



2nd World Conference on Design, Arts and Education DAE-2013
**REFLECTION OF “PHILOSOPHY” ON ART AND PHILOSOPHY OF
ART**

Hatice Nilüfer SÜZEN^{a*} & Nuray MAMUR^{b*}

^a *Uşak University, Faculty of Fine Arts, Uşak 6400, Turkey*

^b *Pamukkale University, Education Faculty, Fine Arts Education ABD, Denizli 2000, Turkey*

Abstract

More focus is needed at faculties of fine arts on the quality and quantity of the philosophy education as well as on its methodology within the scope of “art philosophy”. It is a requirement that different methods and techniques should be used in arts education and that the students have competency in questioning and interpreting art works through different approaches. Do we need to use the language of philosophy in art philosophy lesson? Or does the use of the language of philosophy cause an uncertainty? Of course these questions may be increased and many answers can be found. However, for a more effective arts education we need to search the dialogues of Plato or the importance of Aristotle’s Poetics. Students of the Faculty of Fine Arts should understand and grasp the qualities of knowledge which is the basis of philosophy instead of studying an intense education of philosophy. This would help them to analyze the place and importance of philosophy in arts. It is believed that the mutual interaction process between artistic image and scientific image and different disciplines will contribute to the aesthetical pleasure, judgement and behaviour of the students. In this context, we will attempt to find an answer to the question “how more can we take advantage of philosophy and readings in the education of arts philosophy.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under [CC BY-NC-ND license](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Selection and peer-review under responsibility of Academic World Education and Research Center.

Keywords: Art, Art Education, Philosophy, Art Philosophy.

1. Introduction

The philosophy needed by human being is the one which is correct. In other words, human beings need the philosophy which conforms to reality. As philosophy is a basic factor in human life, it can shape its mind and character and it is the main force shaping the destiny of nations. Philosophy shapes them in a good and bad direction depending on the philosophy type accepted by human beings. Philosophy studies the main qualities of the existence of human beings and the relation of human beings and existence. Contrary to other sciences focusing on specific matters, it deals with everything in the universe. Philosophy is not an activity that can be limited to a definition rather it is a continuous search of knowing and defining. Special sciences are trees in the domain of knowledge, while philosophy is the soil that makes forests exits (Rand, 1982:2).

* Corresponding Author name. H. Nilüfer SÜZEN & Nuray MAMUR Tel.: +00-90-276-2212290
E-mail address: hnsari@gmail.com.tr & nuraymamur@gmail.com.tr

Philosophy literally means “fond of knowledge”. Aristotelianism is the view of the 13th century and thereafter, cartesian view belongs the 17th century, rationalism is the view of the 18th century and positivism is the view of the 19th century. There is no single view that represents this century (Sözer, 2009; 17).

Today the word *felsefe* in Turkish is the Arabic version of the Greek word *philosophia* (love of wisdom). It suggests to seek for and obtain knowledge no matter where and by whom it is produced and more importantly to be friend with knowledge. That is, the wisdom of knowledge means the desire and love to know the origin of everything that happens which is related to either human beings or to God (Küyel, 1976: 10).

The definition and meaning of philosophy vary among cultures as well as among philosopher. For instance in Ancient Greek, the philosophy in the 6th century BC started as a theoretical search regarding existence and what really exists. However, the philosophy growing in the East in the same period differs from the Western one as being a practical philosophy focusing on ethics and politics instead of metaphysics (Cevizci, 2012:7).

Of course, philosophy cannot be matched to a formal flow of the former philosophers or thinkers or their ideas. But, these ideas are not totally worthless, rather they are very important as they shed a light to our way and guide to our views especially with respect to appreciating the past, understanding the present and anticipating the future (Cevizci, 2012; 15).

If we take a quick look at the history of philosophy, we will see that the majority of philosophers reflected upon art and aesthetics. How is the place of art within existence? What is reality within art? (Yılmaz, 2004:7). Philosophy of art as a philosophical discipline deals consciously with this problem and similar ones.

LANGUAGE AND PHILOSOPHY OF ART

The basic objective of art is neither to train, to change nor to recommend something. The basic objective of art is to show not to teach. In other words, to present a materialized image representing the nature of human beings and its place in the universe.

Few have been learned about the nature of art, its function in human life and its huge psychological power. Art is a phenomena that is very important for most of people and that creates a deep personal interest. Art existed in all civilizations including those before the written history and accompanied to human beings in every step.

In simpler words, society may gain its deserved place in the civilized world if art-dominated culture shapes a society with the combination of philosophy and art. The life anticipations in such a society beat common linearity. This character becomes the character of that people (Soykan, 2011:26).

One of the distinguishing features of a work of art is that it doesn't serve to any practical and material purpose and that it is the objective itself. A work of art doesn't serve to any objective except creating a pose of thinking and imagining. The pleasure of this pose is so strong and so personal that man adopts it as a principle that is not a means of any other purpose and lives like a totally local experience. He gets disturbed when asked to resolve this pose and usually resist to not fulfil such a request. This suggestion appears to him like an attack to his deepest personality. But no human feeling can be causeless or irreducible. Nor it can be independent of the source of feelings (and therefore values) or from the needs of human being as a living creature. Art has an objective and fulfils a personal need. But this need covered by art is not a material need but the one felt by the human conscience (Akt. Rand, 1975:14).

Art doesn't say anything since art is nothing to do with telling something but it deals with doing something. But we still think that a work of art based on “doing” by man talks to us either this or that way. Even if art doesn't say anything, we tell many things about it as recipients we don't step back from saying anything. The reason is the fact that we felt that the work of art has a meaning and is full of meanings. Thus, we don't suffice with seeing a beautiful work of art as something addressing to our liking or just as a formal conformity but we seek a meaning in the work of art (Altuğ, 2011:89).

Artist is a philosopher too, just like a philosopher of philosophy. What is important here is a settlement with being and an interpretation of it. One makes an interpretation on a canvas or with melodies while a philosopher does this job with concepts. But reason and sensitivity are against each other and they make human being in harmony (Tunalı, 2011:25).

Answers should be sought for how philosophy education should be in art education, how different approaches can be brought to the use of the philosophy language in art education and how philosophy can be used in art education. It may particularly be useful to make examples of the history of philosophy from the first age, middle age, near age and modern age, the ideas of the ancient Greek philosophers on fine arts and evaluate them with the present interpretation of art in the philosophy lessons. The views of Socrates, Plato and Aristotle's, septic Hume are important in this manner. At the same time, it is also important to explain the activity of human being who lives, produces and is always curious, its interest in the field of art and the aesthetic and artistic problems of art through human philosophy, culture and knowledge philosophy, ontology philosophy, education philosophy. It is impossible to distinguish in the art philosophy lesson to distinguish philosophers, their teachings, from the political, social and cultural events of the historical period they live in. In the process of introducing the socio-cultural and political events of the period, the contribution of the works that can express the social functions of art and artist is important.

Making use of the general approaches of philosophy like realism, rationalism, analytical philosophy and ethical categories like virtuousness, goodness, tolerance etc in the art philosophy lessons will contribute for the students to reach analysis in the context of philosophy-art philosophy. It is necessary with a view that it may have a permanent effect in the art and world views of the students, their behaviour and memories.

It is believed that using philosophy of religion, philosophy of politics, philosophy of science and knowledge will contribute to the quality performance of the art philosophy lesson. For instance, Schiller makes a similarity between art and play and underlines the fact that art is demanded for final freedom and happiness just like the fact the play is not something sought for its own. Accordingly, art, just like play takes human being away from daily trouble and saves him from problems, fear and doubts. Human forgets himself and exists within an absolute problem. According to Hegel, art never reflects the complete truth and only gives the form of truth that it may appear in what is concrete and sensory. Complete representation of idea and developing towards ideal can only be possible with the historic, cultural and periodical progress of art. Hegel finds the truth of art in philosophy which is the only true expression of idea. At just this point, the functionality of art is remarkable.

The objective of the Guitar Player painting of Eduard Manet is to present woman as a factor or action (Figure 1). Traditionally, women used to be illustrated in paintings as a visual object of pleasure and charming figures. In the Guitar Player, Manet overturned the traditional approach and focused on the guitar playing task instead of posing to prevent view of desire where the model's back faces the viewers. Facing back positioning of the figure to the viewer is a formal choice. This serves the function of fulfilling the objective of painting. A work of art is created to fulfil certain goals and/or mentioning a point. Artistic form of a work consists of the total choices allowing the realization of its meaning and objectives (Carrol, 2012:2013).

Sartre, an intellectual and philosopher as well as carrier and implementer of the existentialist philosophy in both philosophical and political area, focuses in all of his works on the question of existence. His major work is called *Being and Nothingness*. Being in his predecessors reveals itself in our spiritual status not in our minds. Sartre's path to being is similar. In the novel *Nausea*, Antoine Roquentine, the hero of the novel, is having fun by skimming pebbles at the shore. He bends down to take another stone and looks at the stone; one face is dry but the other face is wed, muddy and sticky. Suddenly he feels nausea and throws the stone. Nausea is not just an objective feeling. The world is disorderly, dirty and something opposed. "Something is wrong with the world". The world is not set in conformity with human being, but it is cruel, brutal, hostile and nonsense. Human beings live in stickiness. But nausea saves us from this stickiness. Only the

abhorrence from this stickiness takes us to existence. Nausea is not just something taking us to existence but also a guide in all philosophy of Sartre (Akarsu, 1994: 226-227).

Picasso's *Guernica*, just like Sartre's *Nausea*, is a metaphorically important work also in explaining artistic creation. Famous Spanish artist Picasso's *Guernica* is a wall painting. The work was created in 1937. In Spain, military forces supporting General Franco started a bloody civil war to take over the power. When Picasso designed the wall painting he was ordered, the town Guernica was bombed by the military forces supporting Franco. Picasso was informed about and affected by the massacre and decided the subject of the wall painting he would paint. He prepared several sketches before starting the painting. All prepared sketches are metaphorically important. In the composition, there is an electrical lamp emitting light and a gas lamp manually grasped with determination. This naked bulb describes the interrogation and torture rooms at war. Beneath the electrical lamp, there is horse head where its body is designed with newspaper leaves. At the bottom, there is a hero lying on the ground with the broken sword in his hand while he is already dead. In the top left section, there is a bull head with pride and rebellious look and just beneath the bull head, there is a poor innocent woman dying with her baby in her lap. All areas of the painting consist of metaphoric forms (Picture 2).

Another affective example is Munch's *Scream* (Picture 3). The painting describes a skeleton looking figure on the breakwater and empty water behind it described with mobile and curving lines, and mountains in the distance. The figure (its gender is not known) holds two cheeks with both hands and a huge scream rises in the gap around its hugely opened mouth. What is the message of this scream? *Scream* may be the expression of a metaphysical suffering caused by the breaking from the natural world, the expression of the social torture experienced as being taken away from other people, event it may be the expression of the madness in the mind of a crazy man removed from its own body. Whichever phrase we choose, this view is an wordless expression of the extreme feelings (Picture 3).

The concepts and categories in art are also expressed in art. Art makes the world emotionally accessible by giving priority to human qualities in a extremely open way. Metaphorically, art makes world humane for us. A musical concert represents optimism and magnificence of a painting or a dance touches to our feelings just like most of our speeches are on human qualities pinpointed by art. A work of art is created to fulfil certain objectives and to mention a point. Each symbol is created as a result of the life experience of the artist in the perceptual, emotional and intellectual dimension of the artist. In this point, art philosophy lessons use many philosophers and doctrines. Taking advantage of the works of art and art objects which are visual masterpieces and helping students in their artistic analysis allow students to express their feelings and ensure that the art philosophy has a position of discovery and curiosity rather than being boring.



Picture 1: The Guitar Player



Picture 2: Guernica



Picture 3: Scream

CONCLUSION

Art is another discipline where philosophy is in interaction. Art philosophy, just like philosophy itself, questions and interprets the problematic on human, nature and universe through its unique method. However, similarity is important not for reducing these two events to each other but for indicating that these are the most beautiful examples of unique and objective creation different from the other intellectual areas. The creation process in art which has too much objectivity and uniqueness is based on direct feelings and imagination power of the artist contrary to philosophy. On the other hand, the nature of the philosophy activity aims mainly at taking a critical stand against being and questioning the being in the light of reason. But it is not correct to evaluate art limited to just what is beautiful. It is an activity which aims to join in the truth, reveal the truth and create an effort in man for curiosity, understanding and interpretation of truth, just as much as philosophy. In other words, the most important achievement of art may be the fact that it opens a door to feelings and intuition and that it allows an area of entity to it. The approach of different disciplines was engaged in a point where the other one was insufficient and tried to interpret and approach to the work of art. This way, a work of art can be interpreted with “multiple reading”. All theories present to us various viewpoints regarding what we care for. Aesthetic pleasure, liking, attitude and judgement concepts which are attempted to bring in the students within the scope of the art philosophy can be taught more comprehensively under the light of philosophy. For this purpose, philosophy can be used for brining in intellectual and interpretational skills as well as ensuring visual literacy in art education. Supreme liking, culture of philosophy-art, aesthetic comprehension should be gained not only by few number of individuals but also by the society as a whole through constant dialectic and interaction. Society and art can rise on individuals. The individual enlightened by art also speaks out and appears with the language of art. It is known that each individual has its own way of perceiving, interpreting and liking life styles. What is important here is to increase quality by lifting them to the top level and to raise individuals who question instead of accepting all the time, who are curious, who scrutinize and who know its being and essence.

REFERENCES

- ALTUĞ, Taylan (2011). “Sanatın Dili, Doğanın Dili” Felsefe Açısından Kültür, ,Sanat ve Dil. Mimar Sinan Üni. Yayınları. İstanbul.
- AKARSU, Bedia (1994). “ Çağdaş Felsefe. Kant’tan Günümüze Felsefe Akımları. İnkılap Kitabevi. İstanbul.
- AYN Rand(1982). *The Romantic Manifesto*, New American Library, New York,
- CARROLL, Noel Çev. TİRKEŞ, K. Güliz. (2012). “Sanat Felsefesi” Çağdaş Bir Giriş. ”. Ütopya Sanat Dizisi. Ankara.
- CEVİZCİ, Ahmet (2012). “Felsefenin Kısa Tarihi” Referans Kitapları Say Yayınları. 1. Baskı. İstanbul.
- CEVİZCİ, Ahmet (2012). “ Felsefeye Giriş” Referans Kitapları Say Yayınları. 1. Baskı. İstanbul
- KÜYEL, M. T. (1976). *Türkiye’de Cumhuriyet Döneminde Felsefe Eylemi*. Ankara.
- SOYKAN,Ömer Naci (2011). “Sanatın Dili, Doğanın Dili” Felsefe Açısından Kültür, ,Sanat ve Dil. Mimar Sinan Üni. Yayınları. İstanbul.
- SÖZER, Önay (2009). “ Felsefenin ABC’si. Say Yayınları. İstanbul.
- TUNALI, İsmail (2011). “Sanatın Dili, Doğanın Dili” Felsefe Açısından Kültür, ,Sanat ve Dil. Mimar Sinan Üni. Yayınları. İstanbul.
- YILMAZ, Mehmet Çev.ÖZÜAYDIN, Nazım (2004). “Sanatın Felsefesi Felsefenin Sanatı”. Ütopya Sanat Dizisi. Ankara.