

**FROM HEGEL TO ADORNO. ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL
UNDERSTANDING OF ART**

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I. The Philosophical Relevance of Art

In this piece of work we seek to present Adorno's aesthetic theory like an appropriate proposal to specify the nature and the current philosophical status of aesthetics, beyond the aesthetic approaches of Hegel and of -recognizing the impropriety of the use of the term 'aesthetics'- Heidegger, although in fact recognizing that Adorno's aesthetic conception is precisely beginning to take definite shape in the debate with them, especially with the Hegelian position. Nevertheless, Adorno's aesthetic theory joins in principle with the fundamental thesis of Hegel and of Heidegger in the sense of affirming the philosophical/epistemological and ontological relevance of art, opposite to the other perspective that has largely configured the modern understanding of the aesthetics, the one that starting from Kant and that passing to Kierkegaard, culminates in the Positivism. The compartmentalization of Kant about knowledge finally granted the rights of the knowledge and the truth to the science exclusively, affirming that the aesthetic judgement -the art - does not contribute any knowledge about their objects¹. Art would rather have to do with the feeling of life. In any case, evicting it of the knowledge, Kant inaugurated the understanding of art like game, gratuitous and disinterested activity, understanding that culminated in the positivism of Spencer and Taine, where art -already constituted in mere vital tonic, irrational matter left to the wild arbitrariness of the fantasy- becomes pure game, nothing serious, secondary activity opposite to science, that is configured as the only truly serious activity for having in property the rights of the knowledge. For this reason it is not strange that the modern thought has mainly put to bed the philosophy on the side of the science (Descartes, Kant or Husserl), nor that when the inadequacy of the scientific/rational thought has been recognized philosophy had come closer to religion (Kierkegaard) than to art².

Hegel and Heidegger -saving the enormous differences between one and other - reacted against this positivist understanding of art. Hegel affirms that art is worthy of scientific/philosophical treatment and, if it is so, it is due to that is not neither simple vital tonic, nor an arbitrary game without rules³; the art is not the field of irrationality but rather, together with religion and philosophy, they are “ways of expressing and of making conscious the divine thing, the most universal truth in the human spirit”⁴. They are manifestations of the spirit, that is to say, ways of making conscious its supreme interests, and each one of them makes it according to their particular nature⁵. In short, art represents for Hegel the “sensitive manifestation of the Idea (*sinnliche Scheinen der Idee*)”⁶. Certainly Hegel, in contrast to Kant, when making of art an expression of the spirit, an spirit whose essence is the thought, he linked it to the knowledge and the truth, so that he perceived and underlined the philosophical relevance of aesthetics. And Heidegger, on the other hand, conceived that the essence of art is this: “The truth of beings setting itself to work (*sich-ins-Werk-Setzen der Wahrheit des Seienden*)”, “the becoming and the happening of truth”, that is to say, of the being⁷. Definitely Hegel and Heidegger reaffirm the seriousness of art, its epistemological and ontological reach. Adorno also sustains -especially with Hegel- that art, far from being the place of the irrationality, it is rather a “complexion of the truth (*Komplexion der Wahrheit*)”⁸, and only for that reason he considers possible -and he carries out according to the same title of his work- an ‘aesthetic theory’, a ‘theory’ (rational) on the aesthetic thing, what it would evidently be impossible if art were an irrational field. The art thinks, as Adorno underlines, although –in fact- it thinks/judges “without words (*wortlos*)”; its thought, its logic is neither conceptual nor judicative⁹. So that art is not mere vital or emotional stimulant, it not only makes us to laugh or to cry, according to the journalistic-positivist topic that understands art from the point of view of the emotions: above all, art makes us think. Now then, to this the resemblance of the Adorno’s aesthetics is limited with those of Hegel and Heidegger. Starting from here, it is to see the peculiarity of the Adornian understanding of aesthetics opposite to those that Hegel and Heidegger expose. That peculiarity is beginning to take shape in the relationship between art and philosophy, a relationship that, in definite, is the one that underlies to all truly philosophical understanding of aesthetics. The status and the nature of aesthetics are in fact elucidated to the edge of the relationship between art and philosophy. Be it said

otherwise: all aesthetics contains like an essential feature a certain way to understand the relationship art-philosophy, and from now it comes off that it is the first thing that we should profile when we come closer to the aesthetics of any author. It represents the key that opens us the aesthetic building.

Hegel and Heidegger save art, they legitimate its seriousness, they underline its epistemological and ontological competence. But their proposals outline some inconveniences, around which the Adorno's aesthetic theory is drawn. Let us consider the Hegelian aesthetic program especially. Hegel esteems the art as much as less game and vital tonic, and the more knowledge and serious activity he believes that it is, paradoxically he considers it more inessential opposite to the philosophy, up to the point to finally dissolve it into philosophy, and to transform it into "a past (*ein Vergangenes*)"¹⁰ –an operation that has been later denominated 'death of art'. But this paradox stops being and becomes something of the most natural thing if we bear in mind that Hegel, far from defending the peculiarity of the artistic knowledge in contrast to the philosophical one, he measures art from the pattern of the philosophy already configured in model and goal of art. Hegel has so much put to bed art on the side of the philosophical knowledge – conceptual-, and he has defended so little its specificity that the outcome could not be another than the overcoming of art through philosophy, of the intuition through concept. Certainly, when the purpose is to manifest ideas, that is to say, to express the spirit, that the spirit takes self-conscience -and this is the key point, the element that as we will see Adorno will in fact put in question starting from Hegel himself-, when this is the fact, art - that will truly represent another thing - is in disadvantage regarding the philosophical concept, and this is so because the form of artistic expression is sensitive and not all spiritual content can be 'sensitised', so that the sensitive character of art forces it to be limited to manifest a certain stadium of the truth, of the self-conscience of the spirit. What art does –a manifestation of the spirit, an expression of ideas- the philosophy -better, more appropriately- does too, the concept. Apart from that sensitive understanding of the truth, Hegel affirms the existence of a deeper understanding of the truth, the one of the reflexive thought, the philosophical one, without any relationship already with the sensitive and that you can not express it sensibly in an appropriate way¹¹. Then, the art for Hegel can not longer be the "supreme and absolute form of expression of the spirit", "the supreme form in

that the truth becomes existent”, the self-consciousness of the spirit¹². Art is finally overcome through thought and reflection. Art, then, turns to be something superfluous, unnecessary, being overcome by philosophy. Art, according to Hegel, dies for superfluity¹³. From the moment philosophical that Hegel conceived the work of art *more* as symbol of an idea it was dictated its sentence of death. In definitive, Hegel saves the epistemological relevance of art ‘philosophising’ about it, that is to say, transforming it into philosophy, in imitation of philosophical knowledge. The recovery of the epistemological value of art practiced by Hegel ends up in the most natural way in the statement that the aesthetics, the science of art, is worth more than the own art. The Hegelian authentication of the seriousness of art through philosophy ends up costing to art its own life. The case of Hegel teaches to Adorno – he teaches him to a modernized aesthetics- that the salvation of art can not be made without the own art, that is to say, the salvation has to come from the statement of the peculiarity of its non-discursive knowledge and it can not be imported from philosophy.

The opposite to Hegel we find in Heidegger. If in Hegel the philosophy finally substituted art overcoming it, in Heidegger it is art which -using a term not completely appropriate- ‘overcomes’ the philosophy. In the Heideggerian thought, philosophy finishes constituting on the pattern of art. After the crisis of reason and of the scientific/rational culture, in sum, after the crisis of the metaphysical/humanist culture, philosophy does not find another possible way of survival -according to Heidegger- but to imitate art, already transformed into essential model of the philosophy¹⁴. The rational or conceptual knowledge of philosophy is abandoned by the poetic knowledge of art previously dehumanised and conceived as the being’s word. Philosophy, conceptualizing thought, in opinion of Heidegger, is the “enemy of thinking”¹⁵, of the poetic thinking of art still hidden but that it will finish supplanting the objectifying thought of the concept. In last term this is the reason of the Heideggerian sentence of aesthetics, since this consists on the -from the point of view of Heidegger- impossible desire of thinking art conceptually, a desire that represents one more form in the humanist/metaphysical way for him. Aesthetics is the humanist/metaphysical way of treating the phenomenon of art, that is to say, a humanization of a proper ontological phenomenon as art, that it is a poem written by the being; and the aesthetics of Hegel is its last and more accomplished exponent¹⁶. That is the way how Heidegger grants ontological and epistemological relevance -used this last term

with many reservations- to art, dehumanising it, separating it -better: antagonizing it- of philosophy understood as discursive knowledge. However, Adorno sustains in favour of the maintenance of the separation of spheres, that art is not -neither it can be, nor it should be- a “model of philosophy (*philosophisches Maß*)”¹⁷. A philosophy that imitates the art –he adds – it eliminates itself because philosophy is conceptual, the concept is its organ¹⁸. Philosophy can not survive outside of the circles of the concept, its natural habitat. The case of Heidegger teaches to Adorno and in general to a contemporary aesthetics that it is not enough to affirm the peculiarity of the artistic knowledge in contrast to the conceptual one, what Heidegger does without doubt, but rather it is also necessary to avoid that the statement takes with itself the suppression of the discursive knowledge of philosophy.

However, on purpose of the interpretation that Adorno does of Heidegger it is necessary to think rationally about the doubt of if that supposed elimination of the philosophy that Heidegger would practice when forcing it to imitate the art, would not rather respond to the project of achieving a new philosophy, a ‘poetic’ philosophy that would not really be mounted on the annihilation of the rational thinking –a thesis of base of Adorno-, but rather on its replacement or rooting form in its original womb, the *logos mitopoiético*. Only the pattern of rationality ‘modern’ and the philosophy and the technique that accompany it, that have forgotten their *poiético* origin, that is to say, that they have forgotten that they are functions of the *alethéia*, of the revealing of the truth/being, they are only the enemies of thinking. Then it is not to suppress them, but of returning them to their original source. The Heideggerian proposal would suppose the suppression of the division between art and philosophy, and its result would be the poetic thinking, a thinking where reason and poetry would reach a peaceful coexistence, and where the romantic ideal of the intellectual intuition would take body again. This interpretation of Heidegger nevertheless would collide again head-on with the position of Adorno, for whom the separation between art and philosophy -something irreversible- bases on the same structure of the conscience, divided in two different and irreducible dimensions: a mimetic/expressive, ‘artistic’ one, and another conceptual one, ‘philosophical’. From there that Adorno underrates in principle any philosophical project that is sustained about the hope of finding in the conscience hidden sources that liberate us of the objectifying or conceptualizing thinking which is prevailing up to now, and that they open the possibility of a new and different

thinking for us¹⁹. Definitively, -and always from the perspective proposed by Adorno-, Hegel overvalued the rational or conceptual knowledge in detriment of the epistemological particularity of art; Heidegger does the same thing with the poetic knowledge in detriment of the philosophical/discursive one. What both, Hegel and Heidegger, teach to aesthetics is that this has to be mounted on the base of the avoidance of the confusion of spheres among art and philosophy, of the reduction or absorption of one for another. This is the direction that Adorno follows. Therefore, and in summary, the elements of departure of the Adornian foundation of aesthetics are the following. First, art has epistemological relevance, it is a knowledge linked to the truth; second, it is a peculiar knowledge, not discursive; and in third place, that knowledge exists beside the philosophical knowledge. In fact, the determination on the part of Adorno of the status of aesthetics is forged on the explanation of this last element, the relationship among art and philosophy, true touchstone of the nature of aesthetics.

2. Art, Dialectics and Identity

Adorno finds in the Hegelian aesthetic the central piece around which aesthetics is as much profiled, the understanding of the relationship between art and philosophy, as the own philosophy. Hegel has understood the essence (dialectical) of the aesthetic thing, but far from developing it and from displaying his aesthetics and his philosophy all in agreement with it, he has drowned it and betrayed it with another philosophical impulse of a contrary nature (the principle of identity), leaving it as something only initiated, a tendency, that certainly Adorno recovers and that he takes as central element of his aesthetic/philosophic thought²⁰. From there the importance of deepening in the Hegelian aesthetic theory, main referent of the perspective of Adorno. The phenomenology of art that Hegel practiced, and that it had served him as base to develop a truly dialectical thought, it was subjected at the philosophical principle of the identity, and so what miscarried that dialectical possibility denaturalising it in a positive dialectics, being founded on the principle of identity, just the opposite to the dialectical thing. A dialectics founded about the identity is not dialectical. Indeed, Hegel has conceived art, the same thing as religion or philosophy, above all, like forms of the conscience, like positions of the subject/thought before the object/reality (*Stellungen des Gedankens zur Objektivität*)²⁰.

Adorno will later insist on the same thing, he will say that “the aesthetics is not a theory of art, but, in words of Hegel, a certain position of the thought before objectivity”²². In short, the “aesthetic moment of the conscience” consists according to Hegel on the alienation [of the spirit] toward the sensible thing (*Entfremdung zum Sinnlichen*)²³. The art is born of the spirit and it is of spiritual nature, but in the work of art the spirit reaches the non spiritual thing, the sensible/material thing. If we bear in mind that Hegel affirms that the essence of the spirit is the thought, we can assure that in the aesthetic experience the thought thinks what is not thought, the thing itself, the reality *other*. The aesthetic experience is dialectical, in it the spirit comes out of itself and finds its other one, it penetrates in the matter.

Adorno will also echo that dialectics, therefore, does not represent a method to come closer to art but something that is immanent for it²⁴. What is immanent to art, therefore, dialectics, it is but the statement of the permanent tension among fellow and object, spirit and matter, thought and real thing, irreducible one to other, but also inseparable, existing in constant reciprocal reference. Neither dualism nor absorption or identification: dialectics. However, the dialectics as long as opposed principle to the pure static duality -that does not arrive to the other thing - and to the identity -that does not leave from itself-, and as statement of the other thing, it is what allows philosophy to truly be philosophy, that is, thought of the concrete thing, of the thing itself, phenomenology. Here it is pointed the philosophical transcendency of the aesthetics discovered by Adorno: aesthetics is the characteristic field of the dialecticity. On the other hand, if we start from considering that art is already spiritual activity in its origin, what Adorno finds as essential nucleus -dialectical- of the Hegelian aesthetic it is that it affirms -at least in a tendency form- that “the art is a cell of materialism”²⁵, that is to say, principle of statement -salvation- of the other, of the non spiritual thing. Therefore, in art the spirit exists in permanent excursion toward what is not itself. Adorno has referred to this dialectical activity that characterizes art under the name of ‘mimesis’: “The spiritual moment of the art is not what idealism calls spirit, Adorno has written, but rather the proscribed mimetic impulse (*mimetische Impuls*)”²⁶. This is the way art ‘thinks’, mimetically or immediately, and not *by means* of the concept. It does not think using words but with mimesis, without

mediations. For this reason Adorno sustains that the “linguistic moment (*Sprachähnliche Moment*)” of art is its “mimetic moment (*Mimetisches*)”²⁷.

However, the idealistic Hegel does not assume but rather he denies this mimetic/dialectical character of the spirit, and with it he suspends the dialectical possibility for the philosophy discovered by himself in the aesthetic experience. In the philosophy of Hegel it weighs more the imperative of identity than the dialectical principle. Hegel has recognized, moved by a phenomenological impulse that the characteristic of the aesthetic experience consists in that in it the spirit reaches and penetrates in the other, in what is not spirit. But this dialectical moment of aesthetics -centre of interest for Adorno- is disconnected by Hegel himself when sustaining that “the power of the thinking spirit is in that, it is not only captured itself in its peculiar form as thought, but rather it is also recognized to itself in its exteriorisation by means of the sensation and the sensibility, it is understood in the other thing of itself, as soon as turned into thought the alienated thing and with which it leads again to itself”²⁸. Hegel annuls dialectics in which the spirit (subject, thought) recognized the other sensible/material thing (object, reality) to exist in constant and irreducible tension, and he transmutes dialectics in identity: “The subject-object of Hegel, Adorno affirms, is a subject”²⁹. The own Hegel sustains -against the dialectical nature in principle hinted- the identity of the spiritual and sensitive moments of art³⁰. The alienation is only a moment overcome by the impulse of self-acknowledgement characteristic of the spirit, for *Versöhnung*. The spirit that Adorno has discovered in the art, the spirit in general, is mimesis, alienation, dialectics; the Hegelian spirit, on the other hand, is self-conscience. But to say that in Hegel the spirit is self-conscience is equal to say that it tends to be recognized itself in the seemingly other thing, annihilating the strangeness of the world with respect to it, which reveals in last term like only appearance. The world is not essentially strange for the spirit; the final relationship between the spirit and the world is not of strangeness but of familiarity. The Hegelian spirit feels everywhere like at home. The Hegelian statement of the spirit like self-conscience is a correlate of its philosophy of the identity. However, Adorno has written that the identity “devours everything (*alles Verschlingende*)”, “it always looks for the totality”³¹. And so Hegel *overcomes* the injustices to which it seems to be subjected the world of the concrete reality, the whole blood spilled for the long-suffering individual reality. Elaborated from

the point of view of the spirit whose nature is the thought, the reason, transformed now into substance of the real thing, the philosophy, Hegel writes, “it remedies the apparent injustice (*das Unrecht scheint*) and reconciles (*versöhnt*) it with the rational thing”³². The rational spirit, that legitimates all the real thing when understanding it like an external reality of itself, does not deny -logically- the pain nor the blood; what it denies is that they are unjust. They will be able to be from the individual's point of view, but not certainly understood *in big, sub specie aeternitatis*. Be it said otherwise, from the point of view of the reason -no of the understanding- everything is like it should be, the real thing (*wirklich*) and the rational thing (*vernünftig*) are only one thing³³.

In a first moment, the one that interests to Adorno, the Hegelian aesthetic is phenomenological: open to art, liberated to the aesthetic experience, it discovers the alienation, the dialectics that constitutes it essentially. But then it turns its back on this artistic peculiarity, it stops to meditate assisting to the own aesthetic experience, and it finds in it what it has already established *a priori*, in a purely conceptual way: that the aesthetic experience is pure manifestation of the spirit, so that in it the spirit does not really reach the other thing, it does not alienate, but rather it recognizes itself in the other thing, it alienates for self-recognising. It is the systematic moment of the Hegelian aesthetics, the one that finishes determining it. For this reason it can be said that the aesthetics of Hegel is made from outside of the own art, without meditating about the same aesthetic experience, turned its back on the dialectical specificity that this last one represents, to the alienation of the spirit toward the other that happens in it, and it is so in spite of ‘having seen it’. Such is the force of the imperative of Hegelian identity. Logically, if what is about in art is of symbolizing ideas, that is to say, that the spirit is to be recognized itself and not to be alienated, and philosophy does it in a more appropriate way, then Hegel can consider with all property the question ‘for what art’. The crash of the dialectical peculiarity of the art before the principle of identity transforms art into something superfluous. After the death - or superseding- of the art it is found the philosophy of the identity.

What Adorno underlines is that Hegel himself, in the dialectical essence of the aesthetics, had discovered the antidote against this philosophy of the identity that legitimated the wounds of the concrete reality healing them up in false. In the work of art the spirit is mimesis. In the logic of the work of art there is only spirit when “it is subjected

to what is polarly opposite to it”³⁴. This mimetic/dialectical spirit, instead of overcoming the other, its opposing one, the pain of the reality that screams in silence, being recognized in it as its truth, it is undergone to that silent reality to give him the word. It only, only this spiritual mimesis, prevents the false Hegelian reconciliation of the real pain that transmutes it by means of the magic of the philosophy of the identity in rational justice; it only prevents the dissolution of the blood that does not cease flowing of the individual in ideal intelligibility. And it is necessary that we experience that the alive individual really continues bleeding and suffering, because this alive conscience is the only hope that we have left in the universe of the totalising identity. Without that conscience, the pain –real– will be buried. But this movement is the one that the idealism began, especially the Hegelian philosophy: to transform the pain into concept, to identify it, as Adorno sustains, it supposes to leave it silent and sterile. In front of this legitimization of the pain characteristic of the philosophy of the identity by means of the silence and the oblivion, Adorno finds in the mimetic/dialectical spirit of art the opportunity to give it the word. Art, he writes, it is the “language of the suffering (*Sprache des Leidens*)”, “unconscious writing of the history (*bewußtlose Geschichtsschreibung*)”³⁵. That mimesis is the condition of possibility of a negative dialectics. To be the voice of the pain is what, in opinion of Adorno, also explains the inintelligibility of art, its enigmatic character (*Rätselcharakter*)³⁶. If the work of art could be fully understood and translated to concepts, it would be also the concrete reality that designates, but this is in fact what philosophy of the identity does to exorcize the negativity of such reality. The work of art completes its dialectical function giving the word to the real pain in all its negative power, indissoluble to all interpretation.

3. The Convergence of Art and Philosophy

The aesthetics of Hegel is philosophical and not mere theory of art, as the aesthetic theory of Adorno; but it does not coincide with it in that it is in the systematic sense, that is, in the sense that it is an aesthetics made from above or from outside of the properly aesthetic thing, from an established philosophy a priori. It then starts from a previous and independent philosophy of the aesthetic thing, that of the identity. The Hegelian aesthetics is philosophical because it is philosophy applied to art. However, it is so in the price of extirpating the specificity of the artistic –the dialectics, the alienation of the spirit toward

the another- applying from outside, imposing to it a philosophy that is strange for it. The philosophy enters it this way, legislating from its pre-aesthetic categories the truth of art. The aesthetics of Hegel is not but applied philosophy, a philosophy pre-aesthetics, elaborated to the margin of the aesthetic thing, the philosophy of the identity. From it the art is interpreted and, when making it, it prevents the unfolding of the nature of the aesthetic thing, that Hegel himself had suggested. The Hegelian aesthetics gives up before the philosophical imperative of the identity and surrenders to it, abolishing the imperative properly aesthetic, that was of contrary sign, that is to say, of dialectical character and anything identical. The opposition of Adorno to this idealistic understanding of the aesthetics can not be more radical: “The aesthetics is not applied philosophy (*angewandte Philosophie*) but rather it is philosophical in itself (*philosophisch an sich*)”³⁷. Instead of applying it a philosophy of contrary sign, the philosophy of the identity, Adorno finds in the aesthetic thing the base of the philosophical thing, the dialectics. Adorno incorporates the philosophical thing -the dialectics- to the aesthetic thing; the philosophy (dialectical) is immanent to the aesthetic experience³⁸. In fact, only because in the aesthetic thing he discovers the philosophical one, only for this reason, it can be the aesthetics, the aesthetic theory, philosophical in itself. The aesthetics is not philosophical because it is applied to it a certain philosophy; it is philosophical because the topic of the aesthetics, the aesthetic thing, that is to say, the dialectical position of the thought in the face of the objectivity, is philosophical. The aesthetics of Adorno, far from being carried out from outside of the art by virtue of a strange philosophy applied to art, it is directed by the phenomenological principle of attention to the artistic phenomenon. It is not philosophy applied to the art, it is not an aesthetics from outside or from above, it is not then an aesthetic theory in abstract; it abides by the historical phenomenon of art, to the current reality of art.

Adorno has denied the possibility that the aesthetic object is known -legislated- from outside and demands “an understanding of the works of art that is a strictly determined knowledge for the objectivity of themselves”³⁹. The aesthetic theory is not, it can not be, a philosophical construction *a priori*; the experience of the aesthetic object is its stage⁴⁰. But it is not mere theory (positive) of the art either. What Adorno also denies is the possibility that the work of art has to “be understood purely from itself like object of immediate intuition”⁴¹. Art is not certainly understood from a philosophy already done, in a

Hegelian way; but it can not only be understood from itself either. The work of art, he adds, “demands something more than abandon oneself to it”⁴². A reflection that “is limited to the art, he writes, it does not guess right with it: its internal composition requires of what is not art”⁴³. It claims the philosophy. Therefore, Adorno concludes, the aesthetics can not be behind regarding the art [that is what defines to the Hegelian aesthetics], but not regarding the philosophy either⁴⁴. However, the philosophy for Adorno does not intervene in art nor to the Hegelian idealistic way, from outside, legislating the truth of the artistic thing, and as in Heidegger either, where the philosophy imitates to the art: it is self-eliminated as conceptual thought and it becomes poetic thinking. Hegel and Heidegger have understood philosophically the art in exchange of absorbing or reducing one to the other, that is to say, in exchange for sacrificing the peculiarity of one of the spheres to the other one. In front of both, Adorno defends the irreversibility of the separation among art and philosophy, or what is the same thing, it defends the irreducible peculiarity of art and of philosophy. Neither the philosophy overcomes art because this decreases to that one (Hegel), nor the art becomes model of the philosophy (Heidegger). But the maintenance of the difference among the philosophical and artistic spheres does not mean for Adorno to deny the existence of relationships among them. All the contrary. Art and philosophy are different, but in permanent relationship, in constant tension. An appropriate philosophical understanding of art according to Adorno can consist neither in its reduction to philosophy nor in its elevation to pattern of the philosophy, it is only possible on the base of incorporating the philosophical thing in art.

The discovery of the philosophical thing in art does not only prevents that relationship of tension between art and philosophy, of continuous reciprocal reference, but rather it is what makes it possible. The incorporation of the philosophical thing in the aesthetic thing forces art and philosophy to converge, to be needed mutually. The convergence among art and philosophy that Adorno sustains responds to the same dialectics that impregnates all its thought: art and philosophy maintain the same dialectical relationship that subject and object, or thought and reality, they are different but inseparable, as the Dióscuros Cástor and Pólux. Let us analyse this convergence. In the first place it will be necessary to clarify in what sense we are affirming that Adorno incorporates the philosophical thing in art. The philosophy discovered in art is not logically

a philosophy already done; art is not philosophy, it is not symbol of an idea, as Hegel sustained, a reason for what could be finally supplanted by the philosophy itself. Art is rather a demand of philosophy; the philosophy that is discovered in art is a demand, a demand of reflection, a truth thought not discursively, and that philosophy will have to perform developing it conceptually. In art, as long as it is dialectics, mimesis, there is an immediate presence of the things, there is truth. The alienation of the spirit that takes place in art allows it once a leap, without mediations, to install in the things in their truth. Adorno suggests us that art is a proximity experience to the things, perhaps the highest experience of vicinity that we can have with regards to them, and that contrasts with the distance that establishes the philosophical experience -conceptual- between us and things. The proximity that characterizes to the aesthetic experience has a price. The art thinks, it judges, but it does it without words, not discursively, Adorno has sustained, but it is precisely for it that it also has to be thought. It has the truth, but as something incommensurable with itself; it has the truth, but in an immediate way, at a rough guess and for that reason it escapes from art, it gets dark⁴⁵. That is the 'philosophy' which exists in art. For that reason, he writes, "the art is hoping to be explained"⁴⁶, that is to say, it is hoping its thought to be thought conceptually. With the result that Adorno affirms that "the genuine aesthetic experience has to become philosophy or it is absolutely nothing"⁴⁷. For this same reason aesthetics is philosophical in itself. Art demands philosophy, it needs of the discursive reflection.

But also, secondly, philosophy, the conceptual speech, needs of art. Adorno understands philosophy as dialectics, as thought of the concrete, that is, true phenomenology. Only as dialectics -what is equal to the rupture of the imposition of the identity- it is possible phenomenology. Besides, the philosophy according to Adorno can only be verified as such phenomenology/dialectics by means of the concept. Indeed, the concept is the organ of philosophy, but Adorno also recognizes that it is a wall that makes impossible his dialectical intellectual project because the concept itself distances the thought from that which it thinks⁴⁸. This is the paradox in which the philosophy moves: its natural environment, the concept, it is the same one that prevents it to be what it is, phenomenology. Adorno has been liberated of the "idealistic illusion", that is to say, of the "belief in that it is possible to grasp (*ergreifen*) the entirety of the real thing for the force of

the thought”, so that his philosophy is defined by the “conscience of the non-identity” between the thought and the thing, philosophy that in virtue of this critic conscience of the idealistic illusion is denominated by Adorno as *essayistic*⁴⁹. The essay is not then a mere form of philosophy, but rather the current form of philosophy, that is to say, the form of a philosophy that -convinced that the “objects are more than their concepts”⁵⁰- it lives in the conscience of the non-identity between thought and reality, what above all supposes to affirm that philosophy just as Adorno understands it –as essay- it is to think the other thing, what is not to think, concept, but –in fact- with the concept. However, this same concept makes impossible to think the other or concrete, what is not thought. To think (conceptually) it is to identify, so that the concepts -when thinking- they can not say but what they put themselves. Philosophy thinks by means of concepts, but these concepts themselves are those that separate it of what it thinks. This is the distance in what the philosophy moves, and the cause of the distance regarding the things that we experience in it. Philosophy, discursive knowledge, lacks appearance of the things, it lacks truth. Certainly, in exchange for it, it gives us clarity and distinction, rigor and precision, but it lacks the truth, the proximity of the things. It reveals the truth, it has the appropriate conceptual mediation for revealing it, but it has not the truth⁵¹.

The understanding of the concept like wall that distances is equal to the crash of the idealistic dream, but Adorno does not deduce from there the rejection of the discursive knowledge and the opening for the philosophy of another road of knowledge: “Only concepts can carry out what the concepts prevent”⁵². The concept is the organ of the philosophy. Adorno does not reject the concept but rather he corrects it and enlarges it with the incorporation of another element, the dialectical mimesis of the aesthetic thing. Adorno affirms the philosophy like will of telling conceptually what is not concept, “what is not properly possible to say by means of it”, so that in philosophy the concepts have to stop to only be just them to go to their other one and to think about it, they have to penetrate in what is not conceptual without absorbing it, without identifying it with themselves, without accommodating that which is not conceptual to the concepts⁵³. Concepts have to be alienated, but this excursion toward the other thing is the characteristic dialectics of art. Therefore, so that the philosophy, the conceptual thinking, can overcome its natural idealistic tendency -identifier- and can think the other thing, the concrete thing; in sum, so

that the philosophy can be at the height of what is heterogeneous for it -as it is characteristic to the dialectical/philosophical thinking-, the concept has to incorporate in its own behaviour -without stopping to be concept- the activity characteristic of art, the alienation, the excursion toward the other thing, the mimesis. This is the one that contributes to philosophy the presence, the truth. Philosophy has to appropriate in its behaviour of the aesthetic alienation, but being philosophy, conceptual/reflexive thought. What it is treated, Adorno notes down, it is of “saving the mimesis in the means of the concept”⁵⁴. Philosophy can only be carried out as phenomenology -dialectics- by means of the artistic mimesis. Without mimesis there is not dialectics. The concept supplanted the mimesis; now it has to reproduce that mimetic conduct in its own behaviour. Those two sides different from the conscience converge this way. Art needs the philosophical reflection to deploy its truth, the truth that reaches in its mimesis but in dark, incommensurable way; philosophy needs of the artistic mimesis to correct the identifying tyranny of the philosophical reason, to overcome its idealistic limit and to be able to think the things, the other thing of the thought, the truth. The immediacy of the aesthetic proximity needs the conceptual distance of the philosophy to be able to think what it has so next that it cannot think it; the conceptual mediation of the philosophical distance needs the mimetic proximity of art to be able to have the truth of the thing that that distance could never achieve.

1. Immanuel Kant, *Kritik der Urteilskraft*, her. v. K. Vorländer (Hamburg: Meiner, 1990), p. 32.
2. Vide Theodor Wiesengrund Adorno, *Dialektik der Aufklärung* (1947), *Gesammelte Schriften*, her. v. G. Adorno und R. Tiedemann, Band 3 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1984), p. 36. What Adorno also condemns is that when philosophy has come closer to art and not to religion -like in the case of Schelling or Heidegger- it has made it in an inappropriate way, as if the art and the intuition possessed some preference type with regard to the science and to the concept, and therefore in detriment -as we will see- of philosophy like conceptual thought. Another thing is represented by Hegel, whose valuation and recovery of the artistic thing have been done previous subordination to the philosophical thing, to the conceptual thing. Therefore Hegel has not been located very far from the predominant attitude in the modernity that favours the primacy of science.
3. Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik* (1820-1829), I, *Werke*, Band 13 (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1986), pp. 14-16.
4. *Ibidem*, pp. 20-21.
5. *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24, 28-29.
6. *Ibidem*, p. 151.
7. Martin Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes* (1935), *Holzwege, Gesamtausgabe*, Band 5 (Frankfurt am Main: V. Klostermann, 1977), pp. 25, 58-59, 64, 67.
8. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie* (1969), GS, Band 7, p. 391.
9. *Ibidem*, pp. 152, 264.
10. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, I, p. 25.
11. *Ibidem*, pp. 23-24.
12. *Ibidem*, pp. 23 s, 140 s (ed. esp., pp. 16,94).
13. Vide Eugenio Triás, "Arte y estética en el otoño de la modernidad", *Letras de Deusto*, vol. 47 (1990), pp. 37-39.
14. Vide Adorno, *Negative Dialektik* (1966), GS, Band 6, p. 37.
15. Heidegger, *Aus der Erfahrung des Denkens* (1947), GA, Band 13, p. 79.
16. Heidegger, *Der Ursprung des Kunstwerkes*, pp. 68-69. Vide Heidegger, *Einführung in die Metaphysik* (1935), GA, Band 40, p. 140; *Die Zeit des Weltbildes* (1938), *Holzwege*, GA, Band 5, p. 69.
17. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, pp. 26-27; *Philosophische Terminologie. Zur Einleitung* (1962/63), I (Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1997), p. 167.
18. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, p. 27.
19. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie*, I, p. 81; *Negative Dialektik*, p. 26.
20. This is the *leitmotiv* that presides over the understanding of the aesthetics of Adorno carried out by Albrecht Wellmer (vide *Verdad, apariencia, reconciliación*, en *Sobre la dialéctica de modernidad y postmodernidad*, trans. José Luis Arantegui (Madrid: Visor, 1993), pp. 15-18) and Vicente Gómez (vide *El pensamiento estético de Th. W. Adorno* (Madrid: Cátedra/Universidad de Valencia, 1998), *passim*).
21. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften* (1817-30), I, *Werke*, Band 8, § 2-4, 25-26, 74, pp. 41-45, 90 ss, 163 s.
22. Adorno, *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen* (1931), GS, Band 2, p. 262 (*Notiz*).
23. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, p. 28.
24. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 211.
25. Adorno, *Kierkegaard. Konstruktion des Ästhetischen*, p. 186.
26. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 305.
27. *Ibidem*, p. 139.
28. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, p. 28.
29. Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel* (1956/63), GS, Band 5, p. 261.
30. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Ästhetik*, p. 28.
31. Adorno, *Jargon der Eigentlichkeit* (1962/64), GS, Band 6, p. 506.
32. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Philosophie der Weltgeschichte* (1822-28), her. v. J. Hoffmeister, I (Hamburg: Meiner, 1955), p. 78.
33. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts* (1821), *Werke*, Band 7, p. 24.
34. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 180.
35. *Ibidem*, pp. 35, 286, 387.
36. *Ibidem*, p. 179.

37. *Ibidem*, p. 140.
38. *Ibidem*, p. 524.
39. *Ibidem*, p. 513.
40. *Ibidem*.
41. Adorno, *Minima Moralia. Reflexionen aus dem beschädigten Leben* (1944/51), GS, Band 4, p. 253.
42. *Ibidem*.
43. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 518.
44. *Ibidem*, p. 510.
45. *Ibidem*, p. 191.
46. *Ibidem*, pp. 193, 524.
47. *Ibidem*, p. 197.
48. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, p. 27; *Drei Studien zu Hegel*, pp. 284-285.
49. Adorno, *Die Aktualität der Philosophie* (1931), GS, Band 1, p. 325; *Der Essay als Form* (1954), GS, Band 11, p. 17.
50. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, p. 17. Adorno has sustained in several places the “primacy (*Vorrang*) of the object” (*Negative Dialektik*, pp. 184-186; *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 384), but not for dissolving the thought but for forcing it -against all idealism- to assist to the other thing, to the real and concrete, to what is not thought. The primacy of the object is a call to the ‘negative dialectics’, a dialectics that does not finalise in identity, opposite to the ‘Hegelian positive dialectics’, idealistic, that finishes overcoming the difference between thought/thing in identity, in false reconciliation.
51. Adorno, *Ästhetische Theorie*, p. 191.
52. Adorno, *Negative Dialektik*, p. 62.
53. Adorno, *Philosophische Terminologie*, I, p. 56; *Negative Dialektik*, pp. 21, 159.
54. Adorno, *Drei Studien zu Hegel*, p. 354; *Philosophische Terminologie*, I, p. 81.