

HOPE FOR TRUTH: ADORNO'S CONCEPTS OF ART AND SOCIAL THEORY IN A COMPARATIVE APPROACH

*Esperanza de verdad: Los conceptos de arte y teoría social
en Adorno desde un enfoque comparativo*

MARIO VIEIRA DE CARVALHO*

mv.carvalho@fcs.unl.pt

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ABSTRACT

The constellation in which Adorno's unity of thought comes to light - the critique of science as ideology, the overcoming of the distinction between philosophy and sociology, the concept of art as the beginning and end of philosophy, knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) as constituents of both (art and philosophy), presupposes a close relationship between his theory of art and his social theory. In other words, from Adorno's aesthetic theory, and especially from his musical writings, a concept of art emerges that essentially coincides with his concept of social theory. The purpose of the present paper is to discuss this mirror-like relationship. In fact, postulates such as the interaction between object and method, the overcoming of deductive method and descriptive knowledge, the subject-object dialectics, the prefiguration of the non-identical from a tendency, the resistance of the singular to totalizing systems, the critique of ideology as a critique of language - among others with which they are correlated - are inherent to Adorno's concepts of art and social theory. They have both in common, as it should be inferred from Adorno's thinking, *the hope for truth*.

* Universidade Nova de Lisboa (Portugal).

Keywords: art, social theory, truth content, critique of ideology, music as a paradigm of art.

RESUMEN

La constelación en la que emerge la unidad del pensamiento de Adorno –la crítica de la ciencia como ideología, la superación de la distinción entre filosofía y sociología, el concepto de arte como comienzo y final de la filosofía, el conocimiento (*Erkenntnis*) como elemento constitutivo de ambos (arte y filosofía), presupone una relación cercana entre su teoría del arte y su teoría social. En otras palabras, de la teoría estética de Adorno, y en particular de sus escritos musicales, emerge un concepto de arte que coincide en lo esencial con su concepto de teoría social. El presente ensayo se propone analizar esta relación. De hecho, presupone que tanto la interacción entre objeto y método, la superación del método deductivo y el conocimiento descriptivo, la dialéctica entre sujeto y objeto, la prefiguración de lo no-idéntico a partir de una tendencia, la resistencia de lo singular frente a los sistemas totalizadores, la crítica de la ideología como crítica del lenguaje –entre otros elementos relacionados– son inherentes a los conceptos adornianos de arte y teoría social. Ambos tienen en común, como se inferirá del pensamiento de Adorno, una *esperanza de alcanzar la verdad*.

Palabras clave: arte, teoría social, contenido de verdad, crítica de la ideología, música como paradigma del arte.

Philosophy and art converge in their truth content: The progressive self-unfolding truth of the artwork is none other than the truth of the philosophical concept.

Theodor W. Adorno, 1997: 172.

Owing to Hegel and Marx the fundamental references of his dialectical method, Adorno became a critic of totalizing theoretical systems based on deductive thinking¹. In the *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, written in collaboration with Max Horkheimer, Adorno questions the opposition between reason and myth, the claim of modern science to absolute reason that he denounces as ideology. Contrary to

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Marx, who distinguished between utopian and scientific socialism, Adorno does not recognize the capacity of science – particularly, of social science – to free itself from ideology. Simultaneously, and also contrary to Marx, Adorno remove art and philosophy from the sphere of the ideological superstructure (*Überbau*) to place both – art and philosophy, interrelated with one another – into the sphere of a genuine quest for truth. Whereas utilitarian reason, instrumentalized by the relations of production, denies itself, art and philosophy have become, according to Adorno, the last strongholds of resistance to “false consciousness” or ideology.

Adorno states that art needs philosophy to be understood. Conversely, however, philosophy should stop to deny what is its essence, notably: its beginning and end in art. Both are knowledge – as for Hegel – but both should escape the crystallization in a systematic and totalizing discursive model of knowledge. Otherwise they are no longer “authentic” art and philosophy, and become ideology.

Adorno had a solid musical training, since childhood, in the family; developed it and deepened it intensely, even as a student of composition of Alban Berg. Until very late he hesitated between the career he would follow: composer, or philosopher. He chose philosophy, but never stopped dealing with music. Few musicians knew so profoundly – from reading, analysis, or piano performance – the repertoire of European art music. Several witnesses report with amazement the extraordinary breadth of knowledge he had of the scores: “He is unbelievable. He knows every note in the world”. Thomas Mann, who quotes this saying of an American singer in his “novel of a novel” about the genesis of *Doktor Faustus*, of which Adorno almost might be considered co-author, describes him playing Beethoven’s op. 111 “completely and in a highly instructive way” (Mann, 1949: 706-708).

It is in contact with music that Adorno develops a model of aesthetic theory for art in general terms. Music was, of all arts, the one in which the essence of art becomes more evident: being a non-intentional language, a language without propositional content or message.

The philosophy was necessary to make the work of art “speak”. But this effort of interpretation is an endless task: the more you understand the “authentic” work of art, the more it resists deciphering. According to Adorno, it is the analysis of the material, and not the apparent, figurative or propositional contents affixed to the work of art, that makes it speak. Also here music brings to the fore what in the other arts may pass unnoticed.

However, in opposition to the dichotomy between music and society (dichotomy that is presupposed in the dominant tradition of Musicology), Adorno draws attention to the social nature of the material which the musician works with. Art as knowledge means, therefore, knowledge of society. Here just resides the origin of our inquiry: how art and social theory are articulated in Adorno's thinking.

The posthumous publication of Adorno's *Philosophic Elements of a Theory of Society* (2008), a series of lectures given in 1966, was very helpful, for it offers an enlightening overview of his thinking about social theory, that, so condensed and summed up in its complexion, is not found in his previous publications.

Following aspects are to be taken into account:

- Interaction between object and method;
- Overcoming of the deductive method and descriptive knowledge;
- Dialectic subject-object;
- Inspiration (*Einfall*);
- Cognition (*Erkenntnis*);
- Prefiguration of the *non-identical* from a *tendency*;
- The conflict between individual and society;
- Social integration as latent desintegration;
- The critique of ideology as a critique of language.

1 INTERACTION BETWEEN OBJECT AND METHOD

The interaction between object and method acquires in Adorno a crucial relevance. Without questioning the method from the facts or content issues and, conversely, without reflecting methodologically on the observed in society, the stage of social theory cannot be reached. This is why Adorno speaks of a crisis of theoretical thinking in sociology, crisis resulting from both the increasing difficulties in penetrating current society with theoretical concepts (changes in the object) and the attitude of thinkers and researchers who fail to take theoretical position (changes in the state of consciousness of the subject).

Indeed, according to Adorno, it is necessary to overcome this dualism – empty concepts, to one side, facts, to the other – and move from the stage of the classificatory logic of the materials and the mere formulation of hypotheses to a theory that, by emerging from the singular facts, is able to capture in the social what does not end in them (the facts). Not an aprioristic theory, that the more it claimed the

status of theory, the more it moved away from the facts (or it considered only some traits of these, neglecting others), but a theory which, although gaining in autonomy, immerses so in-depth in the concrete of the facts (of the singular materials) that they no longer present themselves as blind, a-conceptual materials. A theory, finally, that put an end to the rigid antithesis between *fact* and *concept* (Adorno, 2008: 25 ss.).

Such interaction between object and method is also postulated by Adorno for art. His critique of constructivism has its origin here. The idea of *Sachlichkeit* (objectivity), related to constructivism, presupposes that the work's formative process cuts the impulses of what is to be formed, lets the teleology of the particular elements atrophy. "*Sachlichkeit*" in this sense "turns out to be ideology: The dress-less unity to which *Sachlichkeit* or the technical artwork pretends is never achieved". That is to say, "art is conceivable only on the condition that any pre-given subordinating standard be excluded" (Adorno, 1997: 204; GS 7, 234). Referring, in particular, to construction in Contemporary music, Adorno states that "the antinomy of freedom and coherence (*Verbindlichkeit*) cannot be overcome by consigning coherence to the realm of mere method" ("striving for what is traditionally called law"), without taking into account the object (*Sache*) (Adorno, 1992b: 290-291; GS 16: 512). Immanent legality, transparent in itself, should spring from freedom, instead of being imposed by any external order (*ibid.*: 292; GS 16: 513). Even Webern's works "do not presuppose any system laid down in advance or superimposed". Instead, "they produce interconnections of themselves" (*ibid.*: 294; GS 16: 515).

Similarly, according to Adorno, social theory should overcome the dilemma between system mathematically deduced, and the mere factual. Adorno rejects the false alternative between deductive theory and positivism (positivism defined as a descriptive narrative based on a collection of facts), and opposes to that false alternative a third moment: a theory based on the dialectical mediation (*Vermittlung*), in which the paradoxical elements condition each other mutually (they are mutually mediated) (Adorno, 2008: 131s.).

Technique and style in art are discussed by Adorno in this perspective. Reified technique "bears the traces of a phase in which, analogous to science, methods were considered to be independent of their object" (Adorno, 1997: 278; GS 7: 316). Technique has the propensity to "self-emancipation at the price of its goal", to become "an end-in-itself, as a sort of contentless proficiency". By quoting Schönberg, Adorno contrasts the "blind faith in technique" with the definition of the

latter (technique) as “accumulated capacity to be suited to what the object (*Sache*) itself demands”. In musical composition, Beethoven is described by Adorno as an example of this authentic *Sachlichkeit*, that is, of the consistency between technique and “truth content” (*ibid.*: 281-282; GS 7: 320). By contrast, integral serialism represents just the contrary. Objectivity was degraded here to mere appearance: the integral rationalization, as never before in the history of music, was based on a capricious legalism, on a system that has simply been decreed from outside, strange to the course of the musical process in time (Adorno, 1988: 189; GS 14: 151).

As to the style, Adorno speaks of its bindingness as a result of society’s repressive character: every artwork – Adorno says – is a force field even in its relation to style, including the so-called “personal style”, that merely projects “the inability to follow the specific logic” of the individual work, collides with its immanent lawfulness (Adorno, 1997: 270-271; GS 7: 307-308).

Style leads us to idiom, a concept of paramount importance in Adorno’s theory of musical performance. Idiom, one could say, is the context that sustains the work in the historic moment in which it emerges, and/or in which it is performed. To such a context belong pre-established practices and ideas, a specific listening and performance culture, “dominant ways of playing and phrasing” (Adorno), according to which – *analogically* – the *non-problematic character* of the notated text is taken for granted: non-problematic character in the sense of the way in which the notated elements should be understood, or of what is contained in the written signs, in spite of not being represented there in an unequivocal fashion. The idiomatic (*idiomatisch, tonsprachlich*) element could be then understood, in my view (Vieira de Carvalho, 2009a; 2009b), as an ideological one, including the obviousness, not called into question in the music *milieu*, as regards the way of “reading” the signs and of reproducing them in the performance. This context that sustains the work tends to become “false consciousness” or “ideology” concerning the canon of musical performance. Incorporated as such in a musical tradition, it goes back to Mahler’s comment, quoted several times by Adorno: *Tradition ist Schlampererei*, “tradition is negligence” (Adorno, 2001: 263-270). The parallel with Adorno’s critique of reified methodology in social science seems to be evident, and converges with Bourdieu’s criticism of academic tradition in the sentence: “*le mort saisit le vif*” (“the dead seizes the alive”) (Bourdieu, 1980).

A formulation of the *Philosophy of New Music* sums up the interaction between method and object that Adorno postulates both in art and social theory: “it is

necessary to transform the strength of the universal concept into the self-unfolding of the concrete object..." (Adorno, 2006: 23; GS 12: 33).

2 OVERCOMING OF DEDUCTIVE METHOD AND DESCRIPTIVE KNOWLEDGE

These premises are constitutive of Adorno's criticism of both totalizing theoretical systems and positivism.

According to Adorno, the theoretical systems that try to set as an invariance what they consider the dynamics of society postulate the unity of the system despite of the individual contradictions. But the system collapses, because there is no unity, either in society or in the theoretical system that seeks to capture it. The system is seen as a close context of deductive relations, from a minimum of so obvious assumptions that they seem to be given in themselves as signs of their own truth. From a single statement or concept the whole is deduced. The multiplicity is reduced to one through mere deduction. However, for Adorno, the exaltation of internal coherence (*Stimmigkeit*) of knowledge succeeds at the costs of truth, which is not coherent (Adorno, 2008: 46-51). Science becomes scientism: it is one of the moments of fetishization of science. Adorno refers to Bacon (*Novum Organum*, 1620), who postulated the need to question the criteria as misleading "idols" that exclude as impossible what is or may be part of reality (Adorno, 2008: 136-137).

This is just what Adorno demands of the composer and gives ground to his diagnosis of the aging of New Music, which was a consequence of its subordination to deductive thinking, to the same idolatry of the criteria that Adorno condemned in science. "The schematic organization", the rationalization of music "takes the place of the *raison d'être*, and the organization of material becomes a substitute for the renounced goal. As a result of the atomistic disposition of musical elements, the concept of musical coherence (*Zusammenhang*) is liquidated, a concept without which nothing like music really exists. The cult of consistency terminates in idolatry; the material is no longer worked through and articulated to be amenable to artistic intention; instead the arrangement of the material becomes the sole artistic intention, the palette becomes the painting" (Adorno, 1988: 192; GS 14: 157).

Accordingly, musical coherence (*Zusammenhang*), similarly to social theory, could not be assured by a pre-given system. Rather it could only be reached "by working through the material". The crucial epistemological issue resides, in fact, for Ador-

no, on the resistance that social reality offers to theory, especially if the latter seeks to establish itself as a system. However, to understand the complex situation in which we live, Adorno himself acknowledges that it does not seem possible to abandon the concept of theory as a system. This will then have to incorporate the self-reference through critical reflection and thus be forced to cover what escapes it: that is, in Adorno's words, it must be both system and non-system (Adorno, 2008: 125-126). It is no longer deductive, because it is capable of being in itself paradoxical, contradictory. Such as the artworks should also be. The terms in which Adorno refers, for example, to *Wozzeck* define exactly a similar paradigm of artistic consistency: "Berg accomplished the supreme coherence of the composition", but left out "the coherence of style, relying more on the monadological strength of the eloquent entity, that absorbs in itself and compels to expression the irreconcilable, than on the purity of the idiom, behind which the indelible contradiction merely conceals itself" (Adorno, 2011: 95). "Artworks present the contradictions as a whole, the antagonistic situation as a totality" (Adorno, 1997 479; GS 7: 479). "Each artwork is a system of irreconcilables" (*ibid.*; GS 7: 274).

This critique of totalizing theoretical systems is carried out together with the critique of positivism, another moment of fetishization of science, which had led to the isolation and absolutisation of the scientific branches, each one with its established method, for it was only possible to rely on particular knowledge. In positivism and its variants, thinking is primarily oriented to the methodology, as a consequence of the domination of instrumental reason, which leads to the defamation of the intellect (*Geist*). Nothing of intellectually relevant is extracted from the amount of collected data (Adorno, 2008: 176-180).

In art, the critique of positivism has its correspondence in the same demand for intellect (*Geist*). On the one side, Adorno stresses the role of technique, which assures that the artwork is more than an agglomeration of what is factually available, and this more is art's content (Adorno, 1997: 283; GS 7: 322). On the other side, however, without spirit or intellect technique becomes an end in itself. Spirit (*Geist*) "raises itself above what merely exists at the point where imagination does not capitulate to the mere existence of material or techniques". Since the emancipation of the subject "the mediation of the work through it" is not to be renounced without the reversion of the work "to the status of a thing" (*ibid.*: 48; GS 7: 63).

3 DIALECTIC SUBJECT-OBJECT

That is to say: method must be corrected not only through reflection on the object but also by means of the dialectic subject-object: thus we arrive at a central postulate of Critical Theory. In Adorno's terms, "subjectivity is not ingredient, ornament, sauce added to objectivity to make it tastier. It is what the object needs to unfold itself". The subjectivity has to disappear into the object so that the object dialectically manifests itself. Adorno's ideal of knowledge is this *Verlöschen* (extinguishing) of subjectivity, which is not possible if subjectivity begins to be eliminated. Neither subjectivity is objectivity itself, nor objectivity can be resolved in subjectivity: both need reciprocal mediation (Adorno, 2008: 194).

In music the object which the composer is confronted with is the sound material, which is historically and socially pre-formed and transformed. The material in itself is not yet art, neither its qualities ensure artistic consistency. According to Adorno, even the movement or development of the material, its "progress", is not independent of the artwork's "content". If the subject, "whose freedom is the precondition of all advanced art, is driven out", composition "turns out into a mere hobby": "[...] an external totality, hardly different from political totalitarianism, acquires the reins of power" (Adorno, 1988: 196; GS 14: 161). The belief of Stockhausen and other composers in following nature laws is denounced by Adorno as "an authentic instance of fetishism": something artifactual was set up as a primal phenomenon, and the absence of tension with the subject changed the composer in a "schoolboy", who blindly followed "alienated and pre-established rules" (Adorno, 1988: 194; GS 14: 159). Being the artwork both the result of the process and the process itself at a standstill (Adorno, 1997: 268; GS 14: 237), the reciprocity of subject and object (what is different of identity) maintains a precarious balance. In the artwork, "Subject is neither the observer nor the creator nor absolute spirit, but rather spirit bound with, preformed and mediated by the object", or, in other words, subject capable of extinguishing itself fruitfully in the object. Whatever the work is composed of, it is always both subject and object (Adorno, 1997: 248-249, 407).

4 INSPIRATION (*EINFALL*)

By postulating the dialectic subject-object, Critical Theory claims the recovery of naïve spontaneity and immediacy in addressing the object. According to Adorno, it

is necessary to recover the capacity of non-regulated experience and to cultivate the sudden idea, the inspiration (*Einfall*). To cultivate the *Einfall* does not invalidate, however, the necessity of testing it and submitting it to the control of the adequacy to the object, to verify whether it breaks out from the object itself. What distinguishes the power of thought is not its non-arbitrary character, but rather the unity of arbitrary and non-arbitrary: the quality of spontaneity that breaks out suddenly, but results from an unconscious continuity. The more intense the thought, the greater the chance of inspirations (*Einfälle*) as a fruit of the continuity of the underground work. Without this moment of sudden irruption (what's new in thought), there is no productive thinking (Adorno, 2008: 157-158).

In this way, Adorno transfers to science and especially to social theory what Kant admitted exclusively in art: inspiration (*Einfall*). And simultaneously condemns in art the import of totalitarian reason that belongs to the paradigm of modern science. Artwork's details should not be extinguished by the whole, as in constructivism, that no longer grants any role to sudden ideas or irruptions (as unplanned arbitrarinesses). But Schoenberg, Berg and even Webern demand for the restitution of inspiration in their works (Adorno, 1997: 385; GS 7: 450-451). Organization and inspiration are combined according to a process that Adorno characterizes making use of systems theory: *homeostasis*, that is, artwork's systemic self-regulation, without which no coherence could be reached, no artwork would be possible (*ibid.*: 206; GS 7: 236). The "exclusive predetermination of the whole by the material" would result in "artwork's muteness", in the lost of its eloquence: "art is expressive when what is objective, subjectively mediated, speaks" (*ibid.*: 138, 385; GS 7: 160, 450-451).

5 COGNITION (ERKENNTNIS)

Einfall (inspiration) as a moment of the dialectic subject-object presupposes in art the categories of mimesis and expression. According to Adorno, "the rationality of artworks becomes spirit only when it is immersed in its polar opposite", and this "polar opposite" are the "mimetic impulses" which become expression. The mimetic element (indispensable to art) cannot be reached other than by way of the particular subject. Art cannot be isolated from expression, and there is no expression without a subject (Adorno, 1997: 52; GS 7: 68). The dialectic of these elements is similar to dialectical logic, in that each pole realizes itself only in the

other, and not in some middle ground (*ibid.*: 55; GS 7: 72). But Adorno's concept of mimesis is not identical with that of imitation. According to Adorno mimesis consists in "a sympathetic reaction to empirical world in the medium of art". In this sense, "art does not remain in the copy, rather makes aware of deficits, evokes ex negativo unaccomplished promises of happiness, the longing for the Other" (cf. Eichel, 1998). This is just what defines art as a form of knowledge: art completes knowledge (*Erkenntnis*) with what is excluded from knowledge and thereby once again impairs its character as knowledge, its univocity (*ibid.*: 70; GS 7: 86-87). Art "denounces the particular essence of a ratio that pursues means rather than ends", reminds us of the ends: here resides "the source of art's rationality", of "its character as knowledge", of its "capacity to perceive more in the things than they are" (*ibid.*: 417; GS 7: 487-488).

Art's rationality puts in this way in evidence that "*ratio* without *mimesis* is self-negating" and that, as Adorno postulated, and recent research in neurosciences confirms (for example, António Damásio, 1994), feeling and understanding "are not absolutely different in the human disposition and remain dependent even in their dividedness" (Adorno, 1997: 418; GS 7: 489). Also in social theory, Adorno postulates, thus, the necessity of recovering the capacity of primary experience as an antidote both against reified consciousness of positivism and absolute reason of totalizing systems. Otherwise social theory renounces to the "capacity to perceive more in the things than they are" (Adorno, 2008: 75-76; 80-81).

6 PREFIGURATION OF THE NON-IDENTICAL FROM A TENDENCY

In fact, for Adorno, social theory, to be truly so, must transcend the existent, but without falling into the mere arbitrary and blind speculation. It goes beyond the presently existing, but by taking into account the weight of what exists. Adorno distinguishes between *trend* and *tendency*. One thing is the extrapolation, generalization from the established evidence, the going-on-so (*So-weiter-Gehen*) if such or such assumptions are maintained: Adorno calls this the mere prophecy, based on the identification of a *trend*. Another thing is, not only to formulate the expected or to predict, but daring to foreshadow the new, the non-identical, which is opposed to the already existing: the field of theory is only then reached from the identification of a *tendency* – *tendency* understood as that to what society evolves in view of the vectors that determine it today. Not the merely predictable (according to a

trend), but the Otherness or Alterity (issuing from a *tendency*) is the task of social theory. *Tendency* as a key-concept expresses the idea that theory must be, dialectically, capable of assimilating the paradoxical moments that seem to escape it (Adorno, 2008: 37-39).

In art, particularly in music composition, the tendency of the material is also a key-concept for Adorno. Material is what is formed, “what the artists worked with”, “everything that artists encounter about which they must make a decision”, including every technique and forms ever developed. In so far as the material is historically and socially preformed, it evolves objectively, progresses like the productive forces in society. The artists are confronted with the “constraint inherent in technical procedures and the progress of material which is imposed by various materials as well as by the necessity to employ specific materials”. They are so “dependent on the transformations of technique” as technique is dependent “on the materials that it manipulates”. That is to say: the artists cannot avoid to be confronted with the most advanced state of the material, its objective tendency (Adorno, 2002: 648; GS 17: 258). According to Adorno, authentic art emerges when, in the process of production, the material is expanded “into the unknown, going beyond the material’s given state” or level (*Materialstand*), what is “to a large extent a function of the material and its critique”, “defined by the material itself” (Adorno, 1997: 194-195; GS 7: 222-223). How this alterity is reached and how similar it is to the postulate of transcending the existing in social theory is summed up in a statement of the *Philosophy of New Music*: What the composer does “is accomplished in the execution of what his music objectively demands from him. But for such obedience the composer requires all possible disobedience, all independence and spontaneity: The movement of the musical material is just that dialectical.” (Adorno, 2006: 33-34; GS 12: 42). Therefore, as the essay *Vers une musique informelle* makes explicit, the composer must go beyond the *trend*, the banal consequentiality, the predictable, and dare to prefigure the non-identical.

7 THE CONFLICT BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

According to Adorno, Parsons’ system is the best example of a totalizing social theory with the intention to fill all possible gaps, but that ignores the fundamental: the conflict between individual and society. By taking into account Freud and psychoanalysis, Adorno stresses the situations in which individuals, even when they

declare to act freely as psychological entities, identical to themselves, are not but character masks (*Charaktermasken*), ie they only do what corresponds to their objective function, their roles (*Rollen*) in society. The totality compels them to act that way. It is true that the deep layer of the self is of social nature: the images (constellations) inscribed in the unconscious derive from social conflicts. But such mediated conflicts are entirely different from the immediate conflicts of the self. What diving (*Versenkung*) in the psychology reveals as being collective or social is not the immediate action of society on the unconscious, but rather an already stored (*aufgespeichert*), sedimented form of social pressure or control, which is therefore much deeper, and much more difficult to erase (*Ich-Neurosen*). Thus it is necessary to distinguish among the external psychological conflicts and to capture those who hide behind them: the conflicts that are truly collective (social). By hypostasizing the concept of role, Parsons attempted to explain society as if the ontology of reality was extracted from theatre. Instead, we must capture the pressure of social objectivity, transmitted to the conscience of the individual through his/her own *ratio* (Adorno, 2008: 145-150).

This purpose of social theory has also its correspondence in art. The composer's "struggle with the material is a struggle with society precisely to the extent that society has migrated into the work, and as such it is not pitted against the production as something purely external and heteronomous [as against a consumer or an opponent]. In immanent reciprocation, directives are constituted that the material imposes on the composer and that the composer transforms by adhering to them" (Adorno, 2006: 32; GS 12: 40). In artistic production unconscious forces and rationality enter the work mediated by the law of form (Adorno, 1997: 11: GS 7: 21). The objectivation of the artwork is the result of this play of forces, a contradiction that is art's answer to the contradiction of the *ratio* itself (*ibid.*: 129-130; GS 7: 153; *ibid.*: 369-370; GS 7: 429). Here resides just what is specific of art as knowledge (*Erkenntnis*): through its immanent dialectic of expression and construction, of rationality and mimesis, the capacity to capture the unsolved antagonisms between individual and society. The difference to social science is that art is a form of non-conceptual or non-discursive knowledge (*ibid.*: 70, 167; GS 7: 86, 191).

8 SOCIAL INTEGRATION AS LATENT DESINTEGRATION

For Adorno, the social integration grows with the social contradictions and antagonisms. Rejecting the premise of classical liberal theory, that the integration would be a consequence of the spontaneous acting of the individuals, Adorno argues that it is performed from top to bottom, through methods of technological standardization of the labor process, mass communication, and planning of the most powerful groups (including the dimensions of advertising and propaganda). Since integration is not but latent disintegration, then the more grows the integration, the less totality and individuals are reconciled. Adorno diagnoses a kind of collective schizophrenia in the sense that people become, increasingly, instrumentalized, they become tools of their own survival. The increasing rationalization of the people in the production process is in conflict with their own reality as humans, because little remains of the purpose for which one works. What is at stake is not the individual subject, but the potential costumer, the consumer (as if this was the purpose of the whole). The person as an entity full of meaning ceases to exist. There is an inversion between means and ends. The rationality becomes irrational (Adorno, 2008: 100-102).

According to Adorno, such a critical perspective of society and of the relations between totality and individual is inherent to art: “The dubiousness of the ideal of a closed society applies equally to that of the closed artwork” (Adorno, 1997: 206; GS 7: 236). Forces of production “emancipated in art” represent “a real emancipation that is impeded by the relations of production”. Artworks “organized by the subject” are capable *tant bien que mal* of what society – that is organized without taking into account the subjects – “does not allow” (*ibid.*: 42; GS 7: 56). So, against the “mistake of traditional aesthetics”, that “exalts the relationship of the whole to the parts to one of entire wholeness” or “totality” (*ibid.*: 206; GS 7: 236), Adorno postulates that “totality” in art presupposes “the substantiality of the particular elements”, “a homeostasis of tension between the parts and their coherence in an unity”. Totality in art, by contrast to totality in society, may not “engorge tension”, “annul that homeostasis”, making itself “fit for ideology” (*ibid.*: 69; GS 7: 85). Accordingly, the rank of an artwork is “defined essentially by whether it exposes itself to, or withdraws from, the irreconcilable”. By “giving form to antagonisms”, instead of masking them, and by forcing them “into appearance that issues from the unreconciled, they incorporate the possibility of conciliation”. In this way,

dialectically, “as the nonviolent integration of what diverges”, a successful artwork “at the same time transcends the antagonisms of existence” without perpetrating the lie that these “no longer exist”, and converges “with knowledge through their synthetic function, the joining of the disjoint” (*ibid.*: 251-252; GS 7: 283-284).

9 CRITIQUE OF IDEOLOGY AS A CRITIQUE OF LANGUAGE

To traditional forms of ideology, providing additional ideas that console and deviate from what exists, now joins the phenomenon to which Adorno calls fusion between ideology and the idea of reality as it is. The disenchanting world (*entzauberte Welt*) presents itself to us as something that is well so and can not be otherwise. The existing, such as it is, becomes the ideology of itself. The veil between reality and ideology is so diaphanous that a breath seems sufficient to make it fall. But the more transparent and the diaphanous the veil, the more difficult it is to destroy it. When there is apparently no longer any ideology, it is the moment when the ideological reaches the peak: the reified consciousness. People adapt themselves so completely to the power that is exercised on them that, instead of complement or transfiguration, ideology becomes duplication of what already exists. The existing manifests itself in the global social consciousness, especially in the language and therefore in thought, since thinking and language are mutually constitutive of one another (Humboldt) (Adorno, 2008: 120; 213s.).

Positivism, by giving voice to an apparent social objectivity, abdicating of theory, is, accordingly, a manifestation of ideology. On the contrary, social theory demands the critique of ideology. However, in so far as, in language, form contradicts the content, the critique of ideology must focus not on a false theoretical content of the language but on the way in which the contents are manifest in consciousness. That is: it must be a critique of language (as practiced Karl Kraus) (*ibid.*: 212-214).

Such a demand must be met also by art, but art itself is demanded as a critical answer to ideology: “something in reality, something back of the veil spun by the interplay of institutions and false needs, objectively demands art”, and “it demands an art that speaks for what the veil hides” (Adorno, 1997: 24; GS 7: 35). Artworks are, in this sense, “real answers to the puzzle externally posed to them”, and as such, “they do not lie: They do not feign the literalness of what speaks out of them” (*ibid.*; GS 7: 16; AT 171; GS 7: 196). Art is knowledge, according to Ador-

no, precisely in that it is knowledge of social reality: art's "truth content and social content are mediated, although art's truth content transcends the knowledge of reality as what exists". The difference to scientific knowledge resides in that art is mimesis, is "bound up with feeling, with the immediacy of experience" (Adorno, 1997 335-336; GS 7: 383-385). As knowledge, however, "art is neither discursive nor its truth the reflection of an object": "truth emerges through it" (*ibid.*: 362; GS 7: 419). Not its "meaning", but rather what decides whether the artwork in itself is true or false, is the "truth-content" (*ibid.*: 172; GS 7: 197). Artworks "are able to say", but "the said also conceals itself". This "unmediated eloquence" of the artworks (Wesche, 2009), as a language *sui generis* that escapes meaning, is in itself a critique of discursive language, and therefore, of ideology (cf. Vieira de Carvalho, 2005; 2011).

Summing up: According to Adorno, both in art and social theory truth is committed to *Bilderverbot*, ban of its representation. Both art and social theory are directed toward truth, but both are not truth in themselves. Truth unfolds itself in art and social theory as otherness or alterity, that cannot be grasped, asserted, verbalised. In the very moment of its representation it would become untruth, false consciousness, ideology. Art and social theory pair in the endless "hope for truth, for a qualitatively Other" (*Hoffnung auf Wahrheit, auf ein qualitativ Anderes*) (Adorno, 2008: 40).

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