



# Aesthetic, ethics and education in adornian perspective

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**ABSTRACT.** The article discusses the relationship between aesthetics, ethics and training in the Adornian perspective. The research, of bibliographical nature, includes some works by Adorno and his interpreters. In the *Dialectics of Enlightenment*, Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) critically discuss the relation between myth and instrumental rationality, for the progress of enlightenment, by valuing a reason for abstract and dominating characteristic, weakened the exercise of critical self-reflection and promoted the regression of consciousness, the process of which are expressed in half education and barbarism. The art and aesthetics oppose this process and strengthen the consciousness and the emancipatory reason, constituting a reference of freedom and integration between the intellectual and the manual work.

**Keywords:** cultural industry; art; emancipation; education.

## Estética, ética e formação na perspectiva adorniana

**RESUMO.** O artigo discute a relação entre estética, ética e formação na perspectiva adorniana. A pesquisa, de natureza bibliográfica, compreende algumas obras de Adorno e de seus intérpretes. Na *Dialética do Esclarecimento*, Adorno e Horkheimer (1985) discutem criticamente a relação entre o mito e a racionalidade instrumental, pois o progresso do esclarecimento, ao valorizar uma razão de característica abstrata e dominadora, enfraqueceu o exercício da autorreflexão crítica e promoveu a regressão da consciência, cujo processo se expressa na semicultura e barbárie. A obra de arte e a estética se opõem a esse processo e fortalecem a consciência e a razão emancipatória, constituindo-se em referencial de liberdade e integração entre o trabalho intelectual e o manual.

**Palavras-chave:** indústria cultural; arte; emancipação; educação.

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## Introduction

The Critical Theory has origins linked in the creation of *Institut für Sozialforschung* (Social Research Institute) in Frankfurt, 1922. Its discussions include, according Freitag (2004), the following thematic axes: the dialectic of reason, criticism for science, double face of culture and the question of State. Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer joined in Institute of Research and wrote the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, which consists in most emblematic works of criticism of the bourgeois rationality. In *Dialectics of Enlightenment* (1985), the authors criticize the instrumental aspect assumed by reason in process of capitalist development, in which it places itself at the service of domination and economic power. Under these conditions, culture submits itself to logic of consumption, external purposes and adaptive appeals, which makes it lose its formative potential. The cultural industry organizes the culture, guided by a single principle: the principle of commodity; criticism of bourgeois rationality is resulting of criticism of cultural industry.

To starting point of first section, which discusses one of central themes of Critical Theory: the dialectic of reason, based on Adorno and Horkheimer's *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1985), for whom culture has two dimensions: the adaptive and emancipatory.

The process of capitalist development prioritized the adaptation to reality and self-preservation, to disadvantage of its emancipatory sense, which turns to the constitution of autonomous individuals and capable of critical self-reflection. In this way, culture is service of exchange values, it becomes a commodity and it becomes a half education. Under this constitution, cultural goods are in the service of regression. Awareness, emancipation and possibility of a welcoming and available reason for otherness represent the possibility of resistance to regression. They found in aesthetic experience and in work of art.

In order to explain the link between these terms, the second section discusses the concepts of aesthetics, ethics and formation, based on ideas of Adorno and Brazilian authors that focus on these concepts, among them Antônio Álvaro Zuin, Barbara Freitag, Jeanne Marie Gagnebin, Rodrigo Duarte and Renato Franco. Reading these authors contributes to the understanding these concepts and the clarification of the relationship between art and cultural formation.

## The dialectic of reason

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1985), written by Adorno and Horkheimer, the process of development of reason in bourgeois society chose for self-preservation and for reconciliation between thought and reality and identification between the person and the world. In this way, culture produces barbarism, adaptation to external forces and the absence of critical self-reflection and tension between idea and reality, whose existence is fundamental to educate individuals and build an emancipatory society. Culture, under this configuration, loses its formative aspect, succumbs to the values of exchange, shaped by the logic of consumption and becomes half education. The maximum expression of this fact lies in the cultural industry. To understand the *genesis* of technical rationality implies knowing the way in which knowledge becomes 'operation'. The progress of enlightenment starts from mythic reason to instrumental reason, evidencing the whole ascension process of rationality typical of modern society, which represents the substratum of the regression of subjective conditions necessary for human emancipation.

In the quest to explain reality, man led to attribute his rational needs to myths. Thus, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 22-23), myth becomes the product of enlightenment; because it objectifies the explanation of the world in order to dominate it. The basic element of the myth is anthropomorphism, in which man projects his subjectivity into nature, reducing it to the same denominator: the person. The expression of this idea found in Olympic gods that come to represent the elements of nature. In these terms, the process of abstraction and separation between thought and reality increases, the former tending to become autonomous, insofar as it constitutes a donor of meaning for other, in the figure of the person and his reason.

The progress of enlightenment implies deny the myth, since to put man in the position of domination, it became necessary to go beyond the mythological rationality. For this, it was necessary to identify, in the myth, its superstitious aspect and, thus, to end animism and to disenchant nature. "The happy marriage between human mind and the nature of things that he has in mind is a patriarchal one: the understanding that defeats superstitions must prevail over the disenchant nature [...]" (Adorno and Horkheimer 1985, p. 20). The purpose of enlightenment, aimed at ridding men of fear, demands a different form of knowledge, something that distances itself from the mythological conception and approaches a new perspective of knowing. In relation to this new form of knowledge, which would replace mythological conceptions, Zuin (1999, p. 8) expresses that "[...] it would not be any kind of knowledge, but rather that which could be converted into something practical. Therefore, following this line of reasoning, the defining criteria of the essence of knowledge would be utility and calculability".

For Zuin, the new protagonist of enlightenment became the number, that is, the calculable. The substrate of knowledge that has surpassed mythological explanations is the operation, which finds in technique, the way in which dominion over internal and external nature is exercised. According Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 20), "[...] technique is the essence of this knowledge, which does not aim at concepts and images, nor the pleasure of discernment, but method, the use of the work of others, The capital".

In *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (1985), the authors address some philosophers who propose basic principles of science, among them Francis Bacon, for whom knowledge would be based on the empirical method. About this, Zuin (1999, p. 8, emphasis added) "Adorno and Horkheimer point to the English thinker as one of the first great enthusiasts and defenders of the construction of a knowledge that departed from the 'sterile' Aristotelian philosophy and approached it from an empirical application perspective".

The search for knowledge, which once occurred through the conceptions inserted in explanations of the metaphysical field, starts to guiding by the ideas defended by Bacon. For this philosopher, operation, calculation, and effective procedure, "[...] they would provide the conditions for us to be sure that we walk on stronger lands than the 'marshy' terrain of metaphysics" (Zuin 1999, p. 9, emphasis added). In this way, human understanding detaches itself from supernatural explanations to give relevance to the understandings based on a logical-formal perspective, in which, according to Zuin, the great protagonist is the number.

The transformation of matter should be a precise and efficient calculation. Any supernatural justifications would be removed. The time had come when the gods should be recognized as hoaxes or as projections of human desires to understand the relationship between themselves and nature. He dreamed of a unique deductive system, of formal logic, capable of solving all the problems arising from social relations (Zuin, 1999, p. 9).<sup>1</sup>

Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) emphasize that progress of enlightenment based on calculation, prioritize operation and demeans the knowledge in itself, since the society taken by subject's utilitarianism and hyperactivity is detrimental to contemplative and self-reflexive moments.

Technical rationality finds its expression in mathematical reason, for it is exact and adept at the distance between the person and the object. The cultural industry adopts these parameters as a form of orientation, since, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1985), immobilizes the different and gives to everything an air of similarity.

The difference between the general and the particular force field constitutes the substrate of culture and its reduction is the goal of the cultural industry, which achieves it through the filtering of contents and the classification of reality. To use technology allows duplicating the empirical objects and reproducing them on the screen, so that the viewer does not differentiate the real from the virtual. Thus, there is no room for fantasy and imagination, because they contradict the adaptive logic of the cultural industry, which makes it impossible to displace the phenomenal world and incapacitate the individual to leave the immediacy and transcend reality. The individual, under these conditions, becomes incapable of self-determination, since, according to Adorno (2010), he succumbs to the dominant form of current consciousness, that is, to half education.

The half education is the substitute for culture, in its falsification, which effected through the submission of culture to economic logic. The most obvious form of this process is in the form of the cultural industry.

The cultural industry also acts by controlling, organizing, and repressing the impulses of individuals. She, according to Adorno (1993), updates and reinforces the natural tendency to identification, transferring it to its models, idols and heroes. In this sense, it is possible to understand the relation that Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) establish between the cultural industry and the myth, since, like this, the cultural industry intends to explain and organize the world, in order to keep it under its control.

Irrational processes find an open path in the cultural industry, which makes it possible to associate it with regression. By playing the role of people in the organization and directing the understanding of world, the cultural industry does not promote the exercise of consciousness. This effect is enhanced by technological resources, which enable images to be accelerated, altered and edited, according to the convenience of capitalist interests.

The cultural industry, according to Duarte (2007), promotes an aestheticization of life in the 'globalized' world, because the aesthetic aspect of merchandise contributes to realization of exchange value, insofar as it convinces the possible purchaser that product it has a value and, therefore, it is necessary. In fact, the product is a substitute of necessity. This aspect justifies, according to the author, the existence of a complete sensory apparatus, aimed at seducing people and inciting consumption. For Duarte, 'domination by the aesthetic' presents two fundamental elements:

[...]1. the existence of technological means that provide the illusion of a 'constructed' reality, 2. The use of both these means and psychoanalytic knowledge, in the sense of producing adhesion 'to what it seems', which is very close to obtaining an unconditional acceptance of existing, as it presents itself (Duarte, 2007, p. 35, emphasis added).<sup>2</sup>

Adorno and Horkheimer (1985) emphasize that cultural industry to reconcile art with fun, configuring it as an escape from bad reality. In addition, it extends the logic of exploration to the realm of aesthetics and to the context of free time, in which the individual consumes the cultural products that were designed for him.

For the process of working in the factory and in the office can only escape by adapting to it during leisure. This is the incurable disease of all the fun. Pleasure freezes itself in annoyance, for, to remain a pleasure, it must no longer

<sup>1</sup> A transformação da matéria deveria ser efetuada por um cálculo preciso e eficiente. Ficariam afastadas quaisquer justificativas sobrenaturais. Era chegado o tempo em que os deuses deveriam ser reconhecidos como embustes ou como projeções dos desejos humanos de compreensão da relação entre si mesmos e a natureza. Sonhava-se então com um sistema dedutivo único, de lógico formal, capaz de solucionar todos os problemas oriundos das relações sociais (Zuin, 1999, p. 9).

<sup>2</sup> [...]1. a existência de meios tecnológicos que propiciem a ilusão de uma realidade 'construída', 2. a utilização, tanto desses meios quanto de conhecimentos psicanalíticos, no sentido de produzir a adesão 'àquilo que parece', o que está muito próximo de obter uma aceitação incondicional de existente, tal como ele se apresenta (Duarte, 2007, p. 35, grifo do autor).

require effort, and therefore it must move strictly on the tracks of habitual associations. The spectator should not need any thought of his own, the product prescribes any reaction [...] (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 128).<sup>3</sup>

For authors (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 114), "[...] technical rationality today is the rationality of one's own domination." In this sense, with the technical progress of society and the instrumentalisation of knowledge, the subjective aspects become diminished, since scientific neutrality, which once erased the aspect of domination present in language, destroys the substratum present in aesthetic works.

Cinema and radio no longer need to show themselves as art. The truth that they are no more than a business, they use it as an ideology intended to legitimize the garbage they purposely produce. They define themselves as industry, and the published figures of the income of their general directors remove all doubt as to the social necessity of their products (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 144).<sup>4</sup>

The Cultural industry submits culture to market interests, so it presupposes that the effects of production and technical details overlap with the idea inherent in the work, for "The cultural industry has developed with the predominance that the effect, the performance 'tangible and technical detail reached over the work, which was once the vehicle of the Idea and with it was liquidated" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 118, emphasis added).

Adorno (1993), in aphorism 22, "The child with the water of the bath", of *Minima Moralia*, opposes the identification of culture solely with the lie, since this is a characteristic of the semi-culture, that's guided by the exchange value. For Adorno, culture is everything that refuses to accept the value of exchange. By basing itself on this principle, it acts in defense of the truth.

The truth of work of art comes from its rigor, from its fidelity to the idea, which does not allow it to succumb to external demands, according to the logic of capitalist society, expressed by the cultural industry. In this way, resistance to market purposes and the preservation of truth presuppose the strengthening of aesthetic, ethical and formative aspects.

## Aesthetics, Ethics and Formation in the Adornian perspective

Art, according to Adorno and Horkheimer (1985), represents the vehicle of idea; however, the production of culture for market purposes destroys the substrate present in the work of art. Thus, the authors assert "[...] the art of integral copying, however, has even surrendered itself in its techniques to positivist science. In fact, it returns once more to the world, to ideological duplication, to docile reproduction" (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 31).

Therefore, in the predominance of the technical reproduction of the work of art, the very logic of production follows the dictates of social objectives and no longer the subjective aspects of the creator. In society governed by cultural industry, serious art is one that is not guided by consumer values and external purposes, but retains the tension with reality, is not adapted to become accessible and close to familiar taste of consumers. Otherwise, it becomes light art, whose production subsists from formula. In this type of art, the variations of work, according to Adorno and Horkheimer, are of an apparent and standardized character, since the whole thing is preceded by details.

Under current social conditions, only the authentic work of art - the serious work of art, not linked to the logic of the cultural industry - manages to run away the dictates that corrupt it. In this sense, Adorno and Horkheimer (1985, p. 31) affirm that, "[...] with the progress of enlightenment, only authentic works of art have managed to escape the mere imitation of what is already".

The thought of aesthetics, in Adorno, thematizes all aspects of its creation, its value, above all, the appreciation of its peculiarities, which make it beautiful.

Adorno's aesthetic is both aesthetic of production, and aesthetics of work, as aesthetics of reception; that is to say, it included - although not always in an explicit or systematic way - all aspects of the creation, value and qualities of art, and appreciation and enjoyment of beauty of art and nature (Duarte, 2007, p. 35).<sup>5</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Ao processo de trabalho na fábrica e no escritório só se pode escapar adaptando-se a ele durante o ócio. Eis aí a doença incurável de toda a diversão. O prazer acaba por se congelar no aborrecimento, porquanto, para continuar a ser um prazer, não deve mais exigir esforço e, por isso, tem de se mover rigorosamente nos trilhos das associações habituais. O espectador não deve ter necessidade de nenhum pensamento próprio, o produto prescreve toda reação [...] (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 128).

<sup>4</sup> O cinema e o rádio não precisam mais se apresentar como arte. A verdade é de que não passam de um negócio, eles a utilizam como uma ideologia destinada a legitimar o lixo que propositalmente produzem. Eles definem a si mesmo como indústria, e as cifras publicadas dos rendimentos de seus diretores gerais suprimem toda dúvida quanto à necessidade social de seus produtos (Adorno & Horkheimer, 1985, p. 144).

<sup>5</sup> A estética de Adorno é tanto estética de produção, como estética da obra, como estética da recepção; quer dizer, ela tematiza – embora não sempre de forma explícita, nem sistemática –, todos os aspectos da criação, do valor e das qualidades da arte, e da apreciação e fruição do belo da arte e da natureza (Duarte, 2007, p. 35).

Duarte (2007), understanding aesthetics in Adorno, emphasizes that the work of art itself is autonomous, because it resists external appeals and brings with it the enigmatic aspect. Therefore, the author states that aesthetic theory has the work of art as its object. In Adorno's reflections, art has a primate perspective, expressed in relation between person and consciousness. In these terms, art represents person without domination and consciousness without concept.

Still for Duarte (2007), Adorno strives to show that cultural industry is enemy to the remains of traditional art, because it tries to reproduce reality by reconciling with it. Unlike the cultural industry, the work of art show the reality from its form; through it, it's possible to return to reality more than what has been taken from it. This issue Duarte (2007) refers to Adorno and his work *Philosophy of New Music*, in which he emphasizes the difference between serious music and mass music. Latter, it is not possible to identify any innovation, although it integrates the most modern 'industrial' methods. It is also characterized by leveling 'down', "[...] because in it there is nothing to be' appreciated'; music consumes itself "(Duarte, 2007, p. 107, emphasis added). Its low quality is related to a family aesthetic that meets the needs of consumption.

The moment we seek an understanding of aesthetic relevance, we see a way of paddling against social degradation, which imposes a damaged way of living. In this way, if life presents itself as degraded, there is only one refuge to preserve beauty: art.

The aesthetics of this movement is therefore based on a radical opposition between art and life: if it's degraded, there is no other way of preserving beauty than by seeking refuge in a pure art, which must refuse any relation to existence or with the dominant language (Franco, 2007, p. 50).<sup>6</sup>

Through art, the possibility arises of denouncing the damaged society and resisting regressive social tendencies, since the autonomy that is characteristic of it does not link its existence and configuration to social or industrial necessity. Thus, the work of art has an end in itself, because it originates from freedom, an aspect that gives it the possibility of not being in agreement with the degraded social reality. The autonomy of art represents a way of getting rid of the bonds imposed by the typical rationality dominant in the industrial world, for, according to the considerations made by Franco (2007, 63), "[...] the autonomous work is an attack on society : autonomy is not reconciliation, radical opposition, resistance to the truculence of the whole ". Blindness, as result of damaged life, can only be deconstructed from the shock, or rather, from the estrangement that only the autonomous work has the possibility of provoking in the subject. It is from this radical clash that one allows one to reflect on the regression of human subjectivity, increasingly evident amidst the prevailing cultural chaos, walks in the opposite direction to cultural education.

The concept of Education, according Zuin (1999), is not restricted only to the formal setting, but also to all other social relations involving some type of learning. In this sense, it can be seen that the training process goes beyond teaching systematized by formal education. To social conditions that express half education, the school walks against the determinations of society. The author explains the Adornian concept of formation, whose term has equivalent relation to culture (*kultur*). However, while the latter tends to approach objective human realizations, formation (*bildung*) is linked to the transformations that occur on the subjective plane, it is, according to Zuin, the correlate of the culture itself. About confrontation and tension

[...] between the objective and subjective dimension of culture originates the concept of formation, being that subjectivity objectified in human products by the intervention of formative action needs a moment of distancing as far as the approximation of reality that transforms the subjective both how much is transformed by the exercise of rational activity (Zuin 1999, p. 55).<sup>7</sup>

According Zuin (1999), education means the subjective appropriation of culture. In a process of distancing from the damaged objective conditions followed by a new approximation of reality, through a critical analysis and no longer immersed in condition of immediate. At the moment when we think of formation, according Zuin (1999), it is necessary to understand that this is consequence of the elaboration of the experience caused by the appropriation of the culture in the subjective plane. By emphasizing the

<sup>6</sup> A estética desse movimento está, portanto, assentada em uma radical oposição entre a arte e a vida: se esta é degradada, não há outra maneira de preservar a beleza senão buscando refúgio em uma arte pura, que deve recusar qualquer relação com a existência ou com a linguagem dominante (Franco, 2007, p. 50).

<sup>7</sup> [...] entre a dimensão objetiva e subjetiva da cultura se origina o conceito de formação, sendo que a subjetividade objetivada nos produtos humanos pela intervenção do agir formativo necessita tanto de um momento de distanciamento quanto de aproximação da realidade que transforma o subjetivo tanto quanto é transformada pelo exercício da atividade racional (Zuin, 1999, p. 55).

need for a moment of detachment from the damaged objective conditions, the approximation of reality occurs again. However, this new approach occurs through a critical and rational analysis and no longer immersed in the blindness resulting from the appropriation of cultural chaos.

In relation to this process of distancing from reality, Zuin (1999, p. 56) expresses that “[...] Adorno himself identifies the veracity of the necessary departure from social conditions, since it provides subsidies for the conception of new realities”. The terms used by Zuin refer to the Adornian assertion that “cultural formation required protection before the attractions of the outside world, certain considerations with the singular subject, and even gaps in socialization” (Adorno, 2010, p. 22).

For Adorno (2010), formation is distinguished from the mechanisms of social domain of nature, since it requires critical self-reflection and strengthening consciousness, autonomy and freedom. Adorno (1993) would find these elements in the art, more specifically in serious music, in which the sense of totality of piece always has a relation with details.

Adorno's thoughts on work of Frenchman Paul Valéry, in the text *The artist as representative*, express the greatness of objective force present in the production of this artist, in the endeavor to combat the destructive potential attached in the cultural industry, in which Adorno evidences the obtuse antithesis between engaged art and pure art (Adorno, 2003). Pure art represents dissimilarity in relation to art filtered by the schematic formulas of the process of cultural production of the managed society. “[...] This antithesis is a symptom of the tragic tendency towards stereotype, of thought hardened into schematic formulas, which the cultural industry produces everywhere and which has long surpassed the scope of aesthetic reflection....” (Adorno, 2003, p. 152).

In Valéry's work, Adorno (2003) highlights some thoughts that transcend the great impressionist painter he represents, but, regard to his ideas, which designate the proximity to the artistic object, something that, for Adorno, is only capable of be achieved by someone who produces by himself with extreme responsibility. The experience of consciousness of art requires something more than a conceptual deduction, since it requires an absolute distance from the artistic object. In this sense, according to Adorno (2003), the medium and empathic ‘understood in art’ can never reach the work of art, insofar as it degrades it in its own contingency, by not subjecting to implicit objective discipline the real artistic experience.

[...] In general, great intuitions about art occur either at an absolute distance, by a conceptual deduction not affected by the so-called ‘artistic understanding’ as in Kant or Hegel, or in this absolute proximity, the attitude of those who do not is confused with the public, because it is behind the scenes, accompanying the performance of the work under the aspect of invoicing, technique (Adorno, 2003, p. 154, emphasis added).<sup>8</sup>

Adorno criticizes the art of engagement and the understanding of art through concepts as do Kantian and Hegelian artistic perception. He expresses notorious admiration for Valéry's art.

[...] Valéry represents the almost unique case of second type, someone who knows the work of art by his *métier*, understands the precision of work of art, but at the same time someone in whom this process is reflected so happily, that this is reversed in theoretical intuition, in that good universality that does not abandon the particular, but rather preserves it, leading it to acquire an obligatory character, by virtue of its own dynamics (Adorno, 2003, p. 155).<sup>9</sup>

The work of art, by itself, is autonomous, does not apply to generic concepts; brings with it the enigmatic aspect, expressing its autonomy in front of objective conditions. In this sense, Duarte (2007, p. 37) expresses that:

The aesthetic theory has its center and its base in its object, the work of art. It occupies in Adorno's reflection, a very particular key position, between being and consciousness: the work represents, according to its intention, to be without domination and consciousness without concept.<sup>10</sup>

The great art, according Adorno (2003), is one that requires, for its understanding, the use of all human faculties. In this experience, man is attained in his completeness. It is precisely this condition that demands, from the artist himself, something Valéry finds in Leonardo da Vinci, when expresses the

<sup>8</sup> [...] De um modo geral, as grandes intuições sobre arte ocorrem ou em uma absoluta distância, por uma dedução conceitual não afetada pela chamada ‘compreensão artística’ como em Kant ou Hegel, ou nessa absoluta proximidade, a atitude de quem não se confunde com o público, pois se encontra nos bastidores, acompanhando a realização da obra sob o aspecto da fatura, da técnica (Adorno, 2003, p. 154, grifo do autor).

<sup>9</sup> [...] Valéry representa o caso praticamente único do segundo tipo, alguém que conhece a obra de arte pelo seu *métier*, entende a precisão do trabalho artístico, mas ao mesmo tempo alguém no qual este processo se reflete de modo tão feliz, que isso se reverte em intuição teórica, naquela boa universalidade que não abandona o particular, mas sim o preserva, levando-o a adquirir um caráter obrigatório, por força de sua própria dinâmica (Adorno, 2003, p. 155).

<sup>10</sup> A teoria estética tem seu centro e sua base em seu objeto, a obra-de-arte. Esta ocupa na reflexão de Adorno, uma posição chave bem particular, entre ser e consciência: a obra representa, segundo sua intenção, ser sem dominação e consciência sem conceito.

completeness of the artist's work. "In any case, he refers to undivided man, one whose reactions and faculties have not been dissociated from each other, alienated from each other and coagulated in usable functions, according to scheme of the social division of labor" (Adorno, 2003, p. 156).

One can see the work of French artist, whose work is to use all human faculties, which is pleased to develop the individual in its integrity: a complete man. The reflection of the artistic experience - belonging in the process of understanding the great of art - refers to the integral formation of the individual.

Thus, these elements shows the potentiality of art and its capacity to provide the clash against social regression, since it preserves in its essence certain crucial aspects of human nature, something that reality represses constantly. This is possible, as Franco (2007) affirms, by the radical antagonism found in the relation between pure art and existence. "Aestheticism raises a calculated alienation: this alienation is, however, a denunciation of society itself as an impaired life, a desperate form of resistance against regressive social tendencies" (Franco, 2007, p. 50).

In this continuity, art becomes the protagonist when it is considered a way of denouncing and resisting the damaged society. Franco (2007) states in his work that the autonomy of art is the fruit of its independence from social and industrial demands, since it has a purpose in itself, insofar as it originates from freedom, the characteristic of which allows it the possibility of not be linked to the damaged social reality. It is this peculiarity of the work that makes it possible - from strangeness - to reflect on the current domination in society.

The autonomous work is one that, although it participates in the world and is also a commodity, does not result from any non-aesthetic demand, whether it originates from pedagogy, cultural industry or cultural politics of states or parties, or democratic or non-democratic. The autonomous work is one whose existence results from special non-productive, unnecessary, non-required social work: free labor, anachronistic in nature, free, a condition that gives it the possibility of not compacting with the world as it is presented, not to be reconciled with the hostile society (Franco, 2007, p. 63).<sup>11</sup>

It is in this sense that autonomous art represents a way of getting rid of the bonds imposed by the typical rationality of the industrial world, because, as Franco (2007, p. 63) affirms, "[...] the autonomous work is an attack on society : autonomy is not reconciliation, radical opposition, resistance to the stupidity of the whole". Faced with this, aesthetic autonomy fosters the possibility of breaking with the regressive ideology present in the marketing culture.

Autonomy allows art to configure what the ideology stresses: it causes in the artist a kind of shortness of breath, a momentary loss of breath, and an inability to continue to nourish the material that the cultural atmosphere offers to him (Franco, 2007, p. 64).<sup>12</sup>

Art represents the possibility for the person to think freely, in a way not conditioned by the determinations of phenomenal world; it also allows the contemplative a moment of detachment from the damaged society. This aspect is fundamental for the elaboration of his critical reflection and for the development of the autonomous thought.

Gagnebin (2001), in discussing the relations between ethics and aesthetics in Adorno, identifies three key concepts of the author's thinking in these two domains: mimesis, autonomy and resistance. In the mimesis, the author points out the risk of the mimetic assimilation, since in her there is the possibility of the subject disappearing and the possibility of the jouissance provided by the joy of the union with the other.

According Gagnebin (2001), the close relationship between the two possibilities makes the mimetic experience so perilous and threatening, as Adorno and Horkheimer warn. In capitalist society, the identification process is organized for profit and do not admit identify hesitation. Thus, the individual needs to emphasize the original mimesis, transforming it into identification with the leaders, heroes and idols of society. The author emphasizes anti-Semitism as an expression of this process, in which the memory of pleasure of the original mimesis refers to suffering, the inability to bear the other, because it evokes the joy of this bodily experience of uniting with the other.

<sup>11</sup> A obra autônoma é aquela que, embora participe do mundo e também seja uma mercadoria, não resulta de nenhuma exigência não-estética, seja ela originária da pedagogia, da indústria cultural ou da política cultural de Estados ou partidos, quer democráticos ou não democráticos. A obra autônoma é aquela cuja existência resulta de trabalho especial não-productivo, não-necessário, não-exigido socialmente: de trabalho livre, de natureza anacrônica, gratuito, condição que confere a ela a possibilidade de não compactuar com o mundo tal qual ele se apresenta, a não se reconciliar com a sociedade hostil (Franco, 2007, p. 63).

<sup>12</sup> A autonomia permite à arte configurar aquilo que a ideologia recalca: ela provoca no fruidor uma espécie de falta de ar, de perda momentânea de fôlego, de impossibilidade de continuar a se nutrir da matéria que a atmosfera cultural oferece a ele (Franco, 2007, p. 64).

*Mimesis* and passivity are closely linked both at the beginning and at the end of our organic life, both in the expectations of desperate assimilation to the environment and in the chaotic escape to survive. Against this blind indifferentiation of organic tenacity, is constructed with difficulty, the determined and conscious subject of the *Aufklärung* (Gagnebin, 2001, p. 67, emphasis added).<sup>13</sup>

In attempt to free oneself from fear and suffering, the individual assumes a dominating and omnipotent posture about everything that is external to him. He stands as the great idealizer of perfect systems and tries to reconcile thought with reality. This logic involves the entire organization of society, since it is only confronted by the aesthetic experience of work of art, which retains traces of knowledge without violence and domination; which preserves the possibility of an interaction between the subject and the object, in which the former does not overlap with the latter, but is willing to accept it.

Gagnebin (2001) defines aesthetic experience as the

[...] experience of distance from the real to us, the experience of the distance between the real as it is and what it could be, this experience can form a privileged path of ethical learning with excellence, which consists in not stressing the stranger and foreigner, but rather in being able to accept with strangeness (Gagnebin, 2001, p. 72).<sup>14</sup>

Adorno's highlights, according Gagnebin, two virtues apparently opposed to thinking: patience and resistance. In the first case, thinking waits without imposing itself and, therefore, is willing to resist the dominating and identificatory logic promoted by the managed society. Thus aesthetic experience is a form of empathic knowledge, open to alterity and ethics, in that it does not attempt to frame the other in a model. Therefore, it preserves the thinking facing for anguish and estrangement.

## Conclusion

Art has great relevance in the process of human education, since it preserves the possibility of strengthening his subjectivity, since the phenomenal world has determinations that regress the feasible subjective conditions of cultural formation. However, art represents the feasibility of distancing oneself from the damaged society and getting rid of the bonds that hinder the process of human emancipation. The investigated authors, when discussing the aesthetics and the art in Adorno, are unanimous in pointing the autonomy and the formation like principles characteristic of both. Autonomy is possible only in the individual who does not succumb to the determinations of reality and who acts consciously and rationally. However, as Adorno (1993) warns, reality tends towards an opposing movement, hindering the emancipatory process.

According Adorno, emancipation, understood as an awareness, is abstract, but must to integrate the educational thought and practice, for only then can it be imposed, confronting the ideology of the cultural industry. An emancipatory education seeks to strengthen the formative principles, which are distinguished from the social domain of nature, but seek the tension between reality and thought, in a reflexive process in which the subject is completely involved in the object, in the same way as in experience with the work of art.

Adorno (2003) finds in the artist the reference of the complete man, whose faculties do not separate, because they contain reason and sensitivity, the capacity to think, feel and do. The artist does not aim the immediate expression of his ideas, but pursues the rigor, which is effective in the internal criterion that guides the construction of the work of art, whose process, according to Adorno (2003), aims at overcoming blindness and shyness of the work of art.

These reflections urge us to draw an analogy between aesthetic experience, artistic experience and education. The office of the teacher, in his analogy with the office of the artist, presupposes a relation with the object, that is, with education; that is not guided by useful interest, but by acceptance. Under these conditions, the teacher must excel at the idea of the work, that is, the essence of the educational activity, which is the search for emancipation and the strengthening of critical self-reflection. The fidelity to this internal logic of the educational process must guide the attainment of the form of the work, the realization of which is effected through the convergence of the teaching actions towards its constitutive idea.

<sup>13</sup> *Mimesis* e passividade são, assim, estritamente ligadas tanto no início quanto no fim de nossa vida orgânica, tanto nas expectativas de assimilação desesperada ao meio ambiente quanto na fuga caótica para sobreviver. Contra essa indiferenciação cega da tenacidade orgânica se constrói, aliás, a duras penas, o sujeito determinado e consciente da *Aufklärung* (Gagnebin, 2001, p. 67, grifo do autor).

<sup>14</sup> [...] experiência da distância do real em relação a nós, a experiência também da distância entre o real tal como é e qual poderia ser, essa experiência pode configurar um caminho privilegiado da aprendizagem ética por excelência, que consiste em não recalcar o estranho e o estrangeiro, mas sim em poder acolhê-lo em sua estranheza (Gagnebin, 2001, p. 72).



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