When we look at the current state of the world, it is obvious that there is still a long way to go and it will always be too soon to grant autonomy to human beings. This is why humanity cannot be freed but only emancipated (De Duve, 1996: 437). Accordingly, emancipation is closely linked to the ethics. Ethics, as Agamben points out, is the simple fact of one’s own existence as possibility or potentiality. He says that:

THE FACT that must constitute the point of departure for any discourse on ethics is that there is no essence, no historical or spiritual vocation, no biological destiny that humans must enact or

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realize. This is the only reason why something like an ethics can exist, because it is clear that if humans were or had to be this or that substance, this or that destiny, no ethical experience would be possible-there would be only tasks to be done. (Agamben, 2007: 43)

When we turn to the second term “project”, it can be said that the emancipation project was only a project that has declared itself ready to emancipate humankind. But inasmuch as it remained a project, emancipation itself was withheld and necessarily postponed. Its premise would be to recognize the premature nature of autonomy, and its first act would be to grant autonomy, yet *as if* humanity were ready to spontaneously order its conduct according to maxims like *Liberté, Égalité, Fraternité* (De Duve, 1996: 441). De Duve points out that saying the motto of the French Revolution is a maxim that precisely implies the “as if”. It is obvious that men are neither free nor equals nor brothers. When it is defended, it is only thought that some day men will be able to be free, equals, and brothers. That is the goal. Now the means remain to be fixed. “Revolutions begin to go wrong when maxim and project are confounded. Then an avant-garde takes possession of the emancipation maxim and claims to direct history in the name of the end of history, to educate people in the name of the people, to postpone the advent of liberation because humanity is not ready yet” (De Duve, 1996: 442). Those seen immature, not fully developed, retarded, the modernists wished to show the light, to teach, to educate and to convert; the modernists could, after all, remain in the avant-garde position only when treating the others as-not-yet-fulfilled, sunk in the darkness, waiting for the enlightenment (Bauman, 1997: 98-99) This characteristic is not only peculiar to artistic avant-garde. It is the ideology of the avant-garde itself. In the field of politics:

Thus, Robespierre: "No freedom for the enemies of freedom!" Terror begins, and we have not yet seen the last of the despot/philosopher duo: for example, there is Hegel believing that he sees the Spirit of the World passing under his window in the guise of Napoleon; there is Lenin appropriating Marx; there is Mao deifying himself into "the Mao-Zedong-thought" Terror has begun, and soon will come the dictatorship of the proletariat, spearhead of emancipated humanity. But the proletariat is not ready yet; it will have to be educated first. Enter the Party, avant-garde of the avant-garde. But the Party itself needs to be kept under the iron fist of the Central Committee, until... (De Duve, 1996: 442)

Terror and violence become the consequence of ideology of the avant-garde that confounds emancipation as a maxim and emancipation as a project. It is argued above that when not severed from a project of emancipation, artistic activity has a critical function since it is the

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emancipation project that defines the very character of the critical function. Therefore, a reformulation of the question is offered by De Duve: “when not severed from a *maxim* of emancipation, artistic activity does have a critical function.” And suddenly, the term “critical” takes on quite another meaning.

After this point, what does the term “critical” mean for the *maxim* of emancipation? One must act, in art as well as in politics, in aesthetics as well as in ethics, *as if* men were free, equals, and brothers, that is, *as if* they were adult, rational, and reasonable beings. De Duve finds the universality of the Idea of humanity in what Kant calls *sensus communis*, a common feeling. He states that without assuming that it exists within each person, it is impossible to avoid oppression, inequalities, and wars. The Idea of humanity requires our behaviour to be regulated according to that end. An end which is therefore an end without end (in Kant’s vocabulary; *purposiveness without a purpose*), a goal with no historical ending, no prescribed term, and no other purpose but respecting the maxim, with no criterion justifying the means (De Duve, 1996: 444).

The aesthetic has its place somewhere in-between the theoretical and the ethical, the material and the ideological, the physical and the spiritual. Its realm is feeling, and feeling is by necessity subjective, personal. As Kant distinguishes it in his *Third Critique*:

Thesis: The judgement of taste is not based upon concepts; for, if it were, it would be open to dispute (decision by means of proofs).

Antithesis: The judgement of taste based upon concepts; for otherwise, despite diversity of judgements, there could be no room even for contention in the matter (a claim to the necessary agreement of others with this judgement). (Kant, 2001: 215)

Kant solves the antinomy of taste over *sensus communis* that he arrives from the *supersensible* and the faculty of judging. Hence, Kant’s *sensus communis* – the feeling of belonging to the “Family of Man” – is not a common demonstrable reality. It still makes a passage from the aesthetic to the ethical necessary; nonetheless, it is not transitive and ideological as adapted by the avant-gardes but rather reflexive and analogical. No one can say that the artistic freedom stems from political freedom, nor conversely, that artistic liberation or revolution necessarily announces, prepares, provokes, or accompanies political liberation or revolution. At most, it may be said that aesthetic freedom, or lack of it, is to art what ethical freedom, or lack of it, is to politics.

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From now on, it is done with the two assumptions underlying question raised by the collapse of the ideology of progress. In the reformulation, De Duve replaces the “emancipation project” with the “emancipation maxim,” and art’s critical function is considered as being reflexive and analogical rather than transitive and ideological. And for the prejudice specified in underlying question: It is good for artistic activity to have a critical function. That would define both the value of art and quality in art. Nevertheless, he points out a difference again. An expression like “the value of art” (meaning the general value of art, or the value of art in general) is meaningless as long as it is not mentioned which works of art are evaluated. Furthermore, he says that quality in art cannot be defined either, except by pointing at particular works, by judging them to have quality and by offering their unique qualities as examples (not as models) of the kind of quality to be expected from all art, if it is to be on this level. In other words, value and quality are themselves the outcome of a reflexive judgement based on feeling – Kant’s definition of an aesthetic judgement (De Duve, 1996: 448).

As for art’s critical function, when a person senses that critical function is active in the work of art he’s looking at, it prompts him to activate in himself a critical function. The prompting itself happens at the same level. It is reflexive and does not show a general artistic quality. It can only be adapted to the works of art in their singularity. This critical function is in Kant’s terminology “the quickening of imagination and understanding in their free play”. Therefore, there cannot be general established criteria for art’s critical function.

They do not, like **logical attributes**, represent what lies in our concepts of the sublimity and majesty of creation, but something else, which gives the imagination cause to spread itself over a multitude of related representations, which let one think more than one can express in a concept determined by words. (Kant, 2001: 193)

The critical function of artistic activity is exerted through this aesthetic judgment. It offers an analogical and reflexive bridge linking knowledge to will, theoretical or ideological activity to practical or ethical action, as De Duve States but it doesn't confound them; it doesn't make one derivative of the other. It abandons the work of art not to its autonomy, but, as stated in Kant, to its *heautonomy*.

Hence judgment also possesses an a priori principle for the possibility of nature, but one that holds only for the subject, a principle by which judgment prescribes, not to nature (which would be autonomy) but to itself (which is heautonomy), a law for its reflection on nature This law could be called the *law of the specification of nature* in terms of its empirical laws...So if we say

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that nature makes its universal laws specific in accordance with the principle of purposiveness for our cognitive power . . . then we are neither prescribing a law to nature, nor learning one from it by observation (although observation can confirm the mentioned principle). For it is a principle not of determinate but merely of reflective judgment. (Kant, 1987: 25)

De Duve's inference from this passage of Kant is that it doesn't lead to the alternative between art as a means and art as an end in itself, so it cannot be claimed that art can be entirely autonomous. Art or aesthetic experience is not autonomous but *heautonomous*, and De Duve claims that has a lot to do with the nature of the reflexive judgment which finds an "as if" end in itself. "The 'as if' is the very movement of the mind by which we extract content from the form of works of art. It is unconscious, accompanied by a feeling, and not something that has to do with concepts or ideas" (De Duve, 2010: 132-133).

After De Duve's evaluation of art's critical function and autonomy, it can be said that independence does not necessarily mean autonomy, while the slogan "art for art's sake" demanded precisely autonomy, the right to self-government and self-assertation, not cutting the ties with the social life and surrendering the right to influence its course (Bauman, 1997: 102). Critical function as carried by artistic avant-garde goes hand to hand with ideology regarding emancipation and autonomy. Therefore, the demise of avant-garde is connected with the rejection of ideology. Foucault draws a close relationship between ideology and repression. He finds these two concepts negative, "psychological," and insufficiently analytical. He specifies three reasons. Firstly, it always stands in virtual opposition to something else which is supposed to count as truth. According to Foucault, the problem is in seeing historically how effects of truth are produced within certain discourses which are neither true nor false in themselves. Otherwise, it is not distinguishing the line between what falls under the category of scientificity or truth, which comes some other category. Second reason is that the concept of ideology refers necessarily to something of the order of a subject. Finally, ideology stands in a secondary position relative to something which functions as its infrastructure, as its material, economic determinant etc. For these three reasons, Foucault approaches the notion of ideology with circumspection (Foucault, 1984: 60). Later on, he relates the notion of ideology to power regarding truth. What follows this notion in relation to the power is repression. I will not get into the subject of ideology, truth and power further here but consider them in the subsequent sections.

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In conclusion, it is obvious that the core of the problem is that there is no criterion for establishing an appropriate correlation between art and politics. This should not be confused with the claim of certain discourses that art and politics should not be mixed, yet there is no formula for such an appropriate correlation. Various theories have been produced regarding the positions of the subject in relation to the politics after the second half the nineteenth century. The stream of avant-garde provided artist the justifying ground to act as political subject in the field of exteriority. Epistemic formation of this system of art is closely linked to the Enlightenment and modernity. However, once the end of the Enlightenment is accepted, the legitimate ground of the avant-garde art also vanished. Therefore, criticism in art evolved into a different vision. Critical judgement depends on artwork itself rather than a theory and that judgement deriving from experience is singular in nature. As a consequence, the question of the role of the artist should not be sought in a sort of “universal intellectual” but it can be related to what Foucault defines as “specific intellectual” if the artist is to act politically. I don’t intend to ascribe an intellectualism to the artist, but, later I will rather argue this position of artists regarding power and discourse in relation the demise of the political role of the artistic avantgardes.

In the next section, I intend to discuss the demise of the master narratives and the transformation of the norms of the modern art. This point of view will contribute to a new understanding of “political art” within the frame of contemporary artistic practices. It will also support my point of view on the invalidity of the ideologies as political motivations in the field of art.

4. The End of Art and Its Politics

So far, I have considered the discursive formation of the new system of art, namely fine arts in second section and the engagement of art, namely avant-garde art, to the politics in the third section. I also argued that one of the characteristics of avant-garde art was its conditions of existence in relation to the formation of a new system of art in modernity. Further on, I have related to the failure of avant-garde art to its ideological engagement to the politics. Finally, I have claimed the critical function of art in the singularity of an artwork. Now, I would like to

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emphasize this point by analyzing the thesis of the “end of art” and the end of ideologies regarding master narratives.

The thesis of the end of art appeared in the philosophy of art rather than in the field of art itself. While this thesis was directed, on the one hand, to contemporary art by critics and philosophers such as D. Kuspit and J. Baudrillard and judging the quality of art made in the present, on the other hand, it is also developed by art critic and philosopher Arthur Danto and art historian Hans Belting, both referring to Hegel in their arguments. The latter sets forth a different perspective by the end of art thesis. I will consider the end of art thesis in Hegel’s aesthetic in reference to them rather than evaluating the quality of contemporary art. This sort of vision obviously would require generalizations in art and accordingly would be inappropriate for my thesis because I have based my thesis not judging the quality of artworks in a particular epoch but the epistemic formations of an epoch that is more specifically modernity. This section will be comprehensive for my thesis since I have been arguing the role of art in society. And the end of art thesis is more about the relationship between art and society as it is defined by Hegel through various stages. Hegel’s thesis situates art in a historical context. However, I must state from the beginning that Hegel’s historicism is totally different that the historicist approach I’ve been following in relation to nominalism. The main difference in this issue is that while nominalist approach rejects the notion of essence and deconstructs what is at stake, Hegel’s historicism presupposes an essence which is actualized throughout the history. Therefore, it is important to avoid this sort of confusion before including Hegel’s arguments in my thesis. The reason that I include Hegel in my thesis despite this important difference is that Hegel’s view suggests removing the constraints brought by the narratives, and specifically manifestos in the art of last hundred years. It is also important to understand the central notions of art history since his theory has provided the art historians a legitimate ground.

First of all, it should be emphasized that the thesis of the end of art does not claim that there won’t be any (production of) art anymore. Art goes on and will go on being made and created. However what changes is its relation to history and society. From this standpoint, the thesis of the end of art is closely linked to the entire philosophy of Hegel. Hegel claimed that art, philosophy, and religion were the three moments of the “Absolute Spirit”, so the three are essentially transformation of one another, or modulations in different keys of identical theme. As for art, Hegel states:

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Art, considered in its highest vocation, is and remains for us a thing of the past. Thereby it has lost for us genuine truth and life, and has rather been into our *ideas* instead of maintaining its earlier necessity in reality and occupying its higher place. What is now aroused in us by works of art is not just immediate enjoyment, but our judgement also, since we subject to our intellectual consideration (i) the content of art, and (ii) the work of art's means of presentation, and the appropriateness or inappropriateness of both to one another. The philosophy of art is therefore a greater need in our day than it was in days when art by itself yielded full satisfaction. Art invites us to intellectual consideration, and that not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is. (Hegel, 1998: 2)

This passage basically shows Hegel's formulation and the thesis is so intricately woven into the texture of Hegel's text. It must be regarded as central and a structural feature of his philosophy of art, rather than a criticism of the art of his time. Art will go on being made. In other words, there will be art after the end of art. "Art can be used as a fleeting play, affording recreation and entertainment, decorating our surroundings, giving pleasantness to the externals of our life, and making other objects stand out by artistic adornment" (cited in Danto, 1999: 1). Therefore, it can be said that art will play the roles in what Hegel designates as the *objective spirit* of a society – the system of meanings and practices that constitute the form of life its members live. However, Hegel did not mean art in terms of objective spirit when he developed the thesis of the end of art. "The universal need for art...is man's rational need to lift the inner and outer world into his spiritual consciousness as an object in which he recognizes again his own self" (cited in Danto, 1999: 1). That is art's "highest vocation," to which alone the End-of-Art Thesis has application.

To depart from Hegel's historization of art, the reciprocity between historical narratives and axiomatic conceptions of art was already established in an early manner when the rhetoricians of antiquity devised evolutionary models that even surpassed the narrative methods used for conventional history. As H. Belting puts it, narrating the genesis or decadence of style in literature and in the visual arts was always a rewarding strategy to put forward a norm or ideal for art. In this discourse, the single work constituted a mere station in the development toward the unfolding of a norm of art. Even if complete in itself, a given work remained openended in relation to the evolution of that norm. "The concept of style served to define the individual phases of the process and to locate them within a cycle where it would become visible in its truth and destination. The historical description of art thus began as applied art theory and consequently was in trouble as soon as the latter become out of fashion" (Belting, 2003: 130).

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The modern departure from an applied theory of art, which art history had been at an early stage, has been achieved at high cost. The narrative of art history can be traced back to G. Vasari and his book *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptures and Architects* (1550) in which he considered the artists of his own time. This type of art historiography functioned as a kind of training for the artists. Belting asserts that after losing this function, the new art historiography has been depended on models from other fields of social research while having emancipated itself from philosophical aesthetics, which viewed art as a pure principle and thus detached it from any empirical context. Afterwards, Belting claims that the new art history profited from Hegel's system of writing history and his historicist revision of former aesthetic discourses. Hegel's *Aesthetics* (1835), first of all, provided a philosophical support for the writing of art history because Hegel considered the art of different societies in different ages, which means that he created a linear narrative. As a result of this, "the art connoisseur, who regarded 'imitation' as the meaning and driving force of art history, is replaced by the philosopher, for whom art incorporates a past stage in the history of 'mind.' Since, as Hegel maintains, art no longer offers 'total satisfaction,' the 'science of art' serves to answer the new 'need' for defining the role of art, a role already exhausted. The new 'science of art' looks at art from a view where its history is seen spatially, that is as a panorama of a universal 'evolution'" (Belting, 2003: 131). Belting's emphasis on the founding tenets of art history as the new "science of art" indicates how it was influenced from Hegel's conception of history.

Hegel's revision of the function of art in human society, which often disparaged as "the aesthetics of content" had, however, a lasting effect on subsequent writing on art even after parting with Hegel's "system". "It is the effect and the progression of art itself" in which the latter finds its world historical task. Nevertheless, Hegel claims that art is no longer bound to "a particular content" anymore, so it loses the authority to act as a medium of representation. All that is left to the individual artist is to reflect a personal view of art. According to Hegel," the very essence of art had already exhausted itself in history, which, for him, made possible the writing of art's history a posteriori" (Belting, 2003: 132).

On the contrary, in the Epilogue to his lecture, *Origins of the Work of Art* (1935-36), M. Heidegger writes:

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The judgement that Hegel passes in these statements cannot be evaded by pointing out that since Hegel's lectures... we have seen many new art works and art movements arise. Hegel did not mean to deny this possibility. The question, however, remains: is art still essential and necessary way in which truth that is decisive for our historical existence happens, or is it art no longer of this character? (Heidegger, 1993: 205)

Heidegger writes this statement approximately a century after Hegel, a century which is full of artistic revolutions. However, as Danto infers, it was still too early to say whether the End-of-Art Thesis were true. The reason, Danto claims it was wrong, is that the Thesis makes no prediction as to the future of art. It is not a thesis primarily about art itself but a thesis regarding our relationship to it. It is a thesis about human beings, whose progress in selfunderstanding means that we can never again relate to art as our predecessors did when it "afforded that the satisfaction of spiritual needs which earlier ages and nations sought in it" (cited in Danto, 1999: 2). Art has become merely an object of intellectual consideration. But this intellectual consideration is "not for the purpose of creating art again, but for knowing philosophically what art is" (cited in Danto, 1999: 2). Therefore, art is now an object for study and philosophical analysis, but it no longer satisfies the deepest needs of the spirit by itself.

Hegel's *Spirit* is well known in his philosophy and the defining activity of *Spirit* is thinking. Danto claims that Hegel was very close to Descartes who attempted to prove that humans were necessarily and essentially thinking beings. However, Danto asserts that the point where Hegel differs from his predecessors lies in the fact that he saw thinking as having a history. The various historical phases of history, Hegel describes, are phases of thought expressed as art. Thus, art is a product of thought, although it is limited by the fact that it must express its thought by sensuous means. The-End-of-Art Thesis proclaims liberation from having to find sensuous equivalents for the content of thought. Thinking has risen above and beyond what art is capable of. Art belongs to a less evolved mode of thinking than what the mind is capable of. Accordingly, Hegel finds this higher capacity in philosophy.

Hegel distinguishes three modes of thought, which he terms as *subjective*, *objective*, and *absolute spirit*. While the "subjective spirit" corresponds to the cognitive operations of the mind, the "objective spirit" corresponds to objectified thought, as it is, for instance, in works of art, political institutions or moral codes. Art becomes a matter of *Absolute Spirit* when, whatever

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other roles it may play, it offers, like religion and philosophy “one way of bringing to our minds and expressing the *Divine*, the deepest interests of mankind and the most comprehensive truths of the spirit” (cited in Danto, 1999: 4). It is a superseded moment of *Absolute Spirit* that art has come to an end. Before being taken by art, this role was assumed by religion. Hegel writes:

The advent of art, in a religion still in the bonds of sensuous externality, shows that such religion is on the decline. At the very time it seems to give religion the supreme glorification, expression, and brilliancy, it has lifted religion over its imitation...Beautiful art, from its side, has thus performed the same service as philosophy: it has purified the spirit from its thralldom. (cited in Danto, 1999: 4)

However, once art left “its highest vocation” in the past and the role was undertaken by philosophy, art was understood as an activity of the past when measured against “its highest destiny,” according to Hegel. Since art has lost “its earlier necessity in the real world,” it has been displaced “more to our imagination.” Hegel adds that, “drawn into aesthetic presence, the work of art no longer keeps the religious and historical context” in which it was born. “It emerges as an artwork which makes it autonomous” and, as a result, allows its new life in the museum’s enclave or its qualification for the discourse of aesthetics (cited in Belting, 2003: 132). It is obvious that Hegel’s aesthetics coincide with the rise of bourgeois culture, in which the reflection on art has become for the first time the concern of a newly born academic discipline. “Hegel provided a philosophical model for this discipline in which art shifted from a living practice to a topic of memory in the guise of history” (Belting, 2003: 132-133). From this point, Belting says that the interest in art had lost its place in life once it is placed in museum. “Since they (the works of art) lost their effect, they lost their *raison d'être*. Turning the exhibition into a practical course in modern chronology amounts to killing art in order to turn it into history” (Belting, 2003: 134).

While Belting deals with the narrative of art history from his perspective and relates it to the aesthetic theory of Hegel, Danto’s analysis is more relevant to the field of philosophy. Both departing from similar points and giving evaluations of art within different practices. However, what is in question is the normativity of art in comparison to the earlier conditions of history. It should be noted that the End-of-Art Thesis is systematically connected with the entirety of Hegel’s thought rather than the actual history of art. It is the defining idea of Hegel’s philosophy of art, and his philosophy of art is the core of his entire philosophical system. As Danto points out, Hegel could not have grounded his philosophy of art on an empirical study of

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artistic practices. Otherwise, it would have been impossible for Hegel to develop his theory in terms of *Absolute Spirit* which cannot be traced empirically, just like Kant's notion of *sensus communis*. Therefore, one can easily say that there are major differences between the End-of-Art Thesis in Hegel and its following various formulations in the late twentieth century.

"Philosophy in the late twentieth century would hardly be regarded as affording 'that satisfaction of needs which earlier nations sought in it.' Its role in human thought is a question mark, and its recent history an agony of self-critique. More than this, the intellectual context in which the end of art is currently addressed is very different from that against which Hegel's thesis must be viewed" (Danto, 1999: 5).

The historicity of Hegel's own thesis should not be missed. His thesis can also be interpreted as a response to the Romanticism of his period. In the last section of Part One of *Lectures on Aesthetics* entitled, "The End of the Romantic Form of Art", the term *Romantic* takes a double meaning. Firstly, it refers to one of the greatest stages through which art has passed its culminating point which is perhaps in Renaissance. It is "romantic" in the sense of one of the synonyms for certain narratives – "romances". On the other hand, it also refers to a set of philosophical attitudes defined by German romantic poetry and that inflamed German poets (Danto, 1999: 6). Romanticism supported the idea that art was superior to philosophy. And I think that is where the historicity of Hegel's philosophy appears. The End-of-Art thesis predicts the end of Romanticism in this sense. Romanticism's claim to superiority of art stemmed from the idea that art also presents its ideas in sensuous form unlike philosophy. Thus, it was believed that art included both thought which is seen as the moving force of history by Hegel and sense. That was the defining position of German Romanticism. "It was proposed to hold that in art the real religion, the truth, and the Absolute was to be found and that art towered above philosophy because it was not abstract but contained the Idea in the real world as well as presented it there to concrete contemplation and feeling." Schelling in a comparison between art and philosophy expresses his support to art in these words:

Philosophy as philosophy can never be universally valid. Absolute objectivity is given to art alone. If art is deprived of objectivity, one may say, it ceases to be what it is and becomes philosophy; give objectivity to philosophy and it becomes art. Philosophy to be sure reaches the highest level, but it brings only, as it were, a fragment of man to this point. Art brings *the whole man*, as he is, to that point, namely to a knowledge of the highest of all, and in this rests the eternal difference and the miracle of art. (cited in Danto, 1999: 6)

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Hegel does not oppose to this idea immediately. He further asserts that it might very well be true at a certain stain in the history of Spirit. Indeed, What Schelling is describing could be art “in its highest vocation.” Nevertheless, in the present state of art, which is Hegel’s moment of course, the relationship between art and philosophy is conceived the opposite way.

Belting relates this historical moment to the emergence of art history as an independent discipline. He says that “after the Romantics invoked historical art as a model for contemporary art – the last time such an attempt went unchallenged – art historians and artists parted ways, and soon art history emerged as an independent discipline” (Belting, 2003: 134). Art historians did not look any longer for the art of their own time, since only the past seemed to have produced art worthy of that name. On the contrary, artists did not seek models in the past anymore but turned their way with the same energy to the future, over which the past would have no power. Both sides were concerned with the past, “but in the opposite sense: the one took it as an ideal either to be recovered in the living practice; the other, as a burden from which to be freed” (Belting, 2003: 134). This artistic process eventually led to the term “avant-garde,” used in both senses directed to a new society and to a new art. It has never shaken off its military sense, but now it has become history. That is where I started my argument in problematizing the relationship between art and politics in terms of avant-garde, so there is no need to go over the consequences of division between artists and art historians. It will be preferable to remain in the borders of the writing of art history as a narrative.

Hegel theorizes three different stages in the history of art which are namely symbolic, classical and romantic. Each period involves a different kind of relationship between vehicle of art and its meaning. Art is symbolic when there is “affinity” between the two. Art is thought as classical when there is instead an “identity” between the two. Finally, art is considered as Romantic when some reference to spiritual states is the best explanation of why the art appears as it does. Danto concludes from this point that the end of art means the liberation of the artist from any such set of constrains. “Bondage to a particular subject matter and a mode of portrayal... are for artists today something past, and art has therefore has become a free instrument which the artist can wield...in relationship to any material whatever” (Danto, 1999: 7).

Consequently, what can be inferred from Hegel’s thesis is a kind of pluralism although it would not be the same kind of pluralism that defines the artworld today. Hegel writes, “Today,

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there is no material that stands in and for itself above this relativity.” Any material, shaped in any way, can be art “only if it does not contradict the formal law of being simply beautiful and capable of artistic treatment” (cited in Danto, 1999: 7). It is another subject that that beauty is no longer regarded as a “formal law of art” today. However, Danto claims that the deep pluralism of art was already something Hegel understood. Turning to F. Schelling, Danto quotes “Every form and every material is now at the service and command of the artist whose talent and genius is explicitly freed from the earlier limitation to one particular art-form” (cited in Danto, 1999: 7). The whole internal logic of the history of art culminates in an absolute artistic freedom. Therefore, this artistic freedom provides the historical condition for artists to even perform with their own body, which only permitted an ephemeral presence in an exhibition, instead of producing works that always leave traces of a given moment in history. As Belting points out, “such activities not only dematerialized works in their traditional profile but dissolved the concept of history, at least in its born materials and testimonies. Events, or happenings, did not allow for the same objectivated kind of memory or trace of history, as did works of art in the old sense” (Belting, 2003: 175).

To the contrary of Romanticism, artists are no longer cultural heroes in Hegel’s philosophy. He defends that the period or era that they had role is over. Hence, “the End-of-Art must be understood in terms of two opposed systems of German thought in the early nineteenth century, each of which deals in different ways with art and intellect, and with the role of each in terms of human understanding. Hegel is announcing a new age of reason, in which thought is the substance of spirit” (Danto: 1999: 9).

In conclusion, to claim that art has come to an end means that the criticism of this sort is no longer licit. No art is any longer historically mandated as against any other art. Therefore, Danto claims that nothing is more true as art than anything else, nothing especially more historically false than anything else. “So at the very least the belief that art has come to an end entails the kind of critic one cannot be, if one is going to be a critic at all: there can now be no historically mandated form of art, everything else falling outside the pale” (Danto, 1997: 2728). Belting summarizes the situation as follows: “Art history, as we know, investigates works that carry representation. However, it is also engaged in self-representation when it uses a particular kind of discourse, the discourse of art history. The old procedure of explaining the world through its history in the meanwhile suffered the crisis of representation. Doubts regarding

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exclusive rights on explanation have also infiltrated other branches of scholarship. In the case of art, things seemed right as long as the commentary chose a role that is analogous to that of authorship and creation, in terms of representation, while retaining the same distance to the work as the work maintained toward the world in representing it. In other words, the respective text depicted the work much as the work depict whatever it chose as its subject” (Belting, 2003: 160). This familiar order was already disintegrating when, in the modern period, the presence of the work found its meaning in nothing but itself. In this process, the artistic form acquired the same authority that motif and content had formerly possessed and thus it guaranteed the complete autonomy of the working process. Today, this innocence in the creative act has gone lost, and the original forfeited its established meaning as a unique creation, unique in terms of its formal entity (Belting, 2003: 160).

Danto gives the examples of Cubism and Fauvism. He says they were both engaged in establishing a new kind of order in art, and discarded everything that obscured the basic truth or order the partisans supposed themselves to have discovered (or rediscovered). “That was the reason,” Picasso explained to Françoise Gilot, that the cubists “abandoned color, emotion, sensation, and everything that had been introduced into painting by the Impressionists.” He concludes that each of the movements was driven by a perception of the philosophical truth of art. He formulates as such that “art is essentially X and that everything other than X is not- or is not essentially- art. So each of the movements saw its art in terms of a narrative of recovery, disclosure, or revelation of a truth that had been lost or only dimly acknowledged. Each was buttressed by a philosophy of history that defined the meaning of history by an end-state which consisted in the true art, once brought to the level of self-consciousness, this truth reveals itself as present in all the art that ever mattered” (Danto, 1997: 28).

Until the 20th century, it was thought that an artwork could be well defined. However, the matter is now to explain why these productions were accepted as art. It was doable for the time because there were certain criteria presented by various manifestos or theories. However, this leads us to re-think why those artworks were indeed considered as art. Does the vanishing of manifestos necessarily reduce the value of the artworks which were created under the principles of those manifestos? If it is not the case, this means that it is not the criteria displayed by the manifesto that settles the artistic characteristic and value of an artwork. Therefore, we have to approach the same artwork from a different perspective today in order to understand art

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and aesthetics. Indeed, evaluation of an artwork is very subjective and contextual so it changes within time. As this era did not begin with the decisions to initiate an artistic rupture but with the decisions to reinterpret what makes art or what art makes.

At the end, Danto draws the picture as such: “there is a kind of transhistorical essence in art, everywhere and always the same, but it only discloses itself through history. This much I regard as sound. What I do not regard as sound is the identification of this essence with a particular style of art – monochrome, abstract, or whatever – with the implication that art of any other style is false” (Danto, 1997: 28). I agree that every movement in history sets forth its own rules of art which represents the true understanding of art according to them. The collapse of master narratives legitimizes all the other styles. Indeed, Danto writes that one mark of art having ended is that there should no longer be an objective structure with a defining style, or that there should be an objective historical structure in which *everything is possible*. If everything is possible, nothing is historically mandated: one thing is as good as another. And that in Danto’s view is the objective condition for post-historical art in his terms (Danto, 1997: 44). However, the problematic point for me is Danto’s assumption that he finds a transhistorical essence in art though he does not formulate it further on and leaves space for the coexistence of all artistic style. He describes this view as an essentialist one in philosophy and says that he is committed to the view that art is eternally the same – that there are necessary and sufficient conditions for something to be an artwork, regardless of time and place. This is a view to which I have been opposing since the beginning of my thesis with a nominalist historical approach I have borrowed from Foucault. However, at the same time Danto is well aware of art’s historicity. He continues to explain his approach to art by saying that “as an historicist I am also committed to the view that what is a work of art at one time cannot be one at another, and in particular that there is a history, enacted through the history of art, in which the essence of art – the necessary and sufficient conditions – are painfully brought to consciousness” (Danto, 1997: 47).

While Danto’s thesis in putting art to a certain historicity is differentiated by its claim to an essence, on the other hand his thesis is important for me as far as it disengages art from manifestos which are necessarily ideological. His claim is that the Age of Manifestos has come to an end when philosophy has departed from the question of style because the true form of the question “What is art?” emerged. According to him, this has taken place roughly around 1960s.

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Once it has been determined that a philosophical definition of art entails no stylistic imperative whatever, so that anything can be a work of art, we enter in what Danto calls the “post-historical period” (Danto, 1997: 46-47). Thus, Danto marks a difference between contemporary and modern art. The difference is the consequence of a deep crisis which has occurred in the 1960s. The great master narratives have not only come to an end but also contemporary art no longer allows itself to be represented by master narratives at all. Belting states that the history of art, which always had framed what happened in art, was a master narrative of this kind. It was also applied to modernist art, as it followed the lines of evolution and progress. He states that the crisis of modernism therefore also affects the practice of writing art history which is a kind of master narrative in his view. “It is not sufficient to reserve this practice for the past including modernism since art is continuing and therefore needs continuous description” (Belting, 2003: 115).

The master narrative of the history of art – in the West but by the end not only in the West – is that there is an era of imitation, followed by an era of ideology, followed by our posthistorical era in which, with qualification, anything goes. Each of these periods is characterized by a different structure of art criticism. Art criticism in the traditional or mimetic period was based on visual truth. The structure of art criticism in the age of ideology is the one from which I sought to disengage myself: it characteristically grounded its own philosophical idea of what art is on an exclusionary distinction between the art it accepted (the true) and everything else as not really art. The post-historical period is marked by the parting of the ways between philosophy and art, which means that art criticism in the post-historical period, must be as pluralistic as post-historical art itself (Danto, 1997: 47). While nothing radically new and never seen before no longer appears, nothing can neither really grow old and thus need to be replaced once and forever. Obviously, Danto is not describing a mere episode in the history of art in his conclusions. As Belting says, when the sixties discussed the crisis or the end of modernism, soon thereafter another topic, the notion of history as a suddenly obsolete category for the narrative of art, became the target of the debate. And here art history comes into play as a topic of memory and no longer as a task to be taken further.

In this sense, art has suffered from the same crisis as history, understood as a binding authority and continuing model. Both Danto and Belting elucidate the peculiar situation that characterizes art history after modernism with the discourse of “post-history”. They both agree that living “after the end of history of art”, or “after the end of art” liberates the artists. The

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artists continue to make art, even though their works often may look as a ritual of memory, so perpetuate the old game. “In retrospect, the assumption that traditional art always resulted in inventions and innovations looks like an undeserved myth. This is what caused the fear of being left with nothing but imitation, as if any link with tradition necessarily would end up in epigonism. Progress, in turn, often was nothing but the dutiful repetition of the creative act which was a peculiar obedience to history.” (Belting, 2003: 183-184). However, there is one thing in the meaning of innovation after all. It remains as an ideal that is pursued by merely escaping into other media. Today, the new already seems to happen by changing the medium instead of choosing innovation in substance.

There are explicitly differences between the historicity that I have taken into consideration when referring to Foucault and De Duve and the historicity that I have considered when referring to Hegel and Danto. Both views ascribe historicity to art. The reason why I have considered Hegel’s End-of-Art thesis is although it is still an essentialist view that while it draws a path to the demise of master-narratives and consequently liberation to the various art forms as explained by Danto, it also argues the role of art in society concerning history. I have argued with the historical relationship between art, society and politics regarding my problematization which is that art has no essence because conception of art changes in history, therefore what kind of relationship can be conceived between art and politics, especially after the failure of avant-garde art. I have argued the historical relationship between art and politics in investigating art’s engagement to politics in history. Now, I intend to turn to the actual politics of art along with the argued historical background. This will relate to the artist’s position in the field of art today and to the kind of political attitude that can be developed in relation to power. However, I will remark on one last point regarding the changing political position of the artist in the current artistic practices before I start to consider the criticism in the contemporary artistic practices in which I will seek the points of differentiations from the modern system of art in relation to biennial.

4.1. The Positionings Regarding Power and Truth

I have attempted to show art's historicity by paying attention to its formation within the category fine arts in modernity and to the political role it played in a certain period both at discursive and non-discursive levels. I have also discussed whether critical function of art constituted most of its political mission. Ideology was a fundamental characteristic in maintaining this function. To express once again the problematization of my thesis: If art has no essence because it is seen that it changes throughout history, therefore, what kind of relationship can be thought between art and politics today, especially after the failure of avantgarde art? I have considered the first two parts and partially the last part. Art's historicity has been emphasized in its formation in modernity. Secondly, I have considered the relationship between art and politics in modernity regarding the Enlightenment. Finally, I have discussed a new relationship between art and politics which derives from the artwork's liberation from master narratives and ideologies. In arguing art's critical function and emancipation project, I have rejected the ideology and attempted to show the invalidity of ideologies by the thesis of the-End-of-Art which claims the age of manifestos as well as the previous stages of art based on ideology are over. From now on, I will examine the relationship between truth and power in terms of criticism in art and discuss the subject matter in the level of discourse by referring Foucault's analysis.

Discourse, which is closely linked to power, have been my primary concern in thinking the formation of modern arts and its relation to politics. After considering the role given to the artist regarding the emancipation project, I intend to turn to the forms of resistance regarding power. In this debate, I will ground my analysis again on Foucault's approach. His reflection on the role of intellectuals in society will be my departure point although I don't seek to ascribe such a political role to the artists directly and establish a transitive link between the two. However, I'm also aware that such a discussion requires two assumptions. The first one is that intellectuals are necessarily political and the second one that artists are a kind of intellectuals. I have directed my criticism to the intellectulism of the artists in the preceding sections. However, artists could act in their own way differently once the critical function is severed from an emancipation project and ideology. Art can also be a realm of resistance to the power in the statu quo. I don't want to limit my argument in this section with the artists but my point of

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departure in art will be the artists although the kind of positioning regarding power and truth can be occupied also by curators or any other actor in the field of art today. The reason I will mostly refer to the role of the artists in relation to Foucault's argument of the demise of "universal intellectual" is to discuss that the figure of artist, as supposed by the avant-gardes, cannot function as the sovereign subject in the field of art. In fact, it is another question that if we can see such a single subject with legitimate authority today. Therefore, I considered the artist as the primary subject in the field of art. However, one cannot talk about such a explicit way in terms of subjective positions. Consequently, I will draw, firstly a correspondence between the avant-garde artist and "universal intellectual" but at the end, the conception of "specific intellectual" will not only correspond to the position occupied by the artists but also the other actors of the field such as curators.

Once the formation of fine arts has exalted the artists to the level of liberators, it has failed as I have argued earlier. Moreover, intellectuals have shared the same fate with them by prescribing themselves a leading position in the process of social transformation. Therefore, the position of intellectuals and that of the artists go hand to hand in this sense if it is accepted that no one can act on behalf of others and forego from the rest of others whom he is representing. Thus, I draw the correspondence between artists and intellectuals in this sense by referring to the transformation of the latter figure as explained by Foucault.

As I have started my argument regarding the role of the artists in the society, I have argued that that Saint-Simon and socialists were the ones who gave the artists prominent role. It also has a similar legitimate grounds for the intellectuals that for a long period of time, the "left" intellectuals have spoken and they have been given the right of speaking in the capacity of masters of truth and justice. They were seen as the spokesmen of the universal. To be intellectual, just like being an artist, meant something like being the consciousness and conscious of all. It should be noted that art and philosophy went hand to hand together for almost two centuries. While the most pioneer philosophers based their theories on art in order to reveal and reach the truth, the artists thought that true art had to investigate art itself and should contain philosophical truth in order to be considered as the "real art". However, this was just a historical period for both sides and I can say from what I have argued so far that this period is over.

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Let's go on with the leading role of intellectuals and artists (also acknowledged as intellectuals in the modern episteme). Foucault asserts the idea that leading position of intellectuals is transposed from Marxism, from a faded Marxism. "Just as the proletariat, by the necessity of its historical situation, is the bearer of the universal (but its immediate, unreflected bearer, barely conscious of itself as such), so the intellectual, through his moral, theoretical, and political choice, aspires to be the bearer of this universality in its conscious, elaborated form" (Foucault, 1984: 67). Hence, the intellectual takes as the clear, individual figure of a universality whose obscure, collective form is embodied in proletariat.

Foucault distinguishes the "universal" and the "specific" intellectual in order to state the condition of intellectuals in present. He argues that a new mode of "connection between theory and practice" has been established. Consequently, "Intellectuals have become used to working, not in the modality of the 'universal,' the 'exemplary,' the 'just-and-true-for-all,' but within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them (housing, the hospital, the asylum, the laboratory, the university, family, and sexual relations)" (Foucault, 1984: 68). Foucault suggests that intellectuals have gained more immediate and concrete awareness of struggles. This specificity has led them closer to the proletariat and the masses on behalf of whom they fought for, or at least they did. He gives two reasons for this. Firstly, it has been a question of real, material, everyday struggles and secondly intellectuals have often been confronted to the same adversary with the proletariat albeit in a different form. This adversary namely would be the multinational corporations, the juridical and police apparatuses, the property speculators, etc. This is what Foucault call the "specific" intellectual as opposed to the "universal" intellectual (Foucault, 1984: 68).

This new configuration has a further political significance. A comparison can be done between the intellectual's previous political role and that of the artist's. The distinctive characteristic of the intellectual used to be "writing" as a universal consciousness and a free subject. As Foucault reconsiders this characteristic, he says that since the time when each individual's specific activity began to serve as the basis for politization, the threshold of *writing*, as the sacralizing mark of the intellectual, has disappeared. And it has become possible to develop lateral connections across different forms of knowledge and from one focus of politization to another (Foucault, 1984: 68). From this point of view, I'd like to consider the position of artists. As long as artists had a privileged role, just like the "universal" intellectual,

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the position they occupied has been seen as belonging to the realm of politics. However, with the new configuration, new forms of art have later provided a basis for new ways of making art such as documentary or performance art. One did not have to have the specifically defined role of artists to act politically. Therefore, the transformation of the concept of artist - I believe it is just a concept since it is conceptually created with certain attributed characteristics – led to a condition in which the realm of resistance has been expanded.

As Foucault emphasizes it, the function of the “universal” intellectual in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, was derived from “a specific historical figure: the man of justice, the man of law, who counterposes to power, despotism, and the abuses and arrogance of wealth the universality of justice and the equity of an ideal law. The great political struggles of the eighteenth century were fought over law, right, the constitution, the just in reason and law, that which can and must apply universally” (Foucault, 1984: 68). Indeed, this was also the maxim of French Revolution at the end of the eighteenth century. What is called “the intellectual” today, - yet Foucault uses the term in the political sense, not the sociological one - the person who utilizes his knowledge, his competence, and his relation to truth in the field of political struggles. As a result, Foucault’s distinction between two types of intellectual is that “the universal intellectual derives from the jurist or notable, and finds his fullest manifestation in the writer, the bearer of values and significations in which all can recognize themselves. The specific intellectual derives from quite another figure, not the jurist or notable, but the savant or expert” (Foucault, 1984: 70). Foucault points out E. Zola in the field of art as “the type of the ‘universal’ intellectual, bearer of law and militant of equity, but he ballasts his discourse with a whole invocation of nosology and evolutionism, which he believes to be scientific, grasps very poorly in any case, and whose political effects on his own discourse are very equivocal” (Foucault, 1984: 70-71). This classical kind of intellectualism in art does not have currency anymore because it predicts a role to enact in different domains. However, the ‘specific’ intellectuality claims to remain within the borders of one’s own field in the struggle of resistance. If this position is occupied by an artist, s/he should develop his/her critical attitude in the field of art. I will argue this position from the field of art in the next section when I consider the case of the biennial.

Let’s continue with Foucault’s figure in which the functions and prestige of this new intellectual are concentrated. S/he is no longer that of the “writer of genius” but rather that of

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the "absolute savant"; no longer he who bears the values of all. It can also be carried to the status of artists. The figure of the artists is no longer the genius who has unlimited power of imagination as constructed subject in the modern system of art. He is no longer the rhapsodist of the eternal, but the strategist of life and death. Meanwhile we are at present experiencing the disappearance of the figure of the "great writer" (Foucault, 1984: 71). So are namely the "great artists" of art history.

Furthermore, Foucault turns to the relations between truth and power, after positioning both type intellectuals. Foucault claims that truth is created in power relations. The "specific" intellectual in his analysis and the artists (I hesitate to call it contemporary artist but at least this sort of artists would be different that the one created in the formation of modern art system) in my case is considered in his relation to truth and power in terms of politics. Therefore, the next question becomes to define truth. Foucault does not see truth outside power, or lacking power. Truth is not the privilege of those who have succeeded in liberating themselves.

There is the whole philosophical tradition starting from Plato that supposes a transcendental truth. Nevertheless, Foucault deals with the matter of truth in a different way. Most importantly, he says that truth belongs to this world and it is produced only by virtue of multiple forms of constraint. It induces regular effects of power. According to Foucault, every society has its own regime of truth, its "general politics" of truth. That is the types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; "the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques and procedures accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true" (Foucault, 1984: 72-73).

According to Foucault, what must now be taken into account in the intellectual is not the "bearer of universal values". Rather, s/he should be seen as the person occupying a specific position-but whose specificity is linked to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth. To go on over the position of the artist, it appears that his/her specific struggle can have critical effects. The artist as well as the intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of regime of truth which is fundamental to the structure and functioning in the society. However, resistance should take place in the specificity of the field. In other words, if the artist is to take a critical attitude this should be performed with artistic means.

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If we turn back to truth itself, Foucault does not mean “the ensemble of truths which are to be discovered and accepted” but rather “the ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true” (Foucault, 1984: 74). Therefore, the battle does not regard truth, but rather the status of truth and the economic and political role it plays. As a result, Foucault thinks “the political problems of intellectuals not in terms of ‘science’ and ‘ideology,’ but in terms of ‘truth’ and ‘power’”. Thus, the question of the professionalization of intellectuals and the division between intellectual and manual labor can be envisaged in a new way” (Foucault, 1984: 74). Truth is closely linked to the system of ordered procedures for the production, regulation, distribution, circulation, and operation of statements. It should be sought in a circular relation with the system powers from which it is produced and sustained. Foucault calls this system the "regime of truth".

In conclusion, the primary political problem of the intellectual for Foucault as for the artist is not to criticize the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that his/her own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth. The problem is not changing people's consciousnesses - or what's in their heads - but the political, economic, institutional regime of the production of truth (Foucault, 1984: 74). Indeed, that is what has been historically attempted to be done by the artistic avant-gardes acting similar to the universal intellectual. Hence, the aim should not be emancipating truth from the every system of power but to detach the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic, and cultural, within which it operates at the present time (Foucault, 1984: 74-75). How can art deal with such issues in its specificity? I have concluded that the artist, curator or any other actor in the field of art should act against the power, if s/he does, by artistic means. Thus, I would like to consider this subject matter further in relation to the event of biennial in general and Istanbul Biennial in particular in order to enhance my view by taking it as an example and question the structure of such big scale art events. I will discuss the differentiating aspects of contemporary art from the modern art in terms of politics. One of my main points will be the decrease of artist's individual political influence and rise of collective art events. In this transformation, the discourse directed to the “regimes of truth” by the artistic activity as such will be my point of departure. Afterwards, I will discuss how contemporary artistic practice may also follow a different structure than that of modern art based on the self-sufficiency of the work of art.

5. Biennial and Politics

I have started questioning the historical relationship between art and politics by analyzing the formation of the modern art system since the beginning of my thesis. I aimed to arrive at a point where there cannot be a static relationship between the two, which means that consequently a new sort of relationship should be conceived today. However, I also intended to show that art and politics are most often conceived in terms of their intersection, or rather, in terms of the intervention of one into the domain of the other: political action in art or artistic practices in politics. In this last section, I will focus on biennials, specifically on the International Istanbul Biennial, taken as a contemporary art event and argue the condition of vis-à-vis politics. The reason I'm taking a biennial as my departure point in this debate is that I have argued that the artist was raised in the formation of modern art system as the sovereign subject, yet what we see today is a more collaborative relationships rather than exhibiting an artwork produced by subject. Therefore, I would like to discuss the transformation of the subject and object in the current artistic practices. In addition to this, while the conception of the artist changes, new actors such as curators have also appeared as "authority of delimitation". Therefore, it is important to analyze the condition of contemporary artistic practices with regard to the transformation in the field of art, although my intention is not to generalize my discussion about the entire contemporary art or art's condition today. I will only emphasize few points that differentiate certain aspects of art from the modern formation I have argued so far. However, this should not be understood as I'm opposing to or claiming the demise of the entire modern art system. I have argued some of the problems encountered in this historical formation of fine art. From now on, I will attempt to think how differently art can enact regarding politics, or what could be the politics of it?

I indicated, in the formation of the new art system, that modern episteme has led to a new subject by attributing it certain characteristics and that 'artists' had gained the legitimate ground in this formation. In addition to the position of this newly emerged subject, there appeared new institutions such as museums and academies. The objects produced by the artists held a particular role in the development of these institutions. Thus, for a long time, the social function of the exhibition was firmly settled: the artist produced artworks, and then these artworks were either selected and exhibited, or rejected. The artist was considered as an

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autonomous author. However, the first point that can be made over this claim is that the relationship between the artist and the institutions has fundamentally changed. Biennials can very well be opposed to the classical conception of the museum due to the reasons I will consider, but for now, I will simply say that the characteristics ascribed to the artist by modern episteme have vanished in many aspects. Today, art is defined through an identification between creation and selection. The case where the selection of an artwork corresponds to the creation of an artwork can roughly be traced back at least to Duchamp. That, of course, does not mean that all art since then has become readymade art. However, it does mean that the act of creation has coincided with the act of selecting (Groys, 2005:93).

Following the demise of the sovereign author, or the genius artist, during the sixties, the primary discourse around art-in-exhibition began to turn away from forms of critique of the artwork as autonomous object of study/critique towards a form of curatorial criticism in which the space of exhibition was given critical precedence over that of the objects of art. Curatorial criticism differed from that of traditional Western art criticism (i.e., linked to modernity) in that its discourse and subject matter went beyond discussion about artists and the object of art to include the subject of curating and the role played by the curator of exhibitions (O’Neil, 2010: 241). The curator also has a crucial function regarding the large-scale exhibitions and biennials. However, contemporary curators, or any other agents of the field, do not and cannot conceive themselves as impresarios or as agents of artists and that is maybe the main difference between contemporary art scene and its predecessor (Groys, 2005: 94). Curators are “translators, movers or creators whose material is the work of other... the curator inversely translates the artist’s work by providing a context to enable public’s understanding” (Thea, 2009: 6). While the notion of the artist goes under transformation, new positions as “authorities of delimitation” may emerge. In the formation of objects, the museum as an institution that possesses its own rules, as a group of individuals constituting the art profession, as a body of knowledge and practice was the major authority in society. This authority delimited, designated, named, and established objects as artworks. Moreover, this institutional authority gradually expanded. First, galleries emerged and provided alternative institutional ground to art. Now biennials act in opposition to the classical notion of museum as well as to the galleries and the discourse created by and in them. Biennials function, with Foucault’s term, as a “plane of emergence” in the field of art today.

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One of the reasons why the authorial autonomy of the artist can no longer be claimed is that the artists are necessarily involved in a collaborative, collective, institutionalized, productive practice from the beginning. Contemporary art or present-day art, however we call it, is not the sum of particular things as understood before. The installation in the exhibition space with any object has established unlimited forms of art that can assimilate all other traditional art forms. All the objects are arranged by an artist or curator in the space, according to an order that is purely private, individual and subjective. Thus the artist or curator has the chance to demonstrate publicly his private, sovereign strategy of selection (Groys, 2005: 95). However, increasingly today, the traditional cult of artistic subjectivity, the figure of the author, and the authorial signature in the old sense do not have much currency. This can be conceived in opposition to the power structures of the art system that find their visible expression in the figure of the sovereign author created by the modern episteme. There is no such thing as an artistic genius and, consequently, that the authorial status of the artist in question cannot be derived from the supposed fact that he or she is a genius (Groys, 2005: 96). The traditional, sovereign authorship of an individual artist has in fact disappeared. When confronted with an art exhibition, we are dealing with multiple authorships. And in fact, every art exhibition exhibits something that has been selected by one or more artists, from their own production and/or from the objects which are potentially readymades (Groys, 2005: 96). Therefore, the space and its presentation have become crucial in an exhibition today. Regarding this characteristic of exhibitions, L. Gillick says, that “curating became a dynamic process... the brightest, smartest people get involved in this multiple activity of being mediator, producer, interface and neo-critic. It is arguable that the most important essays about art over the last ten years have not been in art magazines but they have been in catalogues and other material produced around the galleries, art centers and exhibitions” (cited in O’Neil, 2010: 241-242).

Exhibitions (in whatever form they take) are always ideological; as hierarchical structures; they produce particular and general forms of communication. The ideological aspect of the exhibition lies in the particular forms of communication they create. This ideological dimension of the exhibition has been clear throughout the history of modernity that it was entirely ideological when the Louvre Museum was founded by the new system in France. The objects which were the symbols and representations of the old system were viewed as something that belonged to the past and that consequently led to neutralization of those objects by means of being exhibited in the museum. Museums of African art in the West can be taken as another

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example. None of the objects that are displayed are originally considered as in the same meaning that was attributed to them in their own geography. Therefore, exhibitions are always ideological that they make particular intentions public.

Pierre Bourdieu noted that the curator (inter alia) adds cultural meaning and value to the making of art and artists:

The subject of the production of the artwork – of its value but also its meaning – is not the producer who actually creates the object in its materiality, but rather the entire set of agents engaged in the field. Among these are the producers of works, classified as artists ... critics of all persuasions, ... collectors, middlemen, curators, etc.; in short all those who have ties with art, who live for art and, to varying degrees, from it, and who confront each other in struggles where the imposition of not only a world view but also a vision of the art world is at stake, and who, through these struggles, participate in the production of the value of the artist and of art. (cited in O'Neil, 2010: 243-244)

Exhibitions are, therefore, contemporary forms of rhetoric, complex expressions of persuasion whose strategies aim to produce a prescribed set of values and social relations for their audiences. As such exhibitions are subjective political tools, as well as being modern ritual settings, those upholds identities (artistic, national, sub-cultural, international, gender, or racespecific, avant-garde, regional, global, etc.) are to be understood as institutional “utterances” within a larger culture industry (O'Neil, 2010: 245). Apart from the particular issues of scale, temporality, and location, the activity of curation that is made manifest through such exhibitions is articulated as being identity-driven; therefore an overtly politicized, discursively global, and fundamentally auteured *praxis* prevails, in spite of the many variable forms they have taken on (O'Neil, 2010: 245). In particular, the role of the nomadic curator within large-scale exhibitions is to select and display “international” art through a visible framing device: a subjective (curatorial) system of mediation that has the notion of inclusivity as one of its central thematics (O'Neil, 2010: 245).

The discursive aspect of the large-scale exhibitions can be characterized as an ambivalent way of saying something vis-à-vis doing. The tendency of this characterization has been given further impetus by what he calls “the Foucauldian moment in the art of the last two decades, and the ubiquitous appeal of the terms ‘discourse’ as a word to conjure and perform power,” To the point where “even talking is doing something,” with the value of the discursive as something located in its proxy for actual doing within discourses on curatorial practice

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(O’Neil, 2010: 249). As O’Neil points out that the figure of the curator within curatorial discourse operates at a level previously understood as being the domain of artistic practice, where in Foucauldian terms such discourse is “the general domain of all statements, sometimes as an individualizable group of statements, and sometimes as a regulated practice that accounts for a certain number of statements.” Therefore, curator’s position is important in the sense that curator presents a discourse with the exhibition. Practice alone does not produce and support such a discourse. Rather, distinct moments of practice translate into a hierarchical “common discourse” of curating as it is understood through its discursive formations (O’Neil, 2010: 250).

According to Z. Bauman, it is because of an absence of a single, universally accepted authority within contemporary culture that curators are acting. Bauman adds that art has become recentered around what he calls “the event of the exhibition,” where the dominant experience of art is generated by short-lived temporal curatorial events and only secondly, if at all, by the extemporaneous value of the work of art itself. It is mostly the work of art exhibited in a widely publicized art-world event that can meet the standards set for its global consumption, and the only way it might stand a change of being seen is by maximizing its shock value, its scale, and its visibility so as to avoid the risk of boredom or submission, which would strip it of its “entertainment value” (cited in O’Neil, 2010: 254).

Today, in particular, it is the contemporary art exhibition that has become the principal medium in the distribution and reception of art, thus being the principal agent in debate and criticism about any aspect of the visual arts. Biennials may provide a different form of art than the one anticipated by modernity although it may not totally escape from similar forms. However, they could provide alternative ways of conceiving a different art system in the present. Accordingly, my consideration of the International Istanbul Biennial in the next section should not be understood as claiming neither an entire different system, nor the reorganization of contemporary art system, but rather an attempt that discusses certain differentiations in the artistic practices.

5.1. A Gaze to the International Istanbul Biennial

It is an obvious fact that today the number of international biennials is increasing and these biennials stand somewhere between the global and the local in the global network. A fixed biennial model cannot be seen all over the world though it may have evolved out of the museum exhibition format and holding the formation of the white cube in many instances. However, biennials can be seen, first of all, as a process that involves discussing the ways and circumstances in which things are done, and indeed, what these *things* that are to be done actually might be. Then, with the experience and knowledge we have at our disposal, we need to see if and how one can find an emancipatory dimension in a phenomenon that so closely mirrors the flows of neoliberal capital (Hlavajova, 2010: 293). Biennials as an art institution does not exist in single form representing the entire hybrid field of cultural endeavor. Moreover, the exhibition format is the primary vehicle on which biennials rest and very different projects take place under the events, if one is to describe it so, under this name. Curatorial discourses increasingly distinguish the biennial as larger than the mere presentation of artworks; they are understood as vehicles for the production of knowledge and intellectual debate (Filipovic, 2005: 66). Accordingly, this process does not only include production and display, but also and progressively even more importantly, the production of discourse and the distribution of knowledge (Hlavajova, 2010: 296). Therefore, the question becomes how should a biennial operate regarding its position in the production and distribution of knowledge?

I'm not going to answer this question by drawing a biennial outline. It would make no sense since any biennial format may lead to somewhere else. However, I intend to consider this issue basically in relation to the 9th and 10th editions of the International Istanbul Biennials, because I believe they provide a comprehensive understanding of contemporary artistic practices and biennials in their structures, especially when I take my earlier arguments about the modern formation of art into consideration. The reason why I've chosen this particular biennial is that it has a growing tendency for dealing with a relationship between art and politics is observed in its discourse as well as in practice. The other reason why I've chosen these particular editions of the Istanbul Biennial is that I think they do not only flow in the direction of locality in the level of discursivity but also in the level of organization. Thus, these two editions of the Biennial in particular and the Biennial taken as a whole and as an example

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provide me the ground to argue the discursivity of biennials as well as the political dimension in the contemporary artistic practices.

This section mainly will revolve around the notion of locality from the point of the Biennial. Therefore, I would like to start with a quotation from H. Hanru, the curator of the 10th International Istanbul Biennial:

Biennials of contemporary art inevitably have cultural and geopolitical ambitions. They seek to be nationally and even internationally significant, by putting forward particular and supposedly incomparable local characteristics, what we might call 'locality'. Ideally, the concept of locality should be culturally related to the local tradition but innovative and open to international exchanges... The problem of locality provides us, as curators and artists directly involved with such events, a unique opportunity to explore the creative and innovative possibilities offered by the occasion. The challenge that we face is how to imagine and realize a biennial that is culturally and artistically significant in terms of embodying and intensifying the negotiation between the global and the local, politically transcending the established power relationship between different locales and going beyond conformist regionalism. (Hanru, 2005: 57)

As it is the case of the 10th Istanbul Biennial, Hanru problematizes the local history and focuses on the foundation of Turkish Republic. In this attempt, he relates the history of the Turkish Republic to the process of modernization of the third world countries. He further says that "The Third World is a project by the non-western world to become independent after years of colonization, and to invent their own nation-states based on the principles of self-recognition, independence and equality. Modernization becomes the route towards such a goal, and multiple modernities provide the very ideological guideliness. Thus, the Third World is by definition a global project" (Hanru, 2007: 19). Hanru goes on to argue the historical background of Turkey, but at the end, he finishes his text by stating that "In such a debate, artistic actions, including the Biennial itself, can certainly find their roles in prompting cultural and social changes through innovative forces of intervention – a form of urban guerrilla. Facing this infinitely dynamic, complex and exciting reality of a metropolis, artists and other creators are inspired to mobilize their imaginations and creativities" (Hanru, 2007: 19). In Hanru's statement, the dominant discourse about the local history is brought into question. Statements which are fundamental to the power are critically considered in terms of "regimes of truth". Indeed, this is the point I attempted to emphasize in the previous section by departing from Foucault's notion of the "specific intellectual". To my point, as I have argued, this term should not be conceived only with regard to the artist but also to the curator or any other actor in the artistic field since I have

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also stated that the organization of the artistic field functions in a collaborative way in the contemporary practice. Hanru indicates a good example of this by questioning the “regime of truth” which is produced by discourse of the power and so has been the dominant ideology of the state. What we see in this case is the problematization of the “regime of truth” in the domain of art, which is however performed by artistic means.

The statement of Hanru as the curator of the Biennial and its structure investigate the relationship between the local and global, or local history and world history. Indeed, he thinks that “historically and especially in the contemporary world, locality is always a product of the confrontation and negotiation of the locale with the global (or “Other”)”... Producing new localities is the most imminent task for locales. If the boundaries of locales were once relatively clearly defined and conceivable as being like islands on the world map, today this island-based concept is no longer sustainable” (Hanru, 2005: 58).

Obviously, one of the major results of globalization is the gradual disappearance of borders which separate nation-states and the establishment of new boundaries according to the rules of global capitalism. Concomitant with such a tendency, contemporary art is also going through a transitional period of dissolution. Increasingly, art concepts and practices merge with other disciplines, especially architecture and urbanism, providing a larger space for social intervention by means of the reconstruction of visual environments beyond the framework of art institutions or the market (Hanru, 2005: 60). The 10th Istanbul Biennial’s attempt to carry its discursivity into practice appears in the locations where it took place. Dealing with the question of modernization, urbanization is considered as the most visible and significant sign of modernization. Therefore, exploring the urban and architectural conditions of Istanbul represents the starting point of this Biennial. In order to critically reexamine “the promise of modernity,” the Biennial had chosen, as sites of exhibition, some of the most significant modern edifices and venues including the AKM, IMÇ, Antrepo, santralistanbul and KAHAM. The reason of this choice is given as follows:

They symbolically and physically mirror the various facets and models of urban modernization in the city. In these sites, the utopian project of the republican revolution and modernization meets with the lively, ever-changing and ‘chaotic’ reality, at once harmonious and conflicting. They are sites where the top-down vision of the modern city clashes with the bottom-up imaginations and actions promoting difference and hybridity. (Hanru, 2007: 17)

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Now, this can be a remark for the locality of art, artistic event and biennial. During the course of modernity, the triangle of art, artist and artwork was believed to be universal. This idea was institutionalized mainly by the museums and the ideology of the “white cube”. This aspect of the Biennial is a good example in confrontation with that modern idea. As long as the contemplation held the pivotal role in the perception of modern art, the white cube carried this mission. As Elena Filipovic points it out, what is particular to the white cube is that “it operates under the pretense that its seeming invisibility allows the artwork best to speak; it seems blank, innocent, unspecific, insignificant. Ultimately what makes a white cube a white cube is that, in our experience of it, ideology and form meet, and all without our noticing it” (Filipovic, 2005: 64). Therefore, exhibitions, by their forms, entangle the viewer in a space at once physical and intellectual, but also ideological. Consequently, we can say that biennials and other large-scale exhibitions are as ideological as museums regardless of their differentiation from the idea of the museum. However, one of the important particularities of biennials and other large-scale exhibitions in opposition to the museums is that they mean to represent specificity and this “specificity is precisely their potential to be specific – site-specific, if you will, and timespecific as well” (Filipovic, 2005: 67).

This should not be thought as if biennials appeared in the art scene as opposed to the museums all of a sudden. There are still many large-scale exhibitions using and reusing white cubes to display large portions of the artworks selected for inclusion. This situation is even evident in the 12th Istanbul Biennial that the Biennial was composed of 5 group shows, accordingly 5 main themes which are *Untitled (Abstraction)*, *“Untitled” (Ross)*, *“Untitled” (Passport)*, *“Untitled” (History)*, and *“Untitled” (Death by Gun)*—departing from a specific work by Gonzalez-Torres. Each group was surrounded with solo exhibitions following the same theme. The audience found many historical, social and political references in the Biennial. However that was organized in the format of white cube and still functioning in a similar way to the museum in my opinion because the exhibition structure in this Biennial had been totally isolated from the outside. My aim is not only to set forth an idea that opposes to the museum but also to consider the critical aspect of the exhibition making. That is, in fact, why I think the intended relationship between art and politics had not succeeded in the 12th Istanbul Biennial while I think it was established much more efficiently in the previous biennials after 2005 in terms of selection of the locations as well as other features such as publications and talks held

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in the frame of the Biennials. Such features of the Biennials contributed to the production of knowledge besides presenting them to the audience.

The reliance of biennials on traditional museum exhibition formats is questionable for numerous reasons, including the fact that many contemporary aesthetic practices no longer correspond to the conditions for which the white cube was built (Filipovic, 2005: 68). One important difference between the biennials which present themselves as an alternative to the museum is that they attempt to reveal cultures, histories, and politics underrepresented within that institution. The point is also clearly expressed by Rosa Martinez, curator of the 5th Istanbul Biennial, in her statement for the 2005 Biennial in Venice that “a biennial... looks beyond the present and into the future... Biennials are the most advanced arena for this expanded field precisely because they do not function like museums. Museums are temples for the preservation of memory... Biennials are a context for the exploration and questioning... of the present” (Jones, 2012: 72). Therefore, the distinction between the classical museum format and that of the biennial, though we cannot talk about such a fixed biennial format, yet at least the ones which breaks the white cube format, derives from the differentiation of this function. Brian O’Doherty, one of the white cube’s most eminent theorists, says that:

The history of modernism is intimately framed by (the gallery) space; or rather the history of modern art can be correlated with changes in that space and how we see it... An image comes to mind of a white, ideal space that, more than any single picture, may be the archetypal image of twentieth century art; it clarifies itself through a process of historical inevitability usually attached to the art it contains. (O’Doherty, 1999: 14)

Therefore, the white cube often supports the modern museum’s other historiographic devices, including a linear, evolutionary history of art with its decidedly Western perspective, limited temporal schemas, and unidirectional notions of influence. Museums, in the traditional sense, act to reinforce culture, not to change it; postmodernism revealed that the museum was actually another institution of sameness, not difference (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 366). Consequently, the ideology of an exhibition lies between the discursive statements of purpose and the aesthetic-spatial result that manage more or less effectively to translate the intentions of its makers (Filipovic, 2005: 69). To have begun to question the use of the white cube in recent large-scale perennial exhibitions by addressing the foundation of the modern museum and the historical and political implications of certain exhibition spaces, extreme as those examples may be, was not merely for rhetorical effect. By so doing, what is intended to underscore that the

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framing of art, no less than the selection of artworks, is fundamental to the ideological dramaturgy that what is called an exhibition (Filipovic, 2005: 78).

At a moment when art remains one of the few modes of critically resisting hegemonic global transformations and when the engagement and experimentation of artists remains a source of incredible promise for the future, exhibition forms need all the more urgently to be intelligent, sensitive, and appropriate means for rendering art public (Filipovic, 2005: 79). Artworks, however much they are elements in the construction of the meaning of an exhibition and, dialectically, also subjected to its staging, can also articulate aesthetic and intellectual positions and define modes of experience that resist the thematic or structural frames in which they are put (Filipovic, 2005: 79). This, after all, is what distinguishes an exhibition from, say, an illustrated essay: The articulation of a particular physical space through which relations between viewers and objects, between one object and others, and between objects, viewers, and their specific context are staged (Filipovic, 2005: 79).

From the critique of the white cube, it should not be inferred that it should be supplanted by another model which would become the biennial standard. On the contrary, E. Filipovic stresses that exhibiting works, as often seen, in crumbling industrial buildings or any number of other “exotic” locales is not the solution either. Instead, the future of biennials is to be found in a sensitivity to how the coincidence of works of art and other conditions such as temporal, geographic, historic, discursive, and institutional locate a project (Filipovic, 2005: 80). In the end, none of this will guarantee consistently memorable shows, but thinking through an exhibition’s form will facilitate the development of more complex relationships between artworks and their presentation frames as well as projects and viewers more aware of the ideological entanglements of the structures and strategies they experience everyday. Only then will biennials and large-scale exhibitions emerge and assert themselves fully as the “models of resistance” that they promise to be, which does not necessarily mean the end of the white cube in all cases and for all places so much as a critical relationship to its ends (Filipovic, 2005: 80).

Conceiving the biennials as a model of resistance, one should also think about its discursive dimension. Rather than simply showing the artworks in the space, this genre of biennial includes “exhibitions that question the format of the curatorial project from within, or foreground symposia, platforms for discussion, research, and educational programming, which is to say, they attend to pedagogy, aesthetics, and knowledge production” (Ferguson and

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Hoegsberg, 2010: 361). This, namely discursive transformation, has happened mostly in biennials and other such perennial exhibitions. The modern formation of the art system had proposed the exclusive presentation of concrete and autonomous objects (display) in art institutions of various kinds such as museums and art centers. However, biennials should promote the active participation of the audience in listening, reading, studying, or participating rather than merely looking. Consequently, they have become privileged platforms for exhibiting discursivity. For this kind of biennial organization, I particularly have the 9th Istanbul Biennial in my mind. The structure of this Biennial presented a more complicated and long lasting effect than any other Istanbul Biennials so far. The 9th International Istanbul Biennial's intent to expand its presence beyond the formal and temporal limits of the exhibition is found in the Biennial itself. The series of conferences and publications as well as the exhibition format created a different dynamism around the Biennial. A series of talks had been organized within the frame of the 9th Istanbul Biennial. Entitled "9B Talks", it hosted academics, writers and curators starting from October 2004 and lasting for a year. In addition to this series of talk, numerous parallel projects both in and out of the city took place during the Biennial. Moreover, several publications were released regarding the Biennial. The use of publications as a serious platform for the reflection on the format may prove a small but important strategy in the shift under discussion here.

The growing demand for contemporary art reflects the wide recognition of art's potential to serve social, political, and economic ends, in both the public and private sectors. The increase in biennials signals, in other words, a continuation of a far-reaching instrumentalization of contemporary art, in particular as a "tool" for dealing with issues such as education, cultural diversity and integration, cultural tourism, urban and social regeneration, identity politics (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 362). The conditions of emergence for 'discursive bienial' as a response to the other forms of biennial can be stated as follows: "the power brokering of the West; peripatetic international curators and artists intervening insensitively in a local situation; the lack of impact on communities and the lack of structures for cultural sustainability after a biennial's occurrence" (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 364). The manifestation of discursive biennials undermines the power relations through a deliberately wide social engagement. The new emphasis in these biennials also represents a shift of focus towards a deep and committed interest in local contexts. Not coincidentally, biennials take place in locations in which the biennial fills a gap in the artistic community by becoming a genuine alternative, a platform for

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the dissemination of existing local practices and ideas that may not be discussed elsewhere (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 366). Departing from this idea, it is also an obvious fact that no single biennial has seemed capable of resolving all the key issues raised by curators, artists, and art critics. However, the crucial point is here the “knowledge production”. Acting as a research center, discursive biennials signal a migration of the prerogative of knowledge production. Therefore, “it represents a real need to start to differentiate and designate how knowledge is now produced and reproduced in this expanding form in ways that are significantly distinct from the traditional institutional modes” (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 366). The shift towards education thus makes sense on a number of levels. If biennials are capable of creating an alternative experience, and become potential platforms for the advancement of contemporary art, they are thus powerful vehicles for the production of knowledge. Again, we must return to the question of the audience for whom biennials are organized. In the places outside established art centers, biennials are major points of access and exposure to the international art for citizens or artists (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 366). For instance, entitled the *Hospitality Zone* has been “the core element of the 9th Istanbul Biennial's Positionings programme”. It has been “one of the substantial ways in which the biennial attempted to engage with the cultural scene in the city and beyond”. The *Hospitality Zone* included two group exhibitions which “both reflected on diverse aspects of contemporary art production in Turkey”. It also hosted different parallel events such as a student workshop. Activated by guests and visitors, the *Hospitality Zone* continuously evolved to function as a meeting point in the city for various social and artistic endeavours.

The conceptual framework of the 9th Istanbul Biennial set forth a value around the locality of Istanbul, and accordingly, the exhibition spread throughout the city and absorbed by it. In this sense, Istanbul was “not only the subject of the biennial but also its operational field” (Esche and Kortun, 2005: 25). In retrospect, the site-specificity movement, then, might be seen as a transitional stage to the “discursive”, a pivot in the movement from art to audience. Knowledge production happens on the level of both discourse and practice. Closing the gap between text and object, and between theory and practice, seems pertinent to the process of rethinking biennial (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 371). Therefore, the thematic discourse of the biennial should not be expressed only in terms of theory but also should enact in practice. Will “discursivity,” however imprecisely defined, be able to produce genuine alternatives – economic, cultural, or philosophical – within the equally imprecisely defined genre known as

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the “biennial”? (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 373). Discursive exhibitions might be productive endeavors that embrace the responsibility to produce exhibitions as meaningful engagements within a specific context and location, to impact social and cultural infrastructure and diverse communities in positive ways (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 373). As a result of this, the potential of discursivity in exhibition making might become a form of critical inquiry into the operating conditions and processes of art world and its value systems as a producer of new knowledge and meaning for contemporary art, and as a model of performative reform in the biennial genre (Ferguson and Hoegsberg, 2010: 373).

As argued earlier, the site-specificity of biennial should always be in question. In other words, the structure of biennial that how the works of art coincide with other conditions (temporal, geographic, historic, discursive, and institutional) should be in question. I have discussed the critical dimension of the locations used in 10th Istanbul Biennial regarding its discursivity on the contrary of the ideology of the white cube. When I look at the 9th Istanbul Biennial, in a similar way, the operational field of the Biennial is defined as the city, Istanbul. Contemporary art, the public sphere and politics appeared to be three extensions of it. Consequently, various public spaces were used in the exhibition format of this Biennial. While it adapted locality in its format, it also problematized what is called the “public sphere”. The notion of public sphere is brought into question, as the Biennial took place in so-defined public spaces. At the same time, this is critically argued in the Biennial’s publication that “to build the physical environment and conceptualise it within the mind, there are obviously other historical alternatives to thinking of it within the framework of the public/private duality...so one should be suspicious of the theoretical approach which insists that the urban and architectural history of the world must only be read through the dichotomy of the public sphere and the private sphere” (Tanyeli, 2005: 213). What can be the alternative thinkings in the duality of public and private spheres in terms of the exhibition formats? What is the aim of (contemporary) art in the public sphere? M. Hannula suggests that “the aim is to create meaningful, fruitful and interesting debates about important issues and themes in a discursive context. This context is always both a physical and discursive site. It is an activation of locality that contemporary art tries to achieve and which it yearns for. It participates in the production of content within the public sphere” (Hannula, 2005: 192). In my opinion, the alternative thinking of *space* in the 9th Istanbul Biennial lies in its attempt in using the exhibition space on the ground of a community.

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That is where its political effectiveness comes from. I would like to pass to the notion of community regarding the Biennial from here.

5.2. Towards a New Conception of the Political in Arts

“We are meaning”

-Jean-Luc Nancy, *Being Singular Plural*

The key text, as well as the key notion, in establishing the 9th Istanbul Biennial was G. Agamben's *The Coming Community* (1993). Accordingly, the Biennial was based on the idea of community. Agamben's proposal of a future community may be “visible in this biennial and in all its contradictory, human potential, through the projects of the artists working inside and outside Istanbul. If the ‘coming community’ is to be built, it will be from the singularity of each citizen confronting another person as simply human. This confrontation is what some of the best of the biennials offer sudden glimpses of” (Esche and Kortun, 2005: 30). The singular being cannot be defined by himself as an autonomous individual and apart from others. Later, the curators of the Biennial point out the function of this Biennial as a tool that it is supposed to lead to the awareness of a world outside ourselves and to the ways that we rethink our relation to it. They also emphasize “the potential of a space outside the system that will one day lead to the emergence of a real and viable alternative” (Esche and Kortun, 2005: 30). As Nancy argues community is not something that has been lost, but it is something yet to come. While this matter is argued in the publication, entitled ‘Art, City and Politics In An Expanding World,’ the intention was also to perform it in the exhibition format in practice. Therefore, the structure of the Biennial aimed to question the relations between people and the environment in which they live.

I suppose the statement, “the singularity of each citizen confronting another person as simply human,” is the best point to start thinking about our relations to the world on the basis of a community. The notion of community, primarily as conceived by Jean-Luc Nancy and Giorgio Agamben, derives from the negation of identity. The identities are established in

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relation to the “conditions of belonging”. The negation of identity opposes the power in return of an alternative communication. Hence, the confrontation happens in the singularity of the other “as such”. In this sense, confrontation means a communication which is different than a mere linguistic communication. This sort of communication is grounded on the notion of “community” and it is political by nature.

Nancy argues the question of the community as inseparable from a question of ecstasy and it cannot be properly said that “the singular being is the subject of ecstasy, for ecstasy has no ‘subject’ –but one must say that ecstasy (community) happens *to* the singular being” (Nancy, 2004: 6-7). Singular beings represent a limit for each other; not the enclosing limit of absolute being, but the limit of ecstasy, of existing outside of oneself. The boundaries previously established between beings stand exposed, open to the other through ecstasy. A communication with a thinking of art, of literature, and of thought himself are other figures or other exigencies of ecstasy.

Jan Verwoert argues this sort of communication in the domain of biennial. He states that none can activate the potential to address and renegotiate the conditions of communication that art could have in a situation of cross-cultural exchange. He further defines the crux of the matter by saying that “we intuitively still understand communication primarily as a means by which to *convey content*” (Verwoert, 2010: 192). However, this understanding already leads to the commodification of communication.

If we picture there to be a distinct entity – or ‘content’ – transferred from artists to audiences, this image in fact models the conditions of communication on those of a closed economy in which a clearly defined currency circulates... Those who are called upon to supply it (the currency) are thus reduced to the status of ‘content-providers.’ If we refuse to accept this concept of a closed economy of communication and the limiting terms of exchange it imposes any longer, the question to address would be: how could biennials be more than a global marketplace for content-providers? (Verwoert, 2010: 192)

The challenge artistically as well as philosophically lies in thinking communication differently by rejecting the false premise that it is a form of content management. Communication should exceed the limits of such a content management. What is there to communicate if not content then? Verwoert finds the answer in limits, so the implicit subject of their communicative interaction is, first and foremost, the limits of communication. Each party communicates its limits and proposes a mode of getting around them. “Performatively

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speaking, communication is an encounter on a threshold defined by the mutual limits of understanding. The renegotiation of this boundary is what the performance underlying communicative acts is initially concerned with” (Verwoert, 2010: 193). Verwoert further refers to the conception of communication by Jean-Luc Nancy and says that it “is a paraphrase of how Nancy develops his phenomenological account of communication as a performance *on*, or rather *of*, a threshold. Taking this account of an initial encounter as a model for literary (or in the widest sense, artistic) communication, Nancy then develops a set of criteria to describe the ethical quality of a certain mode of performing the threshold” (Verwoert, 2010: 193). I basically agree with this interpretation of Verwoert and would like to discuss the subject of communication in detail now by turning to Nancy but I must state here that Verwoert interpretation of Nancy and his “phenomenological account of communication” do not fit into Nancy’s approach in my opinion. Nancy’s view for the discussion at issue including this particular point has nothing to do with phenomenological approach at all but let’s this aspect aside now.

The political is the place where the community as such is brought into play. Nancy presupposes that there would be no power relations nor would there be such a specific unleashing of power if the political were not the place of community -in other words, the place of a specific existence, the existence of being-in-common which gives rise to the existence of being-self (Nancy, 2004: xxxvi). This means we are constructed and reconstructed according to how we engage in *common*. The common is shaped in the “regimes of truth”. As a result being-self is shaped around it yet that would not be saying the common is a substance and under which uniformly individuals exist. It rather means the mode of existence. Appropriation of a self is the mode of an exposition in common and to the common. To further the argument to be exposed means to encounter in an exteriority with the inside of the self. This pushes us towards a “threshold”. Nancy directs us to thinking the closure of the political. He thinks such a thinking constitutes closure because it assigns to community a common being, whereas community is a matter of something quite different, namely, of existence inasmuch as it is in common, but without letting itself be absorbed into a common substance. Nancy describes being-in-common as no longer having, in any form, in any empirical or ideal place, such a substantial identity and sharing this “lack of identity” (Nancy, 2004: xxxviii). Consequently, the community loses the *in* of the being-in common at the exact moment when it becomes a single thing, or it loses the *with* or the *together* that defines it. It leaves its being together to a being of togetherness.

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The one/the other is neither 'by,' nor 'for,' nor 'in,' nor 'despite,' but rather 'with.' This 'with' is at once both more and less than 'relation' or 'bond,' especially if such relation or bond presupposes the preexistence of the terms upon which it relies; the 'with' is the exact contemporary of its terms; it is, in fact, their contemporaneity. 'With' is the sharing of timespace; it is the at-the-same-time-in-the-same-place as itself, in itself, shattered. It is the instant scaling back of the principle of identity: Being is at the same time in the same place only on the condition of the spacing of an indefinite plurality of singularities. (Nancy, 2000: 32-33)

Verwoert points out that the ethics that Nancy identifies as inherent to the acts of writing and reading is a mutual dedication to struggling with the limits of understanding that both writer and reader avow when the one seeks to make him -or herself understood through writing and the other seeks to understand through the act of reading. As the writing, beyond simply being print on paper, is only brought to life in the process of this struggle, the experience of reading writing is the sensation of a threshold coming into being (Verwoert, 2010: 193). "The work in fact is that threshold; it constitutes it. The experience of encountering a potent work is the realization that encounter itself is made possible through the emergence of a threshold (an opening as much as boundary) on which the experience (of the work as a threshold) occurs. To attune oneself to the intricate dynamics that allow for a threshold to emerge and be negotiated is the ethical stance that Nancy espouses. The mutual avowal of the emergence of a threshold in the exchange between reader and writer is what he terms the ethics of a 'literary communism.' The spirit out of which this kind of communism is born is not that of an identity invoked, but of a limit avowed. Therefore, politics of a community and communication goes beyond that of identity" (Verwoert, 2010: 193). Consequently, the politics of community requires an alternative communication that exceeds the constraints of identity politics. Such a communication can be experienced through encounters. In the encounters, singular is exposed to the exteriority. Nancy puts the exposition in the center of the notion of community. Singularities exist by exposing each other with their *différance*. Exposition doesn't put the singular being in the center. Exposition is not a being that one can suppose to be in community. Community is presuppositionless. Singular being is not the subject of community or of ecstasy in Nancy's conceptualization. Rather, we can say that community happens to the singular being. That's the way singularities exist in the community by ecstasy. Ecstasy makes interaction possible among the singularities and accordingly they encounter each other with their *différance*. Thus, it leads to the main condition for the existence of a community.

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Accordingly, Verwoert raises the question regarding biennials: “How can we go beyond an understanding of international biennials as a platform for the delivery of content towards an actualization of their potential to become sites where the collective avowal of the limits that form the threshold to a different kind of communication could be enacted?” (Verwoert, 2010: 194). The question applies to how the entire exhibition communicates the threshold on which it seeks to communicate. But it is also related to the mode in which the works in the exhibition bring into being the limits at which the experience of and in the exhibition then becomes possible. This cannot be further formulated. In the search of criteria that delineate what mode of communicating limits would seem desirable. Nevertheless, it seems almost inevitable that we must distinguish between different manners in which the threshold can be avowed or dissimulated (Verwoert, 2010: 194). Rather, the limit at which things get critical is set by works that do precisely what an ethics of performing the threshold in principle would ask for: the staging of the threshold as such, and no more than that. It is true that work deliberately remains on the threshold to evoke a sense of the possible (the desirable, the lost, the hidden, the disappeared, the miraculous) defies the pressure to deliver positive content. It also acknowledges that our negotiations of boundaries in art are deeply steeped in the politics of desire (Verwoert, 2010: 194). The dynamics of desire (hope and belief) will, in some form or another, always play a crucial role in how attention is attracted and held when the contract that will determine our relationship to a person or an artwork is tacitly negotiated on the threshold of communication... And it is this difference that, on a sensual level, also constitutes – and plays across – the initial threshold of communication (Verwoert, 2010: 195).

Verwoert suggests developing “sensuality – or *sentience*, in an expanded sense – as a form of intelligence that determines the conditions of communication precisely by creating threshold that are barriers as much as ports of entry.” (Verwoert, 2010: 196). To resituate the debate about what, at a biennial, art could be and do; he relates the question of an inherent ethics of aesthetic experience. Finally, he suggests this through abandoning the exhausted vocabulary of postwar humanist internationalism and experimenting with a different artistic and philosophical language in order to articulate what may be at stake when we have a sensual encounter with someone or something at the limits of our understanding and on the threshold of a different form of communication (Verwoert, 2010: 196). This approach explicitly displays the transformation in exhibition making by pointing out the aesthetic differentiations. In the domain of art, exhibitions and the works of art function as a threshold which presupposes

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different forms of communication regardless of an identity politics and leads to an alternative politics against the “regimes of truth” rather than a predetermined ideology of the avant-garde.

On the one side, the concept of community or the city is, in every sense, diffracted. It is that which signifies the chaotic and multiform appearance of the infranational, supranational, paranational and, moreover, the dis-location of the ‘national’ in general. On the other side, the concept of community appears to have its own prefix as its only content: the *cum*, the *with* deprived of substance and connection, stripped of interiority, subjectivity, and personality (Nancy, 2000: 36).

In conclusion, biennials can function as a threshold in questioning the “regimes of truth.” The main reason for this is that they don’t presuppose a narrative on the past like museums, to the contrary, they set forth a discourse on the present. This discourse might be their starting point in the criticism they direct toward the status quo. However, this should not claim a new truth but should reveal the truth in the established relations of power. In doing so, it is important to seek alternative exhibition formats different than the one emerged in the modern formation of art. Such a new structure or format should primarily drive from locality. Although the examples I have considered indicate certain differentiations, they are not the ultimate ends for a biennial structure. In fact, one of the most important characteristics of the biennial is that it has no fixed structure. Its success and criticism lie in this flexibility. Biennials can also participate in the production and distribution of knowledge besides exhibiting works of art. The work of art itself is influential in the knowledge though it does not simply derive from knowledge or aim to be a mere knowledge for the audience. In the biennial structure, the works of art represent a threshold which leads to encounters via expositions. Such encounters may result in an alternative communication and consequently, make us critically rethink our relationship with the world in which we live.

6. Conclusion

I have started my thesis by questioning the historical relationship between art and politics through a nominalist approach. First of all, I have claimed that there is no static way of conceiving a relationship between art and politics because art transforms in history. Then, I have argued the possible conception of art that while we come across various objects called artworks in history, we also find different theories on art. Furthermore, we cannot claim a corpus of art because any artwork taken into consideration represents a mere example. An example, by definition, never gives generic. Therefore, I have investigated the modern conception of art back in the history in order to understand comprehensively what we call art today and why we call it so before thinking about the possible forms of relations between art and politics in the current practices.

When I sought the categorization of art in history after the corpus of art, two terms were caught attention in this historical investigation. *Tekhnè* and *ars* appeared as the first classifications in Antiquity. The modern word *art*, belonged to the realm of the *tekhnè* in ancient Greek language and to the Roman *ars*. However, this term did not match what is called “fine arts” today. These terms had a broader meaning than what the modern art system distinguished as “art” and “craft”. Both terms, in their original context, had represented a human production that does not exist in nature. In this sense, it had basically referred to a wide range of human skills in opposition to the nature. Therefore, we can say that in this old system of art which was *tekhnè* and *ars* referred less to a class of objects than to the human ability to make and perform. Similarly, painting, sculpture, architecture, poetry, and music were not treated as if they belonged to a single and distinct category as it is referred today under the category of fine arts.

In my research, I have found out that the category of art in Antiquity was referred as the “liberal arts” (*artes liberales*). While Grammar, Rhetoric, and Logic were the core of liberal arts, this category was extended and divided into two main groups during the Medieval age. While the one of the groupings was called the *Trivium* and consisted of grammar, rhetoric, and logic, the other was named the *Quadrivium* and included mathematics, geometry, music and astronomy. Thus, the *Trivium* and *Quadrivium* together constituted the seven *liberal arts* of the medieval age.

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In addition to the seven *liberal arts*, there emerged the category of *mechanical arts* in the Medieval age. According to the classification of Hugh of St. Victor, it consisted of weaving, armament, commerce, agriculture, hunting, medicine, theatics. It was a medieval concept of ordered practices or skills and juxtaposed to the traditional seven liberal arts which were also called "servile" and "vulgar", from antiquity they had been deemed unbecoming for a free man, as ministering to baser needs. Hugh of St. Victor set forth argument for replacing the terms "vulgar" or "servile" with the term "mechanical arts". Hugh made the mechanical arts an equal partner with the theoretical arts (philosophy, physics) and practical arts (politics, ethics). However, the important point is that in this classification, the subject in the modern sense of it had not appeared yet. The classification of "mechanical arts" modified the old system that remained from Antiquity and extended it with a new category.

I admit that these transformations in the categorizations of art is being too simplistic but the reason I included them in my discussion is to show the historical change through which art goes and that the category of (fine) art is a historical invention as well. I also wanted to emphasize that I considered art as an "event" according to Foucault's archaeology. I analyzed creation of art in modern episteme in terms of both discursive and non-discursive formations. Consequently, I have argued the formation of modern art system in four levels which are respectively the formation of objects, the formation of the subjective positions, the formation of concepts and the formation of strategic choices. Those correspond to the four domains in which the enunciative function operates. Moreover, I have approached the formation of the modern art system in terms of discontinuities rather than continuities on the contrary of art history. Therefore, the epistemic break led by modernity has held an important position in my investigation. While I have critically considered the epistemic formations and epistemic breaks of modernity in the domain of art, I have focused on the work of art as the primary unit of artistic discourse.

When I arrived at the modern categorization of art, I argued that the advent of fine arts required three things needed to come together in order to spread through strategies and gain wide acceptance: a limited *set* of arts, a commonly accepted *term* to easily identify the set, and some generally agreed upon *principle(s)* or criteria for distinguishing that set from all others (Shiner, 2001: 80). Thus, the new grouping of fine arts required some new principles to be able to emerge as a discipline. A combination of four principles provided the legitimate ground on

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which fine arts established. Two of these principles were “genius” and “imagination” and the other two were “pleasure” versus “utility” and “taste.” While the former group concerned the production of works of fine arts, the latter formed the aims and mode of reception of the fine art. The combination of pleasure versus utility with genius and imagination was usually used to distinguish fine arts from the mechanical arts or crafts. The combination of pleasure versus utility with taste was used to distinguish fine arts from the sciences and from other liberal arts like grammar and logic.

In this new formation of fine arts, my first point has been the formation of the subject. Characteristics such as genius and imagination were attributed to the artist in this epistemic formation. Art history as a discipline narrates the history of art as if it is written intentionally with the conscious decisions of the sovereign subjects. Nevertheless, what I found problematic in this narration and argued is that an ‘author’ is not identical with the subject of the statement. In the same sense, one cannot claim an identical relation between the artist and the artwork.

The relation of production that the subject has with the formulation does not intersect with the relation that brings together the enunciating subject and what he states. If the subject in a field is to be examined, it should be approached within the set of relations in which he emerges. Therefore, to describe a formulation through “statement” does not stem from analysing the relations between the author and what he says, but rather in determining what position can and must be occupied by any individual if he is to be the subject of it. In this matter, I have argued the set of relations in which the modern artist was born. This kind of approach provided me a deeper insight to the status of artist in the modern episteme.

Later, I have turned to the formation of objects in the fine arts. I have attempted to investigate the origin of the conception of artwork back in the history. I showed that the definition as well as the categorization of works of art change within time. While something is called an artwork, its status is always subject to change. Any artwork appears in its historicity. It is a status given by the present “episteme.” Thus, it is necessary to determine the “surfaces of emergence” in order to understand the status of artwork and show where these individual differences, which, according to the degrees of rationalization, conceptual codes, and types of theory will be accorded the status of artwork, may emerge, and then be designated and analysed (Foucault, 1972: 41). In my investigation, I arrived at the point that the “surfaces of emergence” are not the same for different societies, at different periods, and in different forms of discourse.

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Besides museums, we can think of galleries at the end of the nineteenth century. They functioned as the “planes of emergence” that alternative streams of paintings could appear. For example, we would not be reading the Impressionists today in art history unless such a gallery system had appeared in history. However, Foucault’s “enunciative analysis” requires more than relating objects to the “surface of emergence” in field of exteriority. Foucault emphasizes the role of concepts in the analysis of discursive formations. I have said that certain characteristics were ascribed to both subject and object. This new formation was also supported by the concepts. In the field of aesthetics, we see the conceptualization of art, its perception as well as its production. Although the concept of beauty existed since Plato, we come across a totally different tradition with German philosophers. We can think of the formation of the field of aesthetics with Baumgarten and its transformation with the German tradition led by Kant, Schelling, Hegel and Schopenhauer. Concepts such as taste and genius were produced throughout this tradition. The role of concepts regarding the theories of such philosophers was enormous in the formation of fine arts. Within time, the new system of art gained validity with the help of various theories and spread through the strategies emerged from the relations among institutions, subjects, objects and concepts in different levels. Nonetheless, it should be noted that they all belong to the same “episteme”.

Once the modern system of art was built, the autonomy of art rose as a matter of debate. While it was argued theoretically, artists also had relative independence from the previously existing condition of art. Art existed as a part of social life and was not conceived as autonomous before the new system of art. It had functions such as honoring the dead, serving the Church, ornamenting bourgeois interiors, placating taste. However, artists could act (relatively) freely once they were liberated economically from these realms with the undergoing transformations in the social structure. This should not be seen only as the relative economic independence but also the transformation of the entire field in relation to the society.

After this point, I have related the condition of art to the modernity. Two notions created by and in modernity have been excessively influential in the condition of art in society in this period of time. Those notions were “development” and “evolution” and they resulted in the constitution of the “avant-garde”. While these two notions were adapted in politics, they also directed the artists both to acting in the field of art progressively and to acting in society progressively for a better life. Consequently, the progressive understanding of the world went

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hand to hand in politics as well as in art. I have problematized this relationship between politics and art in terms of artistic avant-garde through the theory of De Duve and analyzed the following formulation: Is artistic activity able to maintain its critical function when it is severed from an emancipation project? I have claimed that the notion of avant-garde art was carried by history as long as the Enlightenment was believed to be the emancipation of humanity. The Enlightenment anticipated the emancipation of all humanity. That was what the motto of French Revolution aimed: *Liberté, Egalité* and *Fraternité*. The failure of this attempt was not derived from the idea itself, but from turning it into a project. Therefore, the problematic dimension of the emancipation is not what is expressed by the motto but the confusion between project and maxim as defined by De Duve. While project attempts to realize these ideas, the motto treats them as an end without end (in Kant's vocabulary; *purposiveness without a purpose*), a goal with no historical ending, no prescribed term, and no other purpose but respecting the maxim, with no criterion justifying the means (De Duve, 1996: 444). The first side of the artistic avantgarde was this kind of engagement in politics and its confusion of project and maxim. The emancipation project as anticipated by the Enlightenment does not have much currency anymore because it evolved into totalitarianism all over the world regardless of which system or ideological ground it stemmed from. It was the defining notion of the artistic avant-garde. The essential ideological purport of the avant-garde art was the transitive link it established between ethics and aesthetics. This tie between the two realms gave the avant-garde art its critical role by setting forth a critical vigilance between.

On the contrary, I offered a reflexive and analogical relationship in art rather than a transitive and ideological one. This type of relationship is based on Kant's notion "sensus communis." While this notion supports the maxim against the project, it requires acting as if everybody is free, equal and brother although they are not. This notion does not prescribe ends to be realized. The critical relationship it establishes with aesthetics is grounded on the artwork's singularity. This critical function also has its roots in Kant's aesthetic theory. It is called in Kant's terminology "the quickening of imagination and understanding in their free play". The artwork evokes thoughts that cannot be expressed with concepts determined by words. That is to say that the best art makes us think something we could not have thought without it.

From now on, I have stated my point regarding the historical formation of the modern category of fine arts and the relationship it has established with politics. This political role has

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been performed under artistic avant-garde. First, I have defined the problem in terms of artists as vanguards and pionners and then in terms of work of art as a political tool which eventually leads to ideological content and finally in terms of art in general and its position in society. My problematization was that art has no essence because it is seen that it changes in history. This problematizes the kind of relationship that can be conceived between art and politics today, especially after the failure of avant-garde art. I have dealt with the historical relationship between the two and then turned to the present situation of art although I did not attempt to sum up today's state of art today or to represent certain tendencies in contemporary practices.

In the subsequent section, I have considered the end of art and art history through A. Danto and H. Belting who both refer to Hegel and Hegel's End-of-Art in their theories in terms of our relationship to art. The questions here go together with the one of the autonomy of art. As I have said, art was an integral part of society before its (relative) autonomy. Hegel goes over this transition and outlines three different stages in the history of art which are namely symbolic, classical and romantic. Each period involves a different kind of relationship between vehicle of art and its meaning. Once it stopped being such a part of society, it was not obliged to correspond to any particular form. Therefore, the End-of-Art Thesis proclaimed that neither artists nor artworks should be dependent on a master narrative so that any form of art can be legitimate anymore. While this approach negates manifestos, it also deconstructs the art history as a sort of narrative. Once art is freed from such structural obligations, it became possible to think about what art is and should be. In fact, that was the precondition of entire modern art's tradition and avant-garde's.

I have arrived at a point where no art is any longer historically mandated as against any other art and nothing is more true as art than anything else, nothing especially more historically false than anything else. I have ended my study with the critical function of the work of art when I said that quality and critical function in art cannot be defined except by pointing at particular works and by judging them to have quality. However, the role of the artist today is still in question though I don't intend to prescribe him/her such and such role. The leading role of the artist and his/her attributed intellectuality consisted the argument in this questioning. Departing from Foucault's comparison between the "universal intellectual" and the "specific intellectual", I have developed my argument in rejecting the ideology that no one has the legitimate ground to act on the behalf of all. While such a role was represented by "universal

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intellectuals,” similar role was observed with “genius” artists. To be intellectual, just like being an artist, meant something like being the consciousness and conscious of all. When the artists were exalted to the level of liberators, it failed and intellectuals shared the same fate with them by prescribing themselves a leading position in the process of social transformation. Therefore, the position of intellectuals and that of artists are similar. However, I didn’t limit my argument within the specificity of the role of artist although I have begun with it. While the artist had gained such a sovereign position in the society in the past, it is not possible to find a sovereign subject in the current artistic practices. Therefore, the argument of the “specificity” of a position can be extended to that of curators as well as any other position in the domain of art.

The conclusion is drawn from Foucault’s evaluation that “Intellectuals have become used to working, not in the modality of the ‘universal,’ the ‘exemplary,’ the ‘just-and-true-forall,’ but within specific sectors, at the precise points where their own conditions of life or work situate them” (Foucault, 1984: 68). According to Foucault, what must now be taken into account in the intellectual is not the “bearer of universal values” but rather as the person occupying a specific position-but whose specificity is linked to the general functioning of an apparatus of truth. To go on over the position of artist, his specific struggle may have critical effects. The artist as well as the intellectual can operate and struggle at the general level of the “regime of truth” which is fundamental to the structure and functioning in the society. Each political system establishes its own “regimes of truth”. Thus, the resistance should reveal under which conditions it is formed and spreads. However, resistance should take place in the “specificity” of the field. In other words, if the artist is to take a critical attitude that should be performed by artistic means. This position should not be seen peculiar to the artists. It can be extended to the other actors in the field of art such as curators.

In my last section, I wanted to raise the question whether the forms of biennial can be considered one such site regarding power and truth and what movements can be traced through and around them. I have argued the criticism in art with the example of International Istanbul Biennial. I have chosen a this biennial for several reasons. It helped me to distinguish certain characteristics of contemporary art, or call it however, through a different structure. It can be seen as a *surface of emergence* today like museums in the past. However, it differs from the traditional structure of museum because it may hold a critical attitude for the system though its discursivity. This does not mean that museums cannot be critical or all the biennials have such

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a critical dimension. That is the reason why I have chosen the Istanbul Biennial and particularly the two biennials which have been held in 2005 and in 2007 in order to argue how criticism can be expressed in the current artistic practices. Admittedly what I have argued is not the ultimate critical expression in the art of today. In the previous sections, I have argued the role of the artist in modern episteme and then I have claimed that the superior role of the artist was in decay. At least, the relationship between artist and society cannot be as the former's dominant guidance since art's role has also changed. I avoid myself from arguing the artist's role further particularly in the structure of the biennial and approached the position curator from another angle that he acts as the "authority of delimitation". I have also argued that the curator as well as the artist should use the means of the position in which he stands. That's where the "specificity" of the critical position lies to my point of view.

At the end, I considered the locality of the biennial. It was important for my study to the extent that I used this characteristic of the biennial against the universal conception of art in the modern episteme. Such a conception of art was created and sustained in the museum structure and art history. It was also believed that the exhibitions in the museum were neutral. Nevertheless, an exhibition always contains an ideological dimension. It is also the case for biennials. The point is to use this space in creating a discourse rather than merely displaying the objects, namely the works of art, next to each other, a discourse that can be critical.

Discursive criticism is directed towards the "regimes of truth". I have used the example of the 10th Istanbul Biennial in this debate when I argued the curatorial statement and the exhibition locations in terms of criticism directed against the existing "regime of truth". In other words, the discourse should not pose a true consciousness or aim to change people's ideas but rather to present them alternative ways of thinking. This is achieved by means of active participation rather than a passive participation. The earlier exhibition format had required a gaze and contemplation in the exhibition space. Every institution has its own regulating norms. This was the behavioral formation mostly in the museums as the white cube demanded. However, biennials can function by negating such behavioral norms. Later, I have developed my argument in this sort of structure in relation to the 9th Istanbul Biennial. The structure of the biennial provided the audience a different experience in the exhibition space. I have argued its role in knowledge production and knowledge distribution through parallel events and publications. I attempted to emphasize that the success lies in combining both the exhibiting the artworks and organizing parallel events which contribute to the production of knowledge such as conferences

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or publications, because, mere knowledge does not present art by itself. Art addresses both sense and thought. The artwork in the exhibition space becomes a threshold that leads to the encounters and various experiences. At this point, it is important to remember that an exhibition transforms the space. An experience in the space may lead to an alternative way of communication. That sort of communication is not linguistic but based on experience in the threshold. Such a way of communication finds its reflections in the notion of community. The community exceeds the constraints of identity. The politics of community is beyond the identity politics. Therefore, we should think how biennials can function as a tool to experiment with different artistic and philosophical language at the limits of our understanding and on the threshold of a different form of communication.

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