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CONCEPT OF MIMESIS IN THEODOR W. ADORNO'S AND MAX HORKHEIMER'S AESTHETIC THEORY

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Summary

Mimesis, in Theodor W. Adorno’s and respectively, Max Horkheimer’s philosophy emerges as a certain phenomenon that is presupposed by the rapid industrialization of culture. What Adorno provides is an analysis of mimesis in a way that it discloses itself in different manner rather than being a theory or a concept. The lack of such an aspect enables to critically question Adorno’s theory as being simply negative dialectics. By comparing his theory to Walter Benjamin, Jurgen Habermas, Martin Heidegger, Christopher Prendergast and many others that provide a respectable accounts with Adorno’s theory, the goal is to define what mimesis is for Adorno and provide an essential positive upcoming with relation to modernity. Critically questioning and disclosing the shortcomings of Adorno’s theory is an effort to disperse certain peculiarities between myth and enlightenment seeking to achieve their mutual reconciliation towards positive mimetic modernity. The question of aesthetics can be seen held through the socio-political concept of „mass culture“, which from the beginning is directed towards subject/object distinction which resurfaces in order to establish the individual in the face of culture industry.
Santrauka

**Introduction**

This thesis focuses on the theory of mimesis provided in the philosophy of Theodor W. Adorno. Along with his colleague Max Horkheimer, in their writings on what they call „culture industry“ and „the dialectics of enlightenment“ Adorno provides a certain socio-political and aesthetical inquiry about mimesis as a concept and practice. The aspect of socio-politics needs to be underlined in order to maintain a perspective with which mimesis is seen as crucial for Adorno and Horkheimer. By preserving a relation with traditional art mimesis becomes a phenomenon that suggests an establishment of the culture industry. The relation between mimesis and modernity results in a fascinating discoveries within the socio-political sphere: not only highlighting certain totalitarian implications but also developing a concept of mass culture. As often debated as the term „mass culture“ may be, this thesis will preserve it in order to look critically not only at aesthetic theory but at its terminology as well.

The context and motivation for rethinking the concept of mimesis belongs to the relation(s) between art and the culture industry. Speaking in abstract terms, globalization proves it to be crucial to question the mimesis as a background for the search for authentic culture. Therefore, mimesis and „mass culture“ become the point of focus in the terms of modern culture’s aims and intentions. The reason and importance in raising the question of mimesis is an effort to gain a critical perspective on the culture industry and at the same time rehabilitate mimesis from its damning role as a perpetuator of culture industry production. The whole problem of mimesis needs to be held in the particular framework of social-political critique. Reflecting on certain developments that can be observed within modernity and contemporary culture the aspect of individuality and its ability to reflect itself is something that is summarized in many theories, while regarding the actual mimetic activity of the subject, the aim of rethinking, and in a way re-establishing mimetic relations is an answer and solution to the alienation and objectivation of the society that mimesis seems to be incompatible with.

The search for the artistic realm in the totality of capitalistic re-producing is an attempt to draw more attention to the basic aspect of human existence. In the face of totalitarian development that becomes inseparable from the culture industry, the naturalistic idealism can be regarded as being the opposite and a way out of the reproductive totality of culture industry. The goal that can be maintained throughout the work is to reinvent or re-
establish mimesis in a modernistic context, which would prove Adorno’s theory relevant and essential in order to preserve the sphere for art and artistic practices worthy of being called art.

In relation to individuality, Adorno follows up with the question of identity which is intrinsically related to fascism, and this emerges as the radical and logical end of the culture industry. The existentialistic view that the problem takes on, discloses the mimetic nature of every activity, which is held in the course of work as an certain immanence that is determined by the totality of various modernistic cultural phenomenons. Thus in the light of Adorno and Horkheimer's theory, mimesis turns out to be essentially more political than aesthetic.

The object of this thesis is the concept of mimesis in Adorno’s work, investigated in particular in its relation to the theory of culture industry and as explicated in Adorno and Horkheimer's writings. Based on a consistent analysis of this object from various angles through the thesis, the aim(s) of this thesis is to uncover the relations between mimesis, reason and individuality - mimesis presupposes both of these two latter concepts artistic activity. By doing so, the paralleling of mimesis and the culture industry is showcased in a way that seeks their reconciliation. This thesis approaches the analysis of the object by analyzing the assumptions of the culture industry, the technological background for reproducibility, the relation of myth and enlightenment. Particular focus is given to the aspect of cinema in order to establish the modernistic conditions of mimetic activity and its link to political implications, that suppose the socio-political aspect of the analysis, towards which the thesis is directed.
1. Concept of mimesis

In order to provide a certain background for any mimetic considerations and implications in the light of Culture industry it is important to focus on a more abstract view of mimesis not only as a concept, but as well as a conduct and phenomenon. In the philosophical considerations, regarding the actual efficiency of mimesis, the concept itself, in terms of culture industry, can be seen to be on the verge of radical re-development. It can be objected that in „Culture industry“ and „Dialectics of enlightenment“ mimesis is observed as inferior opposite to philosophical and scientific rationality. Fredric Jameson in his work on Adorno’s theory reflects on a certain psychoanalytic aspect that rests on a philosophical level itself. „This notion of a mimicry - a strong form of mimesis - at work within the very technical concepts of science and philosophy themselves, a mimetic impulse that embarrasses them and which they seek to deny (in the strong Freudian sense), <...> that repressed mimetic impulse, allowing us once again to grasp some older relationship of the mimicking subject to its other or nature: a relationship we cannot reinstate or reinvent as such in 'modern times'.” The very reason that mimesis comes as a definitive point of analysis for Adorno may very well lay on the aspect suggested by Jameson. For Adorno never really rejects the mimesis as a concept; within its relation with enlightenment, mimesis is simply surpassed by scientific rationality as a more reliable basis. In general, the culture industry might be Adorno and Horkheimer’s effort to revitalize the mimesis to a modernistic measures - even if to a no better success. Since neither provide the actual theory of mimesis in their work, mimesis is left to speculative judgment. On the most essential perspective mimesis is of reflective nature, more so, that it becomes a matter of communication. Robert Hullot-Kentor simply adresses this aspect as the matter of self-reflection. „Mimesis is the affinity of subject and object as it is felt in one’s knees on seeing someone else stumble on theirs.” From a different standpoint, the mimetic ability to reflect from different perspectives is itself a premise of rationality. Lambert Zuidervaart states that for Adorno, mimesis is a rather artistic activity, the improved mimicry that enables to perceive certain objects without really objectifying them. „In its simplest meaning, "mimesis" refers to the attempt to make oneself like something else." Mimicry becomes mimesis when the subject’s imitation of the object occurs in a conscious and intentional way, leading to a "doubling" of nature. Adorno sees mimesis as the original

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1 Jameson, Fredric. Late Marxism. Adorno, or, the persistence of the dialectic. Verso. London/New York.2007.

2 Jameson, Fredric. Late Marxism. Adorno, or, the persistence of the dialectic.P.65.

form of rationality.\textsuperscript{4} Zuidervaart states, that mimesis, as an act is conscious and therefore rational which implies that reconciliation between mimesis and reason is not entirely irrelevant or inadequate. The process of objectivation, in this instance, focuses more on the actual recognition of the other.

1.1 Change of mimetic paradigm

In accordance with Adorno’s shift towards naturalism and idealism, it comes clear, that mimesis, in modernistic terms, comes as a newly established notion or concept. Though, as what can be understood as modernity itself may very well prove Adorno’s theory to be false. Christopher Prendergast presents mimesis as an pre-existing order, that modernity might prove to be incommensurable with. „Mimesis is an order, in the dual sense of a set of arrangements and a set of commands. On one interpretation, the mimetic ‘command’ consists, through a stress on the values of imitation and repetition, in an imperative to submit the set of symbolic arrangements (the mimetic ‘plot’), as if the latter corresponded to the natural order of things.\textsuperscript{5}“ From such mimetic scheme, myth as a medium of order is almost necessarily ambiguous. From the first perspective, it is unarguably a form of reason; it is important to highlight on religious aspect of mimesis that is prevalent in Adorno’s theory as well, therefore myth serves as an unquestioned order. Though, from the another standpoint, mimesis comes as relatively an opposite to modernistic rationality, and in which case it is the extreme end of irrationality. The authoritarian aspect of mimesis as myth can be seen making even more radical shift in the terms of enlightenment. Such an account supposes the inter-relation between different reasons and everlasting continuation, whereas Adorno alludes to totalitarian nature of enlightenment. „The authoritarian gesture of mimesis is to imprison us in a world which, by virtue of its familiarity, is closed to analysis and criticism <...> Mimesis deals in familiarities (‘recognitions’), but the recognitions it supplies are often misrecognitions<...>\textsuperscript{6}“. Prendergast refers to the irrationality that the mimesis in full-potential unravels. Such perspective in one way or another presumes that mimesis becomes problematical within the context of modernity. Deborah Cook highlights the naturalistic stance that prevails in every mimetic activity and that primordially determined its primitive

\textsuperscript{6}P.6.
objectivity and imagery. “<...>it was the primal fear of nature that first spawned identity-thinking. In fear, the subject slowly differentiated itself from objects while attempting simultaneously to assimilate them by equating them with its concepts.”\(^7\) This may serve as a certain framework for further ongoing analysis of mimesis. The change of the paradigm may be supposed as altering of mimesis itself. Nature-historical and cultural development inevitably results in some, rather, drastical changes in concepts, which presume the need for re-establishment of certain paradigms concerning the concept.

2 The concept of Culture industry

In a chapter „Schema of mass culture“ of his book *The Culture Industry* Adorno provides a certain background for analysis of mass culture in terms of aesthetic approach to it. The main problem that can be focused on here is the dissociateness of aesthetics as a philosophical concept, which more and more comes to the terms of being an asset of mass-producing. Robert W. Witkin in his work on Adorno’s theory\(^8\) takes a more complicated look towards the systematic aspect of mass culture. „For Adorno, however, this popularity becomes part of the object of criticism. He challenges the notion that the elements of popular culture are harmless. He insists on treating popular culture as a deadly serious business, as something that is ultimately toxic in its effects on the social process.”\(^9\) At this point, beforehand, the whole spectre of the problem reveals itself in a way of mechanistic expression, to which the problem of „supply and demand“ leads to. At first stance, it is important to rule out the essential field of inquiry that serves as a starting point to further analysis. To this, Adorno states, that it becomes a matter of relation between reality and images. Needless to say, the inquiry has to start by establishing the core relation between aesthetics and subjective perception of art in general. So to speak, it can be said that from one point or another aesthetics seems to lose its depth when it comes to providing a certain content within the work. „On all sides the borderline between culture and empirical reality becomes more and more indistinct.“\(^10\) It can be concluded, beforehand, that mass culture not only prevailing in the public sphere, but also takes the problem of mass-production to another level, that is, aesthetics, in a way, faces a dilemma of preserving the actual art within its matter. It is fair to say that, for certain amount, the problem of aesthetics and culture industry

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\(^9\)P.1.

derives itself from clash between idealism and its deep contrast within the actual capitalistic archetypes that inevitably lead to a decline of such system. Yet the decline itself can be seen to be a gradual and intrinsic process, keeping in mind the mechanistic nature of capitalistic system. „Those persistent themes of Adorno’s critique of modern culture – the commodification, fetishization and standardization of its products, together with the authoritarian submissiveness, irrationality, conformity, ego-weakness and dependency behaviour of its recipients – are developed by him in ways that forge tacit links among diverse theoretical sources, making, for example, the theory of ‘commodity fetishism’ from a Marxist point of view continuous with ideas about authoritarianism in a Freudian context.“

Yet, despite all the adversities, the art lives on as only way in preserving self-efficiency of modern individual, and even more so, as his intellectual-self. Such perspective can be taken for one of the main problems considering the fact that the actual decline of individual character in capitalistic society comes from the modern perception and practice of mimesis. From one perspective, art may seem victimized by the capitalistic mechanism of reproduction, though on the other hand, when it becomes directly associated with the concept of mimesis, it sheds a different light on the art and artistry in general. In his work „The Work of Art in the Age of Its Technological Reproducibility“, Walter Benjamin, without distinguishing the means of reproduction, also underlines the authentic sphere of the artwork, which is based around the mimesis. „The beautiful is neither the veil nor the veiled object but rather the object in its veil”; this is the quintessence of Goethe's view of art, and that of antiquity. The decline of this view makes it doubly urgent that we look back at its origin. This lies in mimesis as the primal phenomenon of all artistic activity.“

At this point taking both Adorno’s and Benjamin’s views on the actual profile of the capitalistic society, it becomes clear that mimesis as a concept undergoes a change in its matter, which implies its, rather, different use and function. As hard as capitalism may seem to run away from the reality by producing certain image-structured consciousness of the consumers, it still inevitably reflects the actual prospects of reality. So, from such a standpoint it is important to take a certain directions which would provide a particular scope of the problem of culture industry and its origins.

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2.1 Mass culture or culture industry?

In analysis of Adorno and Horkheimer's aesthetic and mimetic theory certain distinction comes prevalent within the use of the term „mass culture“ itself. Doug Kellner in his article\(^\text{13}\) on Adorno’s aesthetic theory highlights an essential definition of the terminology that Adorno and Horkheimer are apt to use. „Adorno and Horkheimer adopted the term “culture industry,” as opposed to concepts like “popular culture” or “mass culture,” because they wanted to resist notions that products of the culture industry emanated from the masses or from the people.\(^\text{17}\) For they saw the culture industry as being administered culture, imposed from above, as instruments of indoctrination and social control.”\(^\text{14}\) Such presentation presupposes the sphere of problematic within Adorno’s theory. From this it is possible to foresee that the masses are seen as an outcome of the industrial production, and thus serves as a main point in analysis of culture industry. Thomas Andrae adds to this, that the specificity of the terminology lies on the critical approach to the aspect of modernity. „Horkheimer and Adorno explicitly coined the term "culture industry" to dispel the illusion that mass culture was in any sense produced by the masses. The term "popular culture" was, in fact, ideological they claimed, mass culture imposed from above rather than derived from the people."\(^\text{15}\) In this respect, the term „masses“ comes troubling, since for Adorno and Horkheimer, society's turn into masses becomes even more complicated. It can be regarded to as a change in the paradigm of the dialectics that was maintained and now became essentially negative for Adorno. The negation of subjectivity in culture industry supposes that masses themselves are meant to be understood as a product of culture industry. By the principle of supply and demand, the masses, at the same time, address both of the parties. Peter Hohendahl, considering Adorno’s theory makes the following remarks. „Notably the culture industry chapter with its emphasis on the dangers of mass culture for the concept of individual freedom and subjective reflexivity contains the material for such a reading."\(^\text{16}\) The problem of individuality of subject supposes the inadequacy of the term „mass culture“ in the way that the lack of ability to self-reflection is what presupposes the masses themselves. Though, at the same time the problem that emerges out of the term, beforehand, presupposes Adorno’s


\(^{14}\)Kellner, Doug. T.W. Adorno and the dialectics of mass culture.


certain aesthetic insufficiency. As for Adorno, mass culture understood as mass art is something to be left outside of the aesthetic realm. This forms a major contradiction later on in relation with Walter Benjamin’s aesthetic theory. „Adorno’s inability to include mass culture in his aesthetic theory, his latent hostility to any aesthetic product that primarily serves a communicative function, is grounded in the metaphysical aspect of his theory.“

It can be concluded from the beginning that Adorno’s theory establishes a certain framework of the culture industry in which mimesis itself, as an presumption of art, is left outside of the limits of cultural industry. „Mass culture was so determined by such effects that it lacked a coherent aesthetic structure; the formula had displaced the work. Consequently it was best analyzed in psycho-social rather than aesthetic terms.“ Though, it is important to underline the importance of the term „mass culture“. From the beginning, the analysis of Adorno’s theory must be developed on both aesthetic and socio-psychological levels, therefore mass culture needs to be maintained throughout the work as essential critical term that highlights its aesthetic capability, which by Adorno and Horkheimer is rendered irrelevant. To make a certain statement regarding political aspect of culture industry it is important to note that the theory that Adorno and Horkheimer provide is not necessarily adequate when it comes to establishing certain inter-relations that can be observed. Philip Goldstein, therefore, makes an important note considering the theory of culture industry. „<...>Kellner denies that all science and reason entail domination; as he puts it, the views of Horkheimer and Adorno are too "undifferentiated". Moreover, he complains that Adorno and Horkheimer construe the "culture industry" as administered, imposed forms of indoctrination and control and neglect the oppositional moments of popular culture. Kellner argues that a "more multidimensional approach to mass culture" would allow "contradictory moments of desire and its displacement, articulation of hopes and their repression"." So, there is important aspect that from the point on discloses some of the shortages on behalf of Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory. In this case, the term „mass culture“ itself remains critical not in the terms of its adornian context but rather as an approach to the problem of culture industry from the perspective that is not entirely developed or provided.

17P.14.
18Andrae, Thomas. Adorno on film and mass culture. The culture industry reconsidered.
3 Technological root of the Culture industry

It can be followed with the question of technology and what relation it has with the art and aesthetics. At this point, Martin Heidegger's theory needs to be briefly taken into account since it provides an explication of what is meant by technological reproducibility and how it differs from traditional artistry or craft making. To be exact, what art essentially is, can be generalized within the terms of traditional art making. Timothy Clark in his work on Heidegger's aesthetic theory showcases the radical shift, first of all, in language that later on supposes the change of paradigm concerning the use of techne. „These are words in which decisive deep-historical (aeschichtlich) shifts show up, where little noticed but colossal alterations in the human world are at work in language. The Greek word techne is a good example: it once named the knowledge implicit in the making of something, both in art and technology. Later these become distinct, even antagonistic.“ At first instance the clash between techne and technology in a modern sense, seem to be a point of focus in such further analysis. In accordance with techne, poesis and aletheia it can be understood as a cornerstone for any art to originate from. „The tremor lives off the excess power which technology as a whole, along with the capital that stands behind it, exercises over every individual thing. This is what transcendence is in mass culture. The poetic mystery of the product, in which it is more than itself, consists in the fact that it participates in the infinite nature of production and the reverential awe inspired by objectivity fits in smoothly with the schema of advertising.“ It is obvious, that with respect to Adorno’s theory on mass producing, the technology and poetry seem to be reoriented in a conformist fashion. Such deemphasizing results in the superficiality of art become essentially troubling when it comes to the understanding of art in philosophical context. Though, there is a great deal of political inclination considering the needs for, first of all, consumerist industry to prevail. To go deeper with such investigation, it is important to underline main aspects in the distinction between reality and image that presupposes the deconstruction of aesthetics in general. „With the liquidation of its opposition to empirical reality art assumes a parasitic character. Inasmuch as it now appears itself as reality, which is supposed to stand in for the reality out there, it tends to relate back to culture as its own object. “ Even though the mass culture produces its own works of art, the problem of content becomes the essence of distinction

21P.77.
23P.65.
between the traditional work of art and the consumerable art. What Adorno basically refers to, is the concept of *hyle* and *morphe*, understood as essential realm in which the work of art comes to being. What mass culture negates here, is the actual form of the artwork. As it can be seen in Martin Heidegger's theory of aesthetics, the *morphe* comes as an actual content of the thing. Whereas mass industry relies on the matter, that claimingly, satisfies the actual productive needs, it is the form that draws its relevancy within the aesthetic theory. In addition to this, Benjamin also introduces two kinds of technology – first and second. Technology, as a means of production, in relation with mimesis, originates itself from nature. Before turning to Benjamin in general it is important to comment on the remarks that Stephen Halliwell makes. In his work²⁴ he attempts to distinguish the aspects of making in terms of techne and mimesis. „<...>where the definition of the sophist is set out in its fullest form through a whole series of divisions of the genus techne¯ (skill, art, and technique), mimesis is defined as “a sort of productive activity [poie¯sis], but the production of simulacra [eido¯la] not of things themselves”.”²⁵ So to speak, every kind of production has in itself a mimetic intention, that is, the intention of reproducing. Though, according to Halliwell, in a more contextual terms, reproduction by mimetic means supposes an intrinsically different outcome. It therefore supposes certain possible categorization of production that can be questioned in the terms of culture industry. The distinctions that Halliwell makes are essential since they provide different perspectives on artistry and its transition to reproduction.

### 3.1 Benjamin’s views on technology

What Benjamin refers to, can be basically understood as a systematic reverse or a change in the function of the art. By saying this, it is important to reflect on the theory of metaphysics within the aesthetics. Refering back to the first and second technology, as mentioned earlier, the question of the artwork needs to held in terms of imanence and transcendence. „These two processes lead to a massive upheaval in the domain of objects handed down from the past - a shattering of tradition which is the reverse side of the present crisis and renewal of humanity. Both processes are intimately related to the mass movements

²⁵ Adorno, Theodor. The Culture Industry. Selected essays on mass culture.P.64.
of our day."26 According to such statement, the functioning of the artwork became a cyclic exploitation in means of effort to preserve a certain values, which may seem desperate, considering the foundations of cultural industry being rather based on consumerist approach. Particularly, what Benjamin refers to as „aura“ can be understood as a culture and authenticity preserving transcendence, which art originally is. By forwarding the supposed demand for values or attractions the culture industry, as it is dubbed by Adorno and Horkheimer, the pop-culture deeply endows to the resurrection of traditional art. Benjamin refers to that as to a certain overcoming of values; obviously, at this point, the historicism takes on a different turn in the perception of the art, since the culture industry itself dictates the different goals and morals, which for now are the repeated overcoming of everything that can be approached. Ansgar Hillach in his article27 on Benjamin’s political aesthetics maintains a perspective of historicity that, allegedly, results in, rather radical shifts in perception of technology. „(...) the advanced technology used in the service of imperialistic expansion revealed itself in an unexpected way: instead of confirming the idealistic belief in the domination of nature by supporting military virtues, it exposed the weakness of all remaining idealistic ideologies, of all subjective efforts to make sense of events – this despite the belief that decadence had been overcome in and through the war.“28 Such claim, needlessly, supposes a certain theory of cultural evolutionism that implies a need for change and reproduction. So, such an overcoming can be seen as a intention towards a reproducing. „It rests on two circumstances, both linked to the increasing emergence of the masses and the growing intensity of their movements. Namely: the desire of the present-day masses to "get closer" to things, and their equally passionate concern for overcoming each thing's uniqueness [Oberwindung des Einmaligen jeder Gegebenheit] by assimilating it as a reproduction.“29 Such an, rather, agressive consumerist approach towards certain values or objects lies on the very superficial level of perception and even more so, the whole culture industry is based by such principle. From different perspective this process of overcoming is nothing other than the matter of synthesis between reality and images, though, as it can be seen it becomes a annihilation of difference between the two. By overcoming certain content

or concept the masses adapt to it as to a reality. It can be said that traditional art served as a
sublimation of values and that way carried within itself a realm of historicity. In other terms,
what is at stake here is a certain dilemma between empirical and rational approach. In terms
of culture industry, the rationalism becomes omnipotent when it comes to perceiving the
reality and such abstractness as art and individuality. Yet it is possible to foresee that such
process of overcoming, reproducing and eventually overproducing renders the inevitable and
total exploitation of any value, but most importantly, it does not suppose any kind of
continuity, or in the similar case, historicity. „But now the mirror image [Bi/d] has become
detachable from the person mirrored, and is transportable. And where is it transported? To a
site in front of the masses. Naturally, the screen actor never for a moment ceases to be aware
of this. While he stands before the apparatus, he knows that in the end he is confronting the
masses. It is they who will control him.“30 When speaking about the film-making, Benjamin
takes a particular example of cinema as an example of originally reproductive art. But in this
instance, what is of the most importance is the approach to it; culture industry dictates the
tendencies of perception and in such way the art becomes mass-dependent. More importantly,
the particular example of cinema showcases the certain use of mimesis in the art making. The
technology becomes the mediator between artist and his self reflection. At this point there can
be two instances of mimesis; the artist himself becomes the victim of mimicry, though, at the
same time, according to tendencies brought on by popular demand, it is almost as if the artist
becomes dependent from the audience. Witkin formulates the problem within the sphere of
individual organisation, which in this case is projected towards the masses. „The desire of the
individual registers as the power of the object over him, his dependency upon it.“31 Though it
may seem abstract to the problem of mimesis and popular culture in general, the totality of
overcoming and singularization of such society leads to a certain demands. As it was
mentioned before, capitalistic mechanism seems to move cyclically, and even with the
reproductive means, the masses may seem to start to desire certain values that have been
lacking. In Benjamin’s case, the film star becomes the symbolic virtue and value of
individuality, something that mass culture negates from the start.

30 P.33.
3.2 Establishment of technology concerning culture industry and masses

Though, the same way as Adorno, Benjamin speaks of aura, his theory, especially in case of film-making preserves a different perspective on subjectivity. On the circumstances of first technology, every craftwork can be assumed as a artwork. To begin with, what Benjamin opposes to the most and what can be seen as greatest threat, lies on the level of human individuality, much like in Adorno later on, the actual relation of individual and society is held at question. „Theses defining the developmental tendencies of art can therefore contribute to the political struggle in ways that it would be a mistake to underestimate. They neutralize a number of traditional concepts—such as creativity and genius, eternal value and mystery—which, used in an uncontrolled way <...>“.

The same way that will be seen later on in Heidegger’s theory of art, for Benjamin, considering the two theories of technology, the main problem arises within the artistic and spiritual relation between the artwork and the artist. Yet it is inevitable, that through the process of reproducing, the art, somewhat, becomes exploited at the most essential level. The art, understood as an element of culture has in itself, paradoxically, a moment that lives on through the historicity of culture. „The here and now of the original underlies the concept of its authenticity, and on the latter in turn is founded the idea of a tradition which has passed object down as the same, identical thing to the present day.“

From this perspective, the culture already presupposes its inconsistency within the needs of capitalistic society. Along with this problem, the incompatibility of traditional techne and technology resurfaces in the manner that, what foremost can be seen as a different perspective on traditional values and means of expression of the individuality, becomes within capitalism the exact opposite. From such perspective the aesthetics and art becomes more troubling. Same way as in Adorno, for Benjamin, the question of individuality and subject/object distinction supposes the question of identity, which can be aforementioned; the question that, nevertheless, can be deduced from the universal reproductive capabilities of culture industry. In correspondence between Adorno and Benjamin there is a major point to highlight, by which Adorno figuratively underlines the importance of inevitable prevailance of subjectivity. According to such view, masses themselves are, rather, artificial conduct which can in no way replace the true objectivity. „as Horkheimer puts it, a mass ego exists only in earthquakes and catastrophes, while otherwise

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33 P.21.
objective surplus value prevails precisely through individual subjects and against them. The notion of collective consciousness was invented only to divert attention from true objectivity and its correlate, alienated subjectivity. It is up to us to polarize and dissolve this 'consciousness' dialectically between society and singularities, and not to galvanize it as an imagistic correlate of the commodity character. It should be a clear and sufficient warning that a dreaming collective no differences remain between classes."34 It is important to underline that this perspective of individuality and objectivity becomes almost missing in Adorno's further theory, yet it is prevalent in Benjamin's theory. It remains unclear whether this view is directly related to the naturalistic position considering any social activity or historical, yet for such an account David Roberts supposes that Benjamin is going for certain correlation between the two. „Benjamin conversely grasps nature as history: ' "History" is writ across the countenance of nature in the sign language of transience'. The sign language of transience, in which nature and history converge, is the language of allegory. Natural history signifies the interweaving of natural and historical being in the second nature of the social, whose 'death's head' is the emblem of allegory. <...> Natural or original history overcomes the idealist division of the world, in which nature is understood as self-alienated spirit (Hegel), by means of a materialist concept of spirit as self-alienated nature."35 This may very well be a cornerstone for Benjamin’s theory in response to Adorno’s culture industry. It can be said that Benjamin seeks to find a certain reconciliation between the two opposites; in such way, Adorno's theory might seem inferior, since it does not support itself with the social and political demands. „Between the mass art of mass society and the mythical art of the community, between historical goal and historical origin, Adorno's modernism appears as that of an art created for a non-existent community, as art in exile, the exile of religious atheism, condemned in Lukacs' words to laying bare through its form the absence of meaning."36 Instead of making any conclusions beforehand, it important to underline some of the aspects that showcase Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory’s framework’s that can account for the further analysis. At this point it is essential to move towards establishing particular notions and context within which the theory of culture industry is set out.


36 P. 31.
4 Adorno's theory of mimesis

Before taking on the mimesis itself a certain background must be provided, according to which the question of culture industry could be raised. As it can be observed, mimesis arises as a natural reflective reaction that can regarded to as conscious or unconscious. To a certain amount mimesis can be seen as a mean of existence and individual development within particular society or plurality. Though, it is important to underline that the individuality remains as a problematic aspect for such investigation. The look towards the Adorno and Horkheimer’s mimetic theory may be seen as twofold. Tom Huhn in his article on Adorno and his mimesis theory provides a consistent epitome on what exactly Adorno’s mimesis revolves around. „Mimesis shares with aesthetic judgment a fluidity of identity between the singular and the universal as well as a confusion and constitutive mistakenness regarding subject and object. And in Adorno and Horkheimer's Dialectic of Enlightenment it is precisely the fluidity of identity that allows mimesis to be characterized on analogy with the criminal.“ Such is the main distinction in the problem of mimesis, from which Adorno and Horkheimmer develop the whole „mass culture“ phenomenon. As it is obvious, the mentioned confusion can be deduced from the aspect, that whenever there is a individual choice of mimicking a certain behaviour or even so, lifestyle, it may very well lead to de-subjectivisation or to say so, objectivation of the self, or more abstractly, the individual. Therefore mimesis, in such manner, showcases itself as a rather disguising itself. Even though, later on, mimesis comes into a relation or even more so, collision with the Enlightenment as an improvement of human reason, the main aspect of mimesis at work even in enlightenment, in Adorno’s work remains unhighlighted, and thus renders his theory at some point superficial. What Ernesto Verdeja in his article on Adorno asserts, is that the mimesis is inevitable since it is a fundamental of human culture and psychophysiology. „For Adorno and Horkheimer, however, Enlightenment contains within it the seeds of domination. Humanity’s control of nature, expanded and perfected through scientific methods, comes to dominate the relations between people and, eventually, the inner nature of individuals.<...> In their reading, Enlightenment is not so much the supersession of mythical ways of understanding the world and ourselves, as it is a way of further expanding the horizon of domination. Myth and Enlightenment are not opposites but rather inextricably linked,
reacting to the same set of problems with essentially the same types of responses.\textsuperscript{40} It is important to maintain such perspective, since it provides a broader view in the entire analysis of culture industry. Now, what becomes obvious from the earlier statement, is that the enlightenment, inevitably, must be seen as a certain development of mimesis and its relation, fundamentally, cannot be negated. Going further towards the broader explication of Adorno and Horkheimer's it is important to establish the main peculiarities considering their theory.

4.1 Myth as a primary point of reason

In Verdeja's article, Adorno's development of mimesis gains a, conditionally, negative aspect, which can regarded as a matter of criticism towards his theory. According to Adorno, mimesis, or myth, can be understood as a dialectics from the beginning; since myth stands as a fundamental for any human activity and culture eventually, retrospectively, enlightenment gradually reveals itself as a totality of such negativity. It comes as no astonishment, that Adorno's judgment towards the myth and mimesis may conclude the entire cultural development and history as a negative dialectics. In the midst of this, the subject and object distinction comes as essential for the departure towards a more structuralized theory. „Enlightenment dominates by distancing itself from nature and grounding ‘reality’ in the realm of ideas an classificatory schema. Nevertheless the two are at their core intertwined.<...> The distancing from nature in order to dominate it that is found in Enlightenment rational thought is repeated at the level of subjectivity.”\textsuperscript{41} So, according to Verdeja, for Adorno, the enlightenment from the first point on negates the naturality of individual in the mythical level. It is obvious that myth and enlightenment, same way as subject/object distinction bases itself on the empiricism and rationalism as the main criteria that supposes the inferiority of one or another. What is, rather, overseen is that, as Verdeja mentions, the difference between myth and enlightenment comes more as a processuality rather than complete break from one another. Seen as a certain stage of development, enlightenment reveals it's mimetic nature. „Mimesis is the vehicle of the desire for identity and unity that necessarily brings about their opposite.<...> Products—artifacts—carry the mimetic trace of their own becoming, that is, of failed identity.”\textsuperscript{42} What Huhn asserts here can easily be adapted for the culture industry; at the level of individual, the search for identity within the masses may very well be the case of failed identity. On Adorno’s terms, the enlightenment

\textsuperscript{40}Verdeja, Ernesto. Adorno’s Mimesis and its Limitations for Critical Social Thought. P.496.
\textsuperscript{41}P.497.
\textsuperscript{42}Huhn, Tom. Heidegger, Adorno, and Mimesis.P.4.
that is so persistent towards scientific rationality inevitably fails as a means mimicry. Its search for identity fails when seen as an certain form of mimesis. The way that enlightenment is presented in such theory is none other than distancing from nature, which inevitably results in alienation. Therefore, enlightenment and mimesis must be kept close in order to decently trace their relation.

4.2 Enlightenment and the phenomenon of subject

The phenomenon that highlights itself here is based around the perception of subject. The enlightenment that seeks to establish a rational subject ultimately fails in its totalitarian nature. It might seem that enlightenment, which cannot conceal its mimetic trait, in a progress, distorts the natural aims of mimesis towards a more complex social and political construct. „Finally, instrumental rationality comes to dominate our interactions with one another. Bureaucratic state apparatuses, enjoying little democratic accountability, exert their power through classifying and ordering citizens (now merely subjects) in the most efficient manner possible. Politics disappears and is replaced by efficient and rational techniques of administration, with civil society reduced to an epiphenomenal veneer over the power of state capitalism in all of its forms. “

It is fair to say that reason or enlightenment that seeks to overcome nature eventually overcomes the individual, that is, subject itself. The self negation that Adorno and Horkheimer address in Odysseus myth is direct link to the alienation with the self, that comes first and foremost, with the help of reason. The refuge from dependance from nature results in the ever-increasing dependancy on enlightenment as scientific rationality. What is to say more, is that the claim for rational subject becomes disproved in the instrumentality to which the nature has been reduced. It proves that human individual cannot be fully discerned from its mimetic nature. „It remains to be asked how the principle of identity, in its failure to live up to its own concept, nonetheless succeeds as production and reproduction of human life. Put differently, how is it that mimesis, the vehicle for the principle of identity, brings forth a likeness which both is and is not identical? “

To highlight the point made here, it can be asserted, that main criticism for Adorno and Horkheimer that can be made, and needs to be maintained throughout the analysis is the certain determinism or even more so, inevitability of the enlightened reason, that is its scientific determination of nature which fails to grasp the human subject in all the world of commodities. Such negative

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aspect of this theory renders many possible inefficiencies in the realm subjectivity and its trait to the nature. The main problem that emerges out of it is the question of freedom considering Adorno’s deterministic inevitability. With this problem the aspect of moral sense becomes almost obsolete, since the choice that subject, claimingly, has, becomes refuted in the mechanism of culture industry which will prove the narrow ability for subjective emergence. As a certain fixation to this Verdeja provides an essential point of mimesis. "A critical rationality takes seriously the intuitive nature of morality, or the ways that we orient our behavior through an internal normative sense that directs us toward freedom, but which is not wholly reducible to pre-reflective desires. The key to understanding this is the idea of mimesis. Mimesis refers to the reconciliation of the world and consciousness, of objectivity and subjectivity. A mimetic rationality seeks to find the ways in which the subject’s experience of the world is not merely instrumental but requires the subsumption of object into subject and vice versa." From certain perspective, mimesis resurfaces as a mediation for establishing the worldly relations. Based on such assumption, mimesis becomes for the most part, the reflection of the self in order to be able to acknowledge the self both as subject and object. The way that it is presented, mimesis, even in terms of enlightenment, must be regarded as historical process; the historicity of mimesis lies at the level of certain cultural developments that form the foundation for the enlightenment itself, though seen from such perspective, enlightenment cannot and, most importantly, must not be seen as conclusion to any development. From Adorno and Horkheimer’s view on it, it can be said that enlightenment and eventually culture industry serves as a critical point, at which the perspectives, rather, drastically change. The perspectives are inevitably the subject and object distinction, which gain differing angles that suppose the problem of individual choice and freedom.

5 Peculiarities of film

From a different standpoint, the art discloses itself in a radically different matter than its tradition seeks it to be seen. Though, with such emergence, the question of certain causality within the cultural industry of art remains vivid. What can already be summed up, as far as the art itself goes, the concept of it already carries within itself the aspect of idolatry, something that Benjamin emphasizes on. Despite the obvious transition in the manner of art,

there still can be seen a certain insurmountability when it comes to the actual function. It might seem that the problem of modern conception of art and culture industry in general, lies on the very superficial and yet essential level of the art’s development. Inevitably, the art is supposed to reflect certain aspects within the social sphere, something that can be regarded to as „mirroring“. Benjamin provides an insight on that by recurrringly showcasing the essence of film-making. „<...> through the exclusive emphasis placed on its exhibition value, the work of art becomes a construct [Gebilde] with quite new functions. Among these, the one we are conscious of - the artistic function - may subsequently seen as incidental.”\(^{46}\) It is quite possible to foresee that such drastic turn in the development of art is already presupposed or even determined in the art itself. It cannot be negated that artistic concept of making or producing is relative, so what Benjamin underlines here is the parallel between the bipolarity of art that seems incommensurable at first. „This implies that art is linked to both the second and the first technologies. It should be noted, however, that to describe the goal of the second technology as "mastery over nature" is highly questionable, since this implies viewing the second technology from the standpoint of the first. The first technology really sought to master nature, whereas the second aims rather at an interplay between nature and humanity.”\(^{47}\) The perspective that Benjamin provides here, open a different realm of understanding towards the necessity of modern art. In comparing Benjamin’s and Adorno’s aspects of film, modernity plays essential role in the aesthetic judgment of film-making and its purposes. Laura D’Olimpio presents Adorno and Horkheimer’s judgment on film as basically negative, therefore suggesting a need to look deeper into both theories. „Yet the stronger claim that can be read from Benjamin’s writings that critical detachment is somehow built into mass media because audiences watching films are distracted should be reconsidered. Adorno and Horkheimer warn of the less desirable aspects of cinema such as the passivity of its viewers and its economic motivation. These concerns need to be considered alongside Benjamin’s celebration of cinema. Neither Benjamin or Adorno and Horkheimer are completely correct, yet both hold value and are relevant to reconsidering important ethical aspects of film spectatorship.”\(^{48}\) Taken this into account it can be speculated that by the method of film, Benjamin is seeking to restore or re-establish some artistic and aesthetic values that may very well represent traditional art. In case of Adorno and


\(^{47}\)P.26.

Horkheimer, film becomes a matter of reproducibility and does not really satisfy the needs for authentic art.

5.1 Benjamin on film

From the consumerist point of view, as it is important since it is the problem of culture industry that Adorno and Horkheimer highlights, the so called second technology directs towards the Martin Heidegger's notion of modern technology as exploitation of nature, which will be a point focus further on. But what Benjamin emphasizes here is quite the moral aspect towards perception of art and its function. So far it is possible to say that art, nowadays, becomes handy or to say so, practical rather than cult symbol. Though, such pragmatism may seem contrary, since, as Benjamin already mentions, the art becomes structural in the way it sort of becomes a part of capitalist mechanism of supply and demand. Considering the art's fate in current social and political stance, the resurgence of art through film comes almost as antidote towards certain malicious tendencies that have driven other types of art towards an exploitation. It is important to underline the specific aspect by which, seemingly, Benjamin efforts to draw a connection between traditional artistry and modern perception of art. „If one considers the dangerous tensions which technology and its consequences have engendered in the masses at large-tendencies which at critical stages take on a psychotic character-one also has to recognize that this same technologization [Technisierung] has created the possibility of psychic immunization against such mass psychoses. It does so by means of certain films in which the forced development of sadistic fantasies or masochistic delusions can prevent their natural and dangerous maturation in the masses.“ Yet again in the course of such analysis, the aspect of individuality resurfaces, which allows to take a different look towards the actual function of the art within the masses. Despite the strict political inclinations that are abundant in the mass psychology, the art, it seems, provides a certain refuge from such threat. As Benjamin notes earlier, exposure of art through film makes the art itself more approachable and at the same time familiar within the audiences. By concluding Benjamin's view on aesthetics and modern art, the certain symbolism or associateness calls for wider layout. To some purpose, Benjamin's underlining of the film industry remains as a certain retrospect towards traditional art. First and foremost it goes with the certain amount of the pathos and idolatry that resurfaces within cinema. One

way or the other, films suggest certain values or attractions, though they still preserve space for individual reflection, they more or less are the case of certain sublimation, since it is the matter of visual perception that cinema becomes so apt at. Keeping in mind the ritualistic nature of the traditional art it becomes clearer that the core essence of the art, even with the change of perspectives, remains as a providing an object of adoration and attraction. „Film has freed the physical shock effect—which Dadaism had kept wrapped, as it were, inside the moral shock effect—from this wrapping. “50 Such element of shock becomes a main driving force in turning art into an pure entertainment. Even though, Benjamin showcases that change in perspectives may seem to change the perception of art, whereas it becomes the service of art for the masses, such an insight reveals the full potential of mass culture towards fascism. Georg Seesslen, in his article51 that retrospect on the particular of Leni Riefenstahl and fascist aesthetics points out that such totalitarian aesthetics seem to marginalize the traditional artistic values in order to legitimize itself. „The problem with what we call “fascist aesthetics” has something to do with the fact that the boundaries drawn in bourgeois culture between high culture, religion, folk tradition, and entertainment no longer apply. These meld into an aesthetic system to which there can no longer be any kind of alternative. “52 This view can be taken as a direct complement to Adorno’s culture industry and it’s peculiarities within film-making. It is easy to estimate the prospects of capitalistic reproduction not only psychological, but also on physical level. „Fascism attempts to organize the newly proletarianized masses while leaving intact the property relations which they strive to abolish. It sees its salvation in granting expression to the masses—but on no account granting them rights. “53 In to reference to such statement, it is possible to reflect a certain determinism of mass culture and reproduction mechanism. Inevitably it leads towards a certain breakpoint which is, namely, war. According to Benjamin, even in the such radical reproductive means the cyclicity still preserves itself, since, now it is the war that consumes the consumers of reproduction. In one way or the other the masses themselves are being determined to be reproduced. „Imperialist war is an uprising on the part of technology, which demands repayment in "human material" for the natural material society has denied it. “54 Considering

52P.12.
54P.42.
Benjamin’s theory, this can serve as a point of arrival for a certain determinism and idealism towards which a reproductive culture leads. Needless to say, such self-destructive mechanism implies a strictly political and even more so totalitarian aspect.

## 5.2 Adorno on film

In the chapter „Transparencies on film“ of his work *Culture industry*, Adorno, considering Benjamin’s theory, re-emphasizes on the unicity and essence of film industry as a definitive case of culture industry and development of mass psychology towards certain conceptions concerning the meaning and understanding of art. So far, it is important to define a key element which showcases the determination of art and aesthetic in a wholly new way, in which the art is found functioning. „The late emergence of film makes it difficult to distinguish between technique and technology as clearly as is possible in music."

Film suggests the equation of technique and technology since, as Benjamin observed, the cinema has no original which is then reproduced on a mass scale: the mass product is the thing itself. In both Adorno and Benjamin, the film emerges as a phenomenon of culture industry. Since the reproduction is seen as a threat towards the originality of traditional art, for the film, on the contrary, reproducibility is an entire field of imanence, considering the negation of transcendence in the mass-art. In the way that the film reveals itself, a certain paradox, or at least contradiction arises; whether the film, nevertheless, can be transcendent or is it trapped in its own reflective imanence that leads to no further allegations of artistic value. If speaking of film’s aspect of displayability, keeping in mind Benjamin’s prospects on the visual meaning of the film, it might seem that it, like traditional artwork, provides a full variety of imageries and a type of transcendentality towards the viewer or the masses lumped in a realness of everyday life. The way that the film can be caught in action, masters its ability to provide the audiences with all kinds of virtues and entertainment issues. At this point the aspect of entertainment distincts the film from other types of art. „Cinema has always had the power to reproduce the phenomenal surface of the world, to fill the screen with the objects, place, faces and gestures of an everyday reality. However, for the most part, this appropriation of the phenomenal surface of reality is the very antithesis of what Adorno meant by mimesis and he made this antithesis a key feature of his critique of both film and television. The typical film is a manufactured commodity. Its reproduction of the recognizable surfaces of the world represents the purposeful and skilful construction of

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calculated and predetermined effects upon the psyches of the mass of consumers. Adorno termed this the 'pseudo-realism' of film.\textsuperscript{56} Witkin here, emphasizes on a efficiency of mass-art, or a film in particular, as a medium of aspirations and desires within the masses. For the most part, the role that film plays in the development of a worldview is a matter of deception; at a particular point of capitalistic development of masses, the film establishes itself a provider of a public need, that is film suggests the certain aspects of life, concerning its quality and purposiveness. So, in general, what cinema seeks to consolidate is a social-distortion. Though it may seem that such a superficial effect is a product of the supply and demand principle, it rather itself initiates certain processes in spheres of masses and media. The mechanistic structure of such system is much more troubling than it might seem at first. As Adorno takes on a film with reference to the traditional mimesis, the film takes a mere mimicry to a different level of imagery, the one that encloses the masses in a subordination to such reflective matter. Such is the inevitable case of fetish within the masses. Even though, as Benjamin takes on, the modern mass-art diminishes the distinction of image and reality to a rational evaluation, or even more so, reduces everything to a reality, rendering the transcendental aspect of art empirical and thus irrelevant, the film is capable to enter the realm of artistic imagery and surrealism with different means. This analysis inevitably bases itself around the concept of mimesis, though as it is obvious, the mass-culture can be seen developing own kind of mimetic theory towards a matter of art. What exactly Witkin states concerning Adorno’s theory is a certain exaggeration of mimesis to means of improving and increasing reproducibility in everyday life, which is all the more matter of consumption of newly established values and standards of lifestyle. „There is a sense in which objects appear more vivid, more real in films, precisely because technique has alienated them from their life-world contexts, their ‘subject relations’, and re-deployed them as the material substructure of manufactured cultural goods.“\textsuperscript{57} At this point it can be concluded that the mimetic theory that partakes its role in this process is directly linked to the problem of alienation.

5.3 Mimesis and the problem of film and reality

Without naming the digression from traditional art and insofar mimetic means of artistic activity, what mass-culture determines itself to is a paradox case of mass involvement to a public sphere. As it have been mentioned earlier on, what capitalistic system endeavors is

\textsuperscript{56}Witkin, Robert. W. Adorno on popular culture.P.136-137.
\textsuperscript{57}P.137.
a certain unification and totality; it can be said that the whole system of this kind is immanent: negating the artistic expresiveness and even more so the individuality of insight, it focuses on the concept of masses as a development of public opinion and demand. From this perspective, mimesis, as theory of mimicry and representation, becomes fully in contact with the new theory of technology. Therefore, from such point on, the mimesis becomes not so much a mimicry but a straight reproduction, as is the case in the film. „What was once real now partakes of the intensity of a pseudo-reality that manifests as the siren appeal of the fetish-object. Drained of any connection to the real life-world relations of the subject, objects and faces lose that specificity, that ordinary eccentric and accidental quality that stamps them as authentic.“

Mimesis, now understood, conditionally, as a reproduction, begins to recreate the reality in the manner of exaggerated worldview which becomes the main attraction for the masses. The certain perfection of the visual content provided in film creates at the same time demand and desire for yet another reproduction which becomes directed towards human resource. By saying this, to be correct, a certain amount of individuality resurfaces on a level of ordinary consumer. Obviously, in the relation with reality the discomfort becomes imminent, and the consumer becomes all the more victim of the culture industry. Though, the paradox here lies on the general view of the masses. Despite its proclaimed aim towards a totality of masses, the culture industry does so by starting from the de-individualisation of the average consumer; by doing so the alienation becomes the key of success in the establishment of new mimesis. „Consequently, it does not permit absolute construction: its elements, however abstract, always retain something representational; they are never purely aesthetic values.«<...> There can be no aesthetics of the cinema, not even a purely technological one, which would not include the sociology of the cinema.«

As Adorno points out, the representational means of cinema, or to say differently, the mimetic aspect of cinema becomes a practice of social mimesis. Looking more externally, this problem is based on the reciprocal or even cyclical representation. From the starting point, it is the cinema that, in order to attract the masses begins to imitate the actual life in the means of creating the close up with the real life, rather than abstract imagery that remains alien to the basic needs of attraction. Within such deveopment the cinema begins to increase the matter of „reality“ within the films and eventually the masses become unavoidably attracted to the entire content of the display. This phenomenon of imitator-imitated can be regarded to as a key element of culture industry as far as the representational means go. „<...>so everyday reality itself comes

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to take on the associations that have been acquired from the world of cinema; life imitates art.\textless...\textgreater The objects of everyday life are thereby increasingly swallowed up by the fetish-objects that make up the world of commodities and men and women come to respond to them in daily life in a dependent and authoritarian–submissive way.\textsuperscript{60} Regarding this statement by Witkin, it can be said that in the processual nature of the mass-culture, or involvement of masses in the consumption of art, the cinema as a contemporary form of art yet again replaces the everyday life with the substitute of cinema as a certain role-model of lifestyle. The way that traditional art used to be at the center of adoration and admiration, and the way that it was rather cynically distorted and turned into a mere representation and mimesis of everyday life, such life-reality has itself been replaced with surreal imagery of mass-art. As much as such issue is social, it also becomes political, since the art starts to function as authority for the masses, which can inevitably be suspected as implications of a greatly political involvement. „That, among its functions, film provides models for collective behaviour is not just an additional imposition of ideology.\textless...\textgreater The movements which the film presents are mimetic impulses which, prior to all content and meaning, incite the viewers and listeners to fall into step as if in a parade.\textsuperscript{61} Despite the radical change in the theoretic aspect of the aesthetics, the mimesis preserves its essence as a mean of not just mere imitation, but rather reflection within the everyday life, so far as if it becomes almost existential aspiration and necessity. At the same time, it can be said that, the „process“ or functioning of mass culture discloses a number of developments concerning the both sides of it. What is also being figured by Adorno, is that within the certain model of mass-art there is also a matter of individual development in hand. Though, any quest for individuality becomes almost immediately suspended by the term „mass“ itself, it is still the case of the development of a model of a consumer. „Nevertheless, the favourite argument of the whole- and half-hearted apologists, that culture industry is the art of the consumer, is untrue; it is the ideology of ideology.\textsuperscript{62} With all its political inclinations and authoritarian nature, the culture industry is deeply involved in developing a subject, consumer, by which the entire masses could be generated. It is easy to foresee the underlying aspects of fascism in the theory of mass culture which are going to be the point of focus in the underway analysis. „The consumers are made to remain what they are: consumers. That is why the culture industry is not the art of the

\textsuperscript{60}Witkin, Robert. W. \textit{Adorno on popular culture}. P.138-139.  
\textsuperscript{61}Adorno, Theodor. \textit{The Culture Industry. Selected essays on mass culture}. P.183.  
\textsuperscript{62}P.185.
consumer but rather the projection of the will of those in control onto their victims." This can be regarded to as a conclusion of the ideology that Adorno speaks of. Such greatly authoritarian or rather totalitarian view towards masses implies a turn towards a more political analysis of the problem of culture industry.

6 Reality and transcendence of art

Considering Heidegger’s theory on the work of art, another look can be taken at the problem of reality. Taking a deeper look into the conceptual side of art, the main fracture within the work of art comes within the question of transcendentalism. What Heidegger asserts in his work „Origin of the work of art“ is the actual poesis that expresses the function of the work of art. „What poetry, as clearing projection, unfolds of unconcealment and projects into the rift within the figure is the open; poetry allows this open to happen in such a way, indeed, that now, for the first time, in the midst of beings, it brings them to shine and sound. If we fix our gaze on the essence of the work and its relation to the happening of the truth of beings, it becomes questionable whether the essence of poetry, of that is to say, projection, can be adequately thought in terms of imagination and the power of imagining." It can be said that, the problem of reality and the art changes its perspective in a respect of Heidegger’s theory. The happening of truth in the work of art emerges as its own reality. Such a theory based on transcendental aspect of art assumes, that the culture industry production fundamentally negates the realm of art as a reflection. What mass-art truly asserts is the functioning of art as a self-reflection. It can be said, on a perspective, that art becomes conscious of itself in the means that it reproduces itself to such extent were it loses its formal content. In a similar fashion, Adorno states that technology, as a mean of reproducing, suspends any set of images or representations that art originally bases itself on. „Reality becomes its own ideology through the spell cast by its faithful duplication. This is how the technological veil and the myth of the positive is woven. If the real becomes an image insofar as in its particularity it becomes as equivalent to the whole as one Ford car is to all the others of the same range, then the image on the other hand turns into immediate reality." As Adorno adds up to this, it can be said that there is no implemented potentiality in mass-produced artwork that could imply

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any specific content. The distinction between matter and form can be simply likened to the one of act and potency. Originally what an artwork is can be referred to as act, therefore potency is a certain imaginative value that can be added to it. The problem that Adorno raises can be summed as a reduction of an artwork to a simple act, rendering its impossibility to potentiality. „The mass culture which is so true to the facts absorbs the truth content and expends itself in the material but all it has left as material is itself.” Out of all the multitude of distinctions that can be referred to in this problem, there is an important aspect of objectivity that contradicts Heidegger's view on truth. In this sense, as Adorno puts it, the mass culture is based around logical assumption that reality has within itself a factor of truth; the reality of reproduced artwork is of an objective nature, that is, it correctly corresponds with an actual reality. It is fair to say that such view implies an unquestionable logical rationality towards any aesthetic presumptions. Since there is no potentiality, the artwork, though, at this point in does not really fall within the category of an artwork, does not create a relative consciousness between the spectator and itself. It becomes up to aesthetics to define artwork as potential transcendence. „This actualitas became actuality, reality. Reality becomes objectivity. Objectivity becomes experience. In the manner in which, for the world determined in the Western way, beings exist as the real, there lies concealed a particular convergence of beauty and truth. To the transformation of the essence of truth there corresponds the essential history of Western art. This can no more be grasped by taking beauty by itself than it can in terms of experience- supposing that the metaphysical concept of art is adequate to the essence of art.” If we are to question Heideggerian aesthetics in a way of its correspondence to the reality, it can be said that objectivity and reality comes on a different terms. As Adorno takes on mass-art dependancy's on reality, it comes to a primordial level of reflection. In this way, reflection works in accordance with the objectivity, that by description negates any kind of individual subjectivism, which would, rather, result in an actual experience of an artwork. In Heidegger's terms, any objectivity of an artwork comes through subjective experience. For Heidegger, the reality of an artwork is first of all the unconcealment, or the, before mentioned, aletheia. The fact that artwork comes to life already supposes its reality. In comparison with the Adorno view of mass culture, this theory of aesthetics contradicts every aspect of mass-production as production of artworks.

67Heidegger, Martin. Off the beaten track. The origin of the work of art.P.52.
6.1 Reproduction of moral and ethical values

Going further with the problem of the mass culture, there is a certain play between empirical and rational experiences that cause a problem of beauty and truth that both Heidegger and Adorno object to. Looking back at the traditional notion of beauty and truth, the rational experience becomes of a great significance concerning the exploitation that this theory undergoes in mass culture. As the mass culture as a means of propaganda goes, the theory of καλός and ἀγαθός can be directly related to the mass appeal that is being achieved through the empirical reflection. „Officially this education is oriented towards the realm of the ideal, towards ‘alles Schöne und Gute’ (‘Everything that is beautiful and good’), it encourages admiration for the heroic individual and glorifies the values of candour, unselfishness and generosity.“ As superficial as this may seem, the actual relation to the empirical realm of perception, comes through an alteration in the theory itself. As seen earlier, the mass culture stereotype of art carries with it an important contradiction, which, let alone, can be seen in comparison with the heideggerian aesthetics. In this sense, the conformity between objectiveness and reality must be seen as another produced need. Even though, the straight empirical perception of art leaves no space for any subjective reflection in general, rationally it can be explained as a lack of consciousness towards reflection. This sort of unconscious reflection, as mentioned before, is basically a reproduction of what is obvious and uncertain within the artistic perception. As for Heidegger, potentiality means, first of all, the truth of being, or in other words the every possible perspective, from which the being of the artwork discloses itself. That being the way that artwork „works“ it is nevertheless the synthesis between empirical and rational perception. Empirical perception, in this instance can be understood as a staging ground for any ontological presumption of an artwork. The criticism of entirely empirical perception of mass-artwork comes from the visual factor that plays essential role in setting the demand for a certain value. It is important to underline that the needs of mass-production come from the masses themselves, whereas the mass culture industry is set out to satisfy such needs. Now, the beauty, truth and good can be interpreted as a certain needs for masses, though it becomes a matter of in what form does it come. Certainly, the mechanism of culture industry is based on principle of supply and demand. It is by the presentation of certain artworks of all kinds, that the popular demand becomes regulated by the industry itself. „The pre-digested quality of the product prevails,

justifies itself and establishes itself all the more firmly in so far as it constantly refers to those who cannot digest anything not already pre-digested. It is baby-food: permanent self-reflection based upon the infantile compulsion towards the repetition of needs which it creates in the first place.\textsuperscript{69} It can be basically summed up that, mass culture produces certain forms of art that are almost identical and repetitive; it is the formula that seems to be at work every time when a particular „cultural indigestion“ occurs. As Adorno puts it, when eventually any subjectivism towards art becomes obsolete, it is the established value that becomes predominant.

7 Mechanism of Culture industry

In the theory of development of mass culture the specific paradox occurs, that, on a great part, is related to mimesis. Looking back at the mythological tradition, it becomes obvious that myth can be perceived as a certain assumption for the establishment of mass culture. Yet again, the virtue that can be perceived here is basically καλὸς κἀγαθὸς. So to speak, whether the myth is perceived as sacral form or as a specific work of art for the masses, it nevertheless is oriented to a primal level of understanding of what is good and to be adored. When speaking of mimesis, the aspect of individuality can be seen in a different light. As mentioned before, mass culture bases itself on a high level of objectivism. In this instance, the subjectivity can be seen as a threat for a mass culture. The essential principle of public opinion can be drawn the line to the entirely political side of culture industry. As is obvious in totalitarian societies, in the case of mass culture any expression of subjectivity towards a public values can be perceived as a flaw from a perspective of mass society being mechanism. „Heidegger accorded a place of honour to curiosity as an invariant feature in the ‘fallenness’ of human existence <...> Although he clearly saw the function of curiosity as the cement of mass activity, probably expressing a diluted form of collective mimesis of the desire to equal everyone else by knowing everything about them, he nevertheless committed an injustice upon mankind by ascribing curiosity to man as such and virtually making the victim responsible rather than the jail-keeper.“\textsuperscript{70} There is a great deal of social publicity when it comes to the terms of mass culture. Though, the term „mass“ may itself emphasize the social aspect of it, it is more about the importance and the level of individual in every person.

\textsuperscript{69}Adorno, Theodor. The Culture Industry. Selected essays on mass culture. P.67.
\textsuperscript{70}P.83.
Paradoxically the „individual“ is something that must be left outside of the masses. Masses, therefore, refers to identity; it is no secret that mass culture is in a big part a fascist mechanism, which is something that is going to be in need of further investigation in the course of the work. „The less the system tolerates anything new, the more those who have been forsaken must be acquainted with all the latest novelties if they are to continue living in society rather than feeling themselves excluded from it. Mass culture allows precisely this reserve army of outsiders to participate: mass culture is an organized mania for connecting everything with everything else, a totality of public secrets. Everyone who is informed has his share in the secret, just as under National Socialism the privilege of esoteric bloodbrotherhood was actually offered to everyone.«71 By this statement, Adorno directly refers to a National Socialism as a high level development of mass culture. Though, it is obvious, that despite paradox of individuality in mass culture, it functions not only as a strict mechanism, but rather as an organic structure, which, on the big part manages to be a cultural totality. Andrew Lyndon Knighton provides a critical look in his work72 on politicization of art. „In Adorno’s general estimation, artworks that surrender themselves to mere sloganeering are not only doomed to political irrelevance but risk invalidating themselves as art.«73 The very historical dynamism of the twentieth century, and especially the coalescence and intensification of a seemingly totalizing culture industry, surely necessitated an ongoing process of definition.«74 It becomes almost an essential that politics in some way conceptualizes art. In the aesthetics of mass culture, evidently, the mass-art no more functions as an art, it, rather, becomes a regulatory form, that articulates the certain flows in society. To put in differently, it is not spiritual or creative influences that art renders, but, instead, it is suspension of sensations towards art establishes it as a regulative. „The sensuous moment of art transforms itself under the eyes of mass culture into the measurement, comparison and assessment of physical phenomena.«74 It can be concluded, that the strictly empirical aspect of mass culture is directed towards a physical fascination of a certain kind. As is the case in fascist aesthetics, the body becomes the work of art, which can be perceived as the most primordial form of admiration and following. Before turning to analysis of fascist aesthetics in general, it is important to consider other important aspects of mass culture.

73P.237.
It is important to underline some other problematic directions to which the analysis of mass culture leads. New aspect which arises in relation between individual and mass culture can be perceived as exploitation, or in other way, resourcing of human as material. „Comparisons such as the one drawn by complexity theory between the complex logic of ant-colony behaviour and the behaviour of corporations therefore become legitimate, even though they deny humans their very nature and only describe humans accurately if they remain predominantly within technological revealing.“ As Dominik Heil puts it, here much like Adorno takes on it, the technology rather than techne becomes out of hand of human interference. In a case of mass culture or other highly structured organism technology becomes a production of human resource of a certain kind; a mass person in this perspective can also be seen as a unit of production. Viewed from this position, technology as mechanism exploits, specifically, the human individuality; such exploitation occurs as an assimilation within the masses. As described before, mass culture relies on a very superficial level of human intelligence and therefore individualism. „The schema of mass culture now prevails as a canon of synthetically produced modes of behaviour.“ So, any kind of individuality produced by mass culture remains a non-organic. Such a rupture in a mechanism occurs basically because of said „lost sense of nature“ that figures in the production of mass culture. The same way that technology becomes absent of its nature as techne, respectively, the production of such technology bears in itself synthetic matter. „People give their approval to mass culture because they know or suspect that this is where they are taught the mores they will surely need as their passport in a monopolized life.“ Production of synthetic individuality plays essential role in a modern society. Capitalism, in perspective, functions, first of all, as a social restructuring fundamental to processing of mass culture in general. Yet mass culture can be referred to as a myth, since such culture relies on identical production and common values, which underlines the undeniable functioning of mimesis. There is a hidden violence in the mechanism of mass culture that prevails in the every form of mass-society. Whether it is fascism or capitalism, mimesis carries with it a violence that is understood as a human nature. Even though, the society may work according to a plan it, nevertheless, quite possibly might produce certain social groups, the outsiders that would be

77P.92.
perceived as a adversities. When Heidegger speaks about intelligence and a decline of human civilisation, it is quite easy to see that where there is a any sign of mythical thought, there is a little of true human intelligence, considering the primitiveness of such *mimesis*. „But once there they obey. They assimilate themselves to what is dead. And that is how they become disposable. Mimesis explains the enigmatically empty ecstasy of the fans in mass culture. Ecstasy is the motor of imitation.“\(^{78}\) With reference to Adorno on this, it can be concluded that any form of mass culture production is expendable or, as it is mentioned, disposable. Whether it is original art or synthetic one it becomes consumerable when in terms of mass culture. At this point a certain example can be taken on such perspective.

### 8 Theory of enlightenment

The concept of enlightenment that is explicated in the Adorno and Horkheimer‘s „Dialectic of enlightenment“, reveals itself as a rational opposite of mimesis and entire mythology in general. From the starting point, it is possible to establish a certain division whereas the concept of enlightenment leads to: a clear distinction between empirical and rational thought. At the same time, as far as the relation with the nature goes, it becomes a matter of changing the perspectives of the perception and the renewal of the status of nature. „All this... stood in the way of “the happy match between the mind of man and the nature of things,” with the result that humanity was unable to use its knowledge for the betterment of its condition. Knowledge obtained through such enquiry would not only be exempt from the influence of wealth and power but would establish man as the master of nature.“\(^{79}\) With strong reference to Francis Bacon, Adorno and Horkheimer render the tendency of enlightenment towards socio-economical aspect, where it becomes a matter of establishing a certain order within the relation of human and the nature. In this way, it seems, that rationality, in a way, predetermines the empirical state; since the other forms of enlightenment prove themselves to be fundamentally empirical or empirically impulsed, the rationalistic enlightenment establishes itself and continues towards the dis-enchantment of the world. „The “happy match” between human understanding and the nature of things that he envisaged is a patriarchal one: the mind, conquering superstition, is to rule over disenchanted nature.“\(^{80}\) It can be said, that from a certain point of view, the enlightenment seeks to

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\(^{80}\) P.2.
maintain a strictly pragmatic prospect towards nature; the reduction of nature to a simply disposable matter seems already implicate of its exploitative means. At the same time, the bond between human and nature becomes a correlation in favor of human, since the nature becomes stripped of its spiritual content or any moral or rational value. Though, in such case the value must be assigned within the frame of, rather, religious content, therefore, the symbolism of values becomes the sole background for cultural synthesis. „The disenchantment of the world means the extirpation of animism. Xenophanes mocked the multiplicity of gods because they resembled their creators, men, in all their idiosyncrasies and faults<...>.”81 So, obviously, the enlightenment seeks to obscure the mimesis at the most primitive means, where it becomes just a repeated self-reflection which does not imply any progress or improvement in the sphere of reason. At the epicenter of the analysis of enlightenment the question of freedom or liberation emerges. With the concern on nature’s hold on human reason and possibilities of perception, the enlightenment becomes established as a solution for such, rather, impass. Gregg Daniel Miller in his work „Mimesis and reason“ states that, although enlightenment intends to establish a purely rational insight in reason, it nevertheless draws itself to the extreme ends. „Against this assessment of modernity, what hope remains for the original intentions of enlightenment, the possibility of freedom from dogma, alleviation from natural and social ills, autonomous action for moral purposes, a positive solidarity that does not immolate its members? <...> analysis of the self-subversion of enlightenment carries with it mimesis as its shadow, its origin, not quite its opposite, but Enlightenment’s object, that which Enlightenment would, if it could, order, arrange and master.”82 Retrospectively, despite the break from the naturalistic views, the enlightenment itself becomes a victim of cyclicality of nature, the change, that at its most radical point traces back everythin to the original state. Therefore Miller claims, that enlightenment becomes rather insufficient within its own circumstances, or in other words the means that it becomes forced back to start to showcase its inadequacy. Instead of making any pre-emptive claims, it ir important to point out some key incommensurabilities that emerge at first within the theoretical explication of enlightenment. Adorno and Horkheimer, similarly reflect on the correlation between myth and enlightenment, that sheds a light on a practical implementations of it as an order. „Myth becomes enlightenment and nature mere objectivity. Human beings purchase the increase in their power with estrangement from that over which it is exerted. Enlightenment stands in the same relationship to things as the dictator to human

It is without a doubt, that the parallel between things and human beings takes place within the sphere of enlightenment as an improved form of mythology. The great paradox arises from its aspect of freedom, when keeping in mind the determination of enlightenment towards an oppression of subjectivity, it becomes a matter not much of a progress, but rather transgression towards its own idealism. Chiara Bottici in her work „A Philosophy of political myth“ negates the strict distinction between myth and enlightenment. In historical retrospect, the way that myth emerges is a form primitive reason, therefore it might render different relation with the concept of enlightenment. „In its search for self-legitimacy, the Enlightenment tends to exacerbate its contrast with myth and thus hides the fact that myth is already a form of enlightenment; however, in this way, the Enlightenment itself risks falling into a mythology, that is, the mythology of an absolute pure reason. “

This discrepancy, that Bottici highlights on, is overseen at first; the initial parallel of subjectivity and objectivity that enlightenment seeks to prove incommensurable shows itself to be faulty. In the aspect of development of enlightenment, it gradually proves itself to be continuous of mythical reason. It is fair to say that enlightenment seeks to establish pure rationality towards reason, whereas empiricallity and subjectivity, rendered insufficient, are not taken for granted. The scientific clarity that enlightenment seeks to achieve becomes essentially problematic within its inescapability from the myth as an initial form of enlightenment. „In this way, the Enlightenment hides the fact that the myth is already enlightenment because myth is already a form of explanation (Erklärung “). But, on the other hand, the pureness of reason that the Enlightenment celebrates can become a myth in its own turn, because once a pure reason has unified the whole world within its pure relationships and thus completely dominates it, what it finds outside is no longer the world, but its totalitarian abstract categories. “

According to Bottici, absolute dominance of the pure reason already suggests its political and even more so totalitarian implications as an objectivation of nature; such case effects the perception of human reason itself. This way the question of freedom of reason becomes more complicated, since the enlightenment as Bottici, Adorno and Horkheimer show becomes a mere improvement of a mythical thought. Though what is more troubling is the predominance of the objectivity which already negates the possibility of „liberated reason“. In such case freedom of reason takes place only to be involved in the authorisation of enlightenment.

85 P.70.
8.1 Mimesis as the origin of rule

Adorno and Horkheimer in their work *Dialectic of enlightenment* provide an explication of perspectives of mimesis and mimetic resurrection through the its historical development. Myth, in its purest form, is described, in relation with enlightenment, as already political implication and even more so a particular mode for social construct. "By indiscriminately denouncing the epic as a form of novel he overlooks what epic and myth actually have in common: power and exploitation. The ignoble qualities he condemns in the epic, mediation and circulation, are only a further development of the dubious nobility he idolizes in myth: naked force."\(^{86}\) Taking into consideration Rudolf Borchardt’s theory towards myth, Adorno and Horkheimer emphasize on its continuity and development to modern day political ideologies. Already from the etymological perspective, the myth derives its symbolism; in such a relation with mimesis symbolism embodies the essential principle of sovereign rule. Though, from a more abstract point of view, it can be said that myth basses itself around the nourishment of common value of the power of reign. Such political origins of myth, from early on imply its, rather, authoritarian character and, in accordance with the Adorno’s theory of art, considering myth an artwork, already presupposes its status of worship. It is important to underline the actual sucesion that can be seen in development of the myth. Simon Mussell regarding Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory on mimesis take on its rather social than cultural involvement in establishing certain social hierarchies and order, thus implying a primordial forms of rule. "Generally speaking, their analysis divides the development of mimesis into three chronological stages: (i) archaic; (ii) magical; (iii) industrial. The authors critically dissect the relation between mimesis and processes of civilisation and enlightenment.\(^{87}\) By following such chronology, myth presupposses itself as a medium for certain socio-political factors to emerge. Considering the archaic stage, it can be regarded simply as to a reflective relation to the nature, whereas at such stage, nature can be seen playing the main role in establishing any order within the community or society. "This adaptive form of mimesis is much like mimicry in plants and non-human animals. Indeed, in the early phases of the civilising process, one could say that mimesis of this kind is prior to the development of rational consciousness and subjectivity."\(^{88}\) Referring to Mussell, it can be said that archaic stage, basically, focuses on empirical aspect of survival in complete

\(^{86}\)Adorno, Theodor W., Horkheimer, Max.*Dialectic of enlightenment*.P.37.


nakedness of primordial being. That way is already supposes that the basic social forms and norms are not yet to be found, therefore such being renders itself primeval. Though, it is important to estimate such stage as a fundamental establishment of the original relation with the nature, which would allow to make certain presumptions about possibility of the magical stage.

8.2 Magical stage and the presumptions of sovereign rule

Regarding the magical stage, it emerges as a radical change in the inter-social relations within any primal society. There are a lot theories concerning the involvement of the myth in establishing the first political orders, though at this point, in accordance with Adorno and Horkheimer, Rene Girard can be referred to as providing a particular mimetic theory on the development of mimesis. Wolfgang Palaver in his work\(^89\) on Girard's mimetic theory highlights the myth as a cornerstone of any civilised activity considering the establishment of political power. "As a theory of culture [tr. Kulturtheorie], the mimetic theory explains not only the genesis of archaic religions and the foundation of human civilization, but also the formation of major political institutions, which in Girard’s eyes can be traced back to the scapegoat mechanism.\(^90\) At this point, the so-called scapegoat mechanism can be directly referred to a second stage of Adorno and Horkheimer’s mythical development. „The development of magical mimetic activity is concurrent with that of self-empowerment. As a result of this shift, a steady yet definite movement towards a rational, instrumental control of nature is set in motion.\(^91\) Within the second stage, the nature begins to be slowly replaced within the human authority. Keeping in mind importance of symbolism in the myth, along with the natural forces the symbol of human em-powerement begins to emerge and steadily replaces the first one, thus establishing a rather cult or authority of a certain sovereignty. What is important, is that along with the second stage the distinction between the human and nature begins to develop; inevitably, any kind of social structure, in order to preserve its rationality must drift further away from nature as an empirical mean of existence. Though, mimetism itself varies between rational and irrational. „As rationality accrues greater value for human beings in attempts to secure their own survival, and through increasingly effective domination of brute nature, mimetic impulses come to be seen as regressive, irrational, even

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animalistic (that is to say, pre-human).” Referring to Mussell, it can be said that every stage sooner or later reaches its excess point where it inevitably undergoes the radical changes in subordination and its nature. Therefore, it would be fair to refer to such stages as to a processes that all partake their role in development of the myth. Despite the radical changes, the mimesis maintains and carries within itself a great part of violence which originates from the nature. Palaver, on the other hand, regarding Girard’s theory, makes a claim that violence is not so much a critical state, but rather the fundamental beforehand for any order to be achieved. „Mimesis, in and of itself, carries the potential to resolve the crisis; while acquisitive mimesis polarizes the society into groups divided against each other, antagonistic mimesis can overcome this conflict and reunite the conflicting factions.“ According to such theory, mimesis functions as a distinct feature, possible of mediating the inter-social relations. Though, it is important to underline that the mimetic theory that Girard provides is based around the traditional form of mythical thinking and symbolism. In this case, such theory becomes contradicting with the fundamentally developmental prospect of Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory. „At the moment when human beings cut themselves off from the consciousness of themselves as nature, all the purposes for which they keep themselves alive - social progress, the heightening of material and intellectual forces, indeed, consciousness itself-become void, and the enthronement of the means as the end, which in late capitalism is taking on the character of overt madness, is already detectable in the earliest history of subjectivity. “ Taking this statement with reference to Girard’s theory, it is posible to claim that mimesis itself is determined towards violent sacrifice or other kind of exploitation. When regarding the early social structures and hierarchies, mimetic theory, as in Girard, kind of already presupposes a certain political and social offside that presumes the eventual demise or inevitable change. „Order in human culture certainly does arise from an extreme of disorder, for such disorder is the disappearance of any and all contested objects in the midst of conflict, and it is at such a point that acquisitive mimesis is transformed into [mimesis of the antagonist] and tends toward the unification of conflict against an adversary.“ As is obvious, Girard’s concept of mimetic rivalry alligns greatly within the sphere of magical stage of mythical development. The way that it can be regarded to as, is the purest form of mimesis, the one that relies greatly on the natural origin of any social and political order possible. The everlasting repetition of the crisis or contradiction between subject-object

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distinction implies the renewal of mimesis as a mimicry that determines the fate of the stage. As it has been speculated before, the mimesis shares a great amount of cyclicality of nature; similarly as in the nature, the order based on mimesis as a, rather phenomenon, has a tendency to repeat itself. „This process unfolds within the framework of wrong society. In that society everyone is one too many, and is cheated. But society's predicament is that the person who escaped the universal, unequal, and unjust exchange, who did not renounce but immediately seized the undiminished whole, would thereby lose everything, even the meager residue of oneself granted by self-preservation.” 96 The motif of a victim or a sacrifice is consistent within the traditional myth; from one point of view, such a figure discloses the nature of any order. It is fair to say that concluding the aspect of magical stage, the sacrifice functions both as a symbol and as a practical necessity that tends to reiterate.

8.3 Industrial stage as emergence of Culture industry

Moving on towards the third stage, it can be noted, that paradoxically, in the industrial stage, mimesis reaches its apex. From one point or another, the mimetic chronology could be visualized as a certain geometrical curve, while seen in a retrospect of its historicity. „Civilization replaced the organic adaptation to otherness, mimetic behavior proper, firstly, in the magical phase, with the organized manipulation of mimesis, and finally, in the historical phase, with rational praxis, work. Uncontrolled mimesis is proscribed. The angel which, with fiery sword, drove humans out of paradise and on to the path of technical progress, is itself the symbol of that progress.” 97 At the same time, according to Mussell, the mimesis becomes obscured by the predominance of rationalism, which renders mimesis insufficient, or even, essentially inadequate. At such point, industrial society becomes reasoned by mechanical and technical production and reproduction, therefore every public need is satisfied in a strict co-ordination with the mechanism of supply and demand. „With such rational development within the progress of civilisation, mimetic behaviour is seen as either pre-rational or irrational, and in any event wholly irrelevant to modern social life, with the latter conceptualised as an unequivocally forward step upon the paths of progress and civilisation.” 98 Reflecting on such perspective, it can be said that the claimed distinction between empirical reality and rationality becomes obscure in the wake of technical reproducibility and its undeniable rational fundamentality. Moving on towards the industrial

96 Adorno, Theodor W., Horkheimer, Max. Dialectic of enlightenment. P.43.
97P.148.
stage, which itself presupposes the term „culture industry“, the whole mimetic reason and consciousness drifts from subjective level towards the objectivity of cultural industry. As Mussell shows, in one way or the other, the mimesis preserves its reflective essence, though on much a larger scale it changes its perspective towards mediating the desires and needs of the masses. „In his later works, Adorno’s deployment of mimesis becomes less anthropologically directed and instead moves decidedly towards an understanding of aesthetic experience and aesthetic rationality. <...> For Adorno, ideology lies in ‘the implicit identity of concept and thing’ (1973 [1966], 40), and as such one should try to resist the urge to impose upon an object a single, selfidentical, conceptual straitjacket.”

What emerges from the relation between mimesis and ideology, can be taken as a certain friction between the two theories. From the first point, mimesis inevitably becomes involved structurally in the ideological mechanism of culture industry, though, on the other hand, as mentioned before, it maintains its critical aspect. Another important aspect, that renders the suspension of mimesis and subjectivity is the concept of culture industry as totality, that Kai Hammermeister highlights in his work „German aesthetic tradition“. Considering the Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory on mimesis, he explicates that totality of the society bears the greatest danger towards the subjective rationality and thus reason itself. „<...>Horkheimer and Adorno argue that a total society has even eliminated all oppositional conceptual thought. Such diagnosis, however, poses the problem of all-encompassing statements regarding self-referentiality: How can philosophy escape the embrace of total society in order to view it from the outside and make statements about it that can claim to be true?”

Essentially the main problem can be formulated within the more abstract view of the culture industry. What Hammermeister reflects on is the totality of philosophy itself, since at this point, considering the main problem of art and mimesis insofar as it is the matter of society and culture, to avoid disintegration of a certain philosophical ideology, philosophy finds its needs to partially resurrect itself in terms of totality of society. „Yet in art, Adorno locates the potential formerly attributed to philosophy both to show reality as it is and to remind us of a better reality. At the very basis of art we therefore find two interconnected functions: the presentation of reality in all its shortcomings and its critique with a better society in mind.”

What Adorno and Horkheimer seek to preserve at such point is the rational relation between philosophy, which is understood as fundamental of culture, and totality of society; preservation of philosophical

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101P.197.
cause is seemed to be the antidote to the conformity and ideological totality that prospers in modern culture industry.

9 Culture industry as a case of social engineering

Reflecting back on the parallel of the Adorno’s and Benjamin’s theories Hammermeister highlights upon the differing perspectives on the reproducibility of the art. As for Adorno and Horkheimer, the reproduction of art renders the disintegration of the not only aesthetic, but also philosophical fundamen which focuses on the cultural aspect of the society. It can be said, that in this view, film or cinema comes to replace the traditional art as a sort of universal form of art, much more attractive and collateral. „Dealing with this apparatus also teaches them that technology will release them from their enslavement to the powers of the apparatus only when humanity's whole constitution has adapted itself to the new productive forces which the second technology has set free.“\(^{102}\) What Benjamin asserts here, is the psychological aspect of culture industry. Regarding the lack of historicity and ties with traditional art and consciousness towards reflection of art, Benjamin suggests that the second technology, ot the technology in a modern sense provides the society with a means of adaption and self-preservation. Though, what Benjamin really seeks to establish and preserve can be described by the „distraction“. According to such theory, cinema, through its specific presentation creates a sense of schock, that serves as a distraction. It is easy to perceive such distraction as to a particular psychological stance or condition. „He celebrates film for being the ideal means for a modern collective audience to train their eye in a new mode of perception, that is, one that is characterized by disjoined moments and a rapid succession of impulses.\(<...>\) The cutting technique of film forces the same experience of shock and distraction on its viewer as life in the production hall or on the street of a metropolis.“\(^{103}\) It comes as a mere sensation, that the distraction and experience of shock through, apparently an a art, derives itself from the aggressive mechanistic nature of the second technology. Without mentioning the radical change in artwork's spiritual and emotional perception, the element of shock changes the entire reflection towards the mass culture, whereas instead of contemplation and individual reflection it becomes a matter of rigid consumption. It is important to underline that the totality of society, that Adorno and


\(^{103}\)Hammermeister, Kai. *The German aesthetic tradition*. P.198-199.
Horkheimer predicates, can be taken as a new model of the social; from such account, the emotional reflection overtakes the need and significance of the individual contemplation and reason within the perception of modern art. In the chapter „The culture industry: Enlightenment as mass deception“, considering the earlier remarks on political assumptions towards the theory of culture industry, certain explication provided implies the political and social determination of the culture industry as a matter of social engineering. „The standardized forms, it is claimed, were originally derived from the needs of the consumers: that is why they are accepted with so little resistance. In reality, a cycle of manipulation and retroactive need is unifying the system ever more tightly.“¹⁰⁴ It can be said that the rationality, so deeply entwined with the mechanistic nature of modern art, can be understood as a certain medium of mass culture. As much as it have been mentioned before, the essential distinction between traditional technology and modern concept of it differ on a scale that it becomes a matter of relation with nature and origin of the certain fundamental needs. „Technical rationality today is the rationality of domination. It is the compulsive character of a society alienated from itself.“¹⁰⁵ By cutting of the links with the technological origins in nature that are maintained through the preservation of traditional values, the problem of alienation becomes entangled in the entire system.

9.1 Mass psychology and its totalitarian assumptions

Referring to a fascist aesthetics as a particular example of mass media in practice, Adorno takes on a psychoanalitic prospect of mass ideology. What is being questioned at this point, can be considered as a return to the problem of individual. What Adorno emphasizes on is the phenomenon of the masses as understood as modern day necessity. „According to Freud, the problem of mass psychology is closely related to the new type of psychological affliction so characteristic of the era which for socio-economic reasons witnesses the decline of the individual and his subsequent weakness.“¹⁰⁶ Regarding Freud, it can be said that mass culture emerges as inevitable social evolution. According to such theory, on the terms of modern day culture of supply and demand, the individual seems to become insignificant in relation with increasing productive desires of modern day politics. Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe

¹⁰⁴Adorno, Theodor W., Horkheimer, Max. Dialectic of enlightenment. P.95.
¹⁰⁵P.95.
and Jean-Luc Nancy in their article „The nazi myth“ underline a key element that fascism, in the matter of subjectivity, bases itself around. With certain contrast to Freudian aspect, this element supposes the both political and psychological mentality of the mechanism of fascism. „<...>Nazism claimed to be based on a science, which is to say, given the totalization and politicization of the All, that it claimed to be based on science as universal itself, knowledge. We say it above all because it must certainly not be forgotten that one of the essential ingredients in fascism is emotion, collective, mass emotion (but this emotion is not only the political emotion, it is the revolutionary emotion itself), and neither must it be forgotten that this emotion always joins itself to concepts (and, in the case of Nazism, these concepts can perfectly well be "revolutionary concepts," they are concepts nonetheless).“

Obviously, the given characterization of fascism, or nazism in particular, directly corresponds with the Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory. Even though it insists on the rationality of the ideology, it nevertheless relies on the emotional and, even spiritual level. Looking back to Adorno and Horkheimer’s theory, it can be said that the mass culture or culture industry is found fully functioning in the example of nazism. From the perspective of values, mass culture seem to provide both the need and satisfaction of a certain qualities. It seems that, in such light, mass culture is the becoming of the political masses, negating the earlier remark on the problem of consciousness within the masses. Masses share a collective consciousness, therefore, a member of society finds his individuality, paradoxically, in a masses. Though, such individuality should be referred to as identity. In a case of Nazi Germany, while it is widely regarded as a national rebirth and re-emergence of a political society, it nevertheless is, based on Adorno’s theory, a production of exaggerated national identity through the mass culture mechanism. „The leader can guess the psychological wants and needs of those susceptible to his propaganda because he resembles them psychologically, and is distinguished from them by a capacity to express without inhibitions what is latent in them, rather than by any intrinsic superiority.“

It is fair to say that, fascist theory of mass culture provides an embodied unity of all desires and values, that is, the leader, or more precisely, the fuhrer. Such an example shows a very minimalistic mass culture mechanism that is based around the idolatry. Such political alignment displays the strict political content within the mass culture, since every mass industry is directed towards a certain goal. It is far to label it as a mechanism; with all the implications of fascism and capitalism inserted in it, it, though, at the same time contains

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aspects of both primitive society considering the importance of *mimesis*, and of the modern political system. Paradoxically, mass culture can be seen as advanced when it comes to political potentiality of society.

### 9.2 Mass society as a search for identity

The example of nazism brings about the essential problem of identity, which results in the ever increasing feeling, or to be exact, the demand for unification of society. The way that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy points out is that, not only the lack of identity directs the fascism towards an extreme end, that at this point is nazism, but also underlines the problem of certain defragmentation of society, which inevitably leads to emergence of anti-semitism. As it has been noted before, for Adorno and Horkheimer, the model of mass culture or its prototype bases itself around the particular loss of identity; that is, the distinction between subject and object becomes irrelevant when the masses are seen as a unity, and itself an object. It is a fundamental matter for the subjective perspective to become obsolete, since it is as Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy mentions, a different kind of distraction or alienation from the unity, which claimingly, dissassociates the individual as a social misfit. The symbolism of nazi myth inevitably resurfaces here as a answer to a need of identity. „In other words, the question posed by myth is that of mimetism, insofar as only mimetism is able to assure an identity. (It does so, to be sure, in a paradoxiocal way: but we can't go into the details here.)<...> All of which indicates, additionally, that the problem of myth is always indissociable from that of art, not so much because myth is a collective creation or work (the expression of a people, the constitution of their language, and so on) as because myth, like the work of art that exploits it, is an instrument of identification. It is, in fact, the mimetic instrument par excellence.“\(^{110}\) Before taking on a mimesis as a main issue, it is important to underline, that in paralel between traditional capitalistic culture industry and national-socialist one is the deeply rooted desire for national identity, which at this point is seeking its re-emergence, though, distinctively, what is at matter here is the political desire rather than socio-economical. As Adorno and Horkheimer showcase in their theory, the masses succumb to the consumerist needs; such mechanism is based on reproductive means of both culture and industry, on the other hand in the case of nazism, it is essentially a question of strictly political and ideologival principle of supply and demand. This supposes a presumptions for myth as mimesis to be developed. „All of which indicates, additionally, that the problem of

myth is always indissociable from that of art, not so much because myth is a collective creation or work (the expression of a people, the constitution of their language, and so on) as because myth, like the work of art that exploits it, is an instrument of identification. It is, in fact, the mimetic instrument par excellence.\textsuperscript{111} It is important to underline that such case of a political mimesis carries within itself a great deal of historicity, whereas for Adorno and Benjamin, modern day artistic aspect of mimesis is stated lacking such relation with tradition of art. The fascist aesthetics at this point make a turn towards a myth as a resurrection of traditional aesthetic values. „From this point of view, it is not at all surprising that the quarrel of the ancients and the moderns should have been kept up so long in Germany-that is to say, at least until the beginning of the nineteenth century. And it would be perfectly accurate to describe the emergence of German nationalism as the appropriation of the means of identification.\textsuperscript{112} It can be said that, national-socialism finds itself in the traditional mimesis and in such way it becomes pre-developed set of symbols and values that are being set in motion in fascist aesthetics. „Henceforth, perhaps, one will better understand why National Socialism did not simply represent, as Benjamin said, an "aestheticization of politics" (to which it would have been sufficient to respond, in a Brechtian manner, with a "politicization of art," as if totalitarianism were not perfectly capable of assimilating that as well), but rather a fusion of politics and art, the production of the political as work of art.\textsuperscript{113} Much more clearance can be suspected from this point of view in an effort to distinct the capitalistic culture industry art and the fascist aesthetics. From this point on, the politics maintains its status of the sole goal; such mutual determination between art and politics showcases the mimetic resurrection in the field of politics. By the uncovering of mimesis as a fundamental principle in fascist aesthetics it is important to make essential notes on the question of identity.

10 Psychology of fascism

Adorno and Horkheimer, considering the Freud’s theory of psychologization of masses make an important note on the overall context within which the fascist establishes itself. „The straightforward comparison of modern mass formations with biological phenomena can hardly be regarded as valid since the members of contemporary masses are at

\textsuperscript{111}Lacoue-Labarthe, Philippe and Nancy, Jean-Luc. The Nazi Myth. P.298.
\textsuperscript{112}P.299.
\textsuperscript{113}P.303.
least prima facie individuals, the children of a liberal, competitive and individualistic society, and conditioned to maintain themselves as independent, self-sustaining units; they are continuously admonished to be ‘rugged’ and warned against surrender.\textsuperscript{114} It is obvious that certain theories are tend to form a rather minimalistic view of the masses. According to such perspective, it can be said that masses as such do not exist beforehand. Other than what has been underlined before, the process of de-individualisation comes as complicated issue, considering the totality of different inclinations that are bond within the society. Therefore, it must be highlighted that, in the case of fascism, what exists already is a society and only within the functioning of national identification and its mythologization it is that it becomes a masses in sense of unified political and national potential in hand. The question here must be held on a particular relation of rationality and irrationality of both society and masses and the myth itself. Chiara Bottici, in her characterisation of political myth underlines the specific aspect of myth that already implies its totalitarian determination. „Here myth is the symptom of an irrational force that stems from the consciousness of a common race and descent, traditions, language, the feeling of belonging to the same community of fate, as well as a certain feeling of being different in itself. In other words, national myths are the symptoms of common identities. They are the mere epiphenomenon of a deeper reality, of an identity that is already given and that finds its source in an irrational power that is fundamentally hostile to rational discussion.“\textsuperscript{115} Even though nazi aryan theory insists on its rationality, which thus is based on the relation with cultural and historical background, it nevertheless emerges as a threat not only to a rationality as such, but moreover as political threat. Wilhelm Reich in his work „The Mass Psychology of Fascism“ underlines that despite traditional aims of myth, its political resurrection, inevitably, along with its irrationality, emerges as a anachronism. „Myth and ethos may be heroic, but they are always dangerous, undemocratic, and reactionary measures. It is a question of the character, the will, the conviction, joy of assuming responsibility, and enthusiasm of the broad masses of working men and women.“\textsuperscript{116}

The symbol of heroism presupposes the totalitarian mass mechanism, which, associated with labour, develops its status as of sacrifice. The sacrificial aspect is inseparable from the myth in practice. The claimed rationality of fascist theory becomes highly questioned within the framework of its practical ocurrence. Other than Benjamin’s theory on aesthetization of politics, this becomes a matter of psychologisation of politics. The way Adorno and

\textsuperscript{114}Adorno, Theodor. \textit{The Culture Industry. Selected essays on mass culture}. P.135.
\textsuperscript{115}Bottici, Chiara. \textit{A Philosophy of political myth}. P.229.
Horkheimer take on fascist symbolism showcases the psychological importance and impact on the masses. „This actually defines the nature and content of fascist propaganda. It is psychological because of its irrational authoritarian aims which cannot be attained by means of rational convictions but only through the skilful awakening of ‘a portion of the subject’s archaic inheritance’. Fascist agitation is centred in the idea of the leader, no matter whether he actually leads or is only the mandatory of group interests, because only the psychological image of the leader is apt to reanimate the idea of the all-powerful and threatening primal father. This is the ultimate root of the otherwise enigmatic personalization of fascist propaganda, its incessant plugging of names and supposedly great men, instead of discussing objective causes.“117. Such lived myth is much more intriguing than it seems at first; on the one hand there is cosmopolitic society, along with its rationality there is an embedded subjectivity of the individual, and every point of view is possible in such instance. What can be met in case of fascist mythology is as almost the matter of reverse enlightenment, since the distinction between individuals, that is based on subjectivity, becomes obsolete from the perspective of, as Adorno and Horkheimer, „the leader“. From this point on, the multi-individual society becomes a problem for the emergence of fascism as de-subjectifying matter. Therefore, the lack of national identity becomes almost an error in entire culture and society which needs to be fulfilled. The further analysis demands for a particular attention for the nazi myth itself.

10.1 Mass identity and symbolism

The earlier mentioned psychologization of politics inevitably resurfaces in the analysis of nazi myth. What Adorno and Horkheimer highlight on, is the certain individual desires that are being sophisticated through the mimetic consciousness. From this point on, the myth becomes identity insofar as the lack of cultural and national identity or collectivity start to become fulfilled through the sole collective ego, or leader as alter ego. „The leader can guess the psychological wants and needs of those susceptible to his propaganda because he resembles them psychologically, and is distinguished from them by a capacity to express without inhibitions what is latent in them, rather than by any intrinsic superiority.«118 Since this very quality of uninhibited but largely associative speech presupposes at least a temporary lack of ego control, it may well indicate weakness rather than strength.“
evident, that much like pointed out earlier, it is a matter of individual desires that bring about the irrationality on a wider scale. Though the rationality aspect of the masses remains highly questionable, it is nevertheless a matter of disclosed public desire that fascism seeks to grant. „Hitlerism could perhaps be defined as the exploitation-lucid but not necessarily cynical, for convinced of its own truth-of the modern masses' openess to myth. The manipulation of the masses is not only a technique: it is also an end, because in the last instance it is the myth itself that manipulates the masses and realizes itself in them.)“ The way that Lacoue-Labarthe and Nancy emphasize here on the exploitational aspect of fascist mythology, is nevertheless allows to presume that fascist culture industry in itself, is directed or even so, determined towards the extreme ends of the capitalistic exploitation. What matters here the most, is the psychological aspect of exploitation; at such point myth evolves into a certain socio-political construct. „Freud goes beyond such observations by explaining the coherence of masses altogether in terms of the pleasure principle, that is to say, the actual or vicarious gratifications individuals obtain from surrendering to a mass.“ Adorno and Horkheimer in accordance with Freud state that, it is almost necessarily the carnal interests over rationality in individuals that prevail in such manner. The fascist symbolism targets the certain level of desires that are not fulfilled by the norms of traditional society. It can be said that fascism emerges whereas the capitalistic culture industry proves itself to be insufficient; such an extreme end is determined by the will towards, rather, higher needs to which fascism becomes solely oriented.

### 10.2 Remarks on Freud and identification

At this point the rationalism of enlightenment and social identity comes to be fully questioned at its fundamental level. „Freud stresses that identification is largely unconscious, and that this quality is what differentiates it from admiration, empathy, influence or other consciously recognized emotional bonds, and makes it both the origin of identity and the potential origin of neurotic symptoms.“ With such reference the whole background that culture industry bases itself on reveals its mimetic nature. But before making any conclusion it is important to look at this problem from socio-psychological perspective. „Even if one were to assume that archaic, preindividual instincts survive, one could not simply point to this inheritance but would have to explain why modern men revert to patterns of behaviour which

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flagrantly contradict their own rational level and the present stage of enlightened technological civilization. This is precisely what Freud wants to do. He tries to find out which psychological forces result in the transformation of individuals into a mass.”

Taking into account the aspect that identification as a form of mimesis comes to work on a very instinctual level, mass culture emerges as a specific expression of mimesis. This can be taken to be an essential drawback to the theories mentioned above. Since Adorno negates the actual possibility of mimetic reconciliation within modernity, while on the other hand Benjamin goes so far to establish certain mimetic modernity, Freud’s aspect on this shows a certain anachronism considering the mass psychology. Culture industry regarded as a direct product of scientific rationality, that being enlightenment, comes to reveal itself led by instinctual drive of collective identity. As it has been analysed earlier on, such phenomenon is found fully functioning in case of fascism. Though, there is an important difference to point out. Mass society, which brings mimesis to a greater scale tends towards extreme ends, which are ultimately violence. Such can be regarded to as a great paradox that shows the difference between mimesis on individual and mass level. „We might begin to dress like others in the group, take on their ways of speaking and model our lives on the pattern of its most influential members. In most cases, such transitory identifications are harmless, but in extreme instances, such as mob violence or religious cults, they can become dangerous.”

According to Potolsky, what Freud asserts, is the deeply situated irrationality of mass society. It becomes obvious that the process of mass identification bears a empirical, or even more so unconscious following; Freud basically takes it as a mass-psychosis, since there is no plane for individuality to resurface. All of this can be easily traced back to the Girard’s scapegoat mechanism mentioned before. „For Girard, mimesis is a dynamic social force that lies at the origins of religion and culture. But whereas Adorno argues that the control of mimesis underlies the development of rationalistic modernity, Girard suggests that uncontrolled mimesis threatens social stability. Mimesis is not the utopian other of reason, but the origin of violence and conflict.”

This can be taken as a certain perspective of Adorno’s mimetic theory. Reasoning Benjamin’s view on mimetic relativity, Girard presupposes mimesis violent nature. At the same time it justifies Adorno and Horkheimer’s outsiderist view of mimesis, seeing it as a certain social and cultural anomaly incompatible with culture industry.

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123Potolsky, Matthew. *Mimesis*. P.120.
124P.146.
Nevertheless, Girard accents on mimesis repetitive nature; the fascist example of mimetic symbolism showcases that mimesis is tend to disclose itself with its intrinsic violent nature.

11 Prevailance of mimetic modernity

At this point, aesthetics emerges as an essential revival for mimetic activity. Such resurgence bases itself around art as the primary realm in which mimesis was initially intended as a fundamental activity. In other words, what can be grasped in Adorno’s aesthetic theory is that the art maintains its initial autonomy as an individual activity. This also supposes the certain change of perspectives that showcases itself later on in the aspect of film industry. Since the art was supposedly seen as working for subjective means, that is as an individual expression, or expression of subjectivity in seems to become, in modern terms, the only plane on which subjectivity still maintains its abstractness in relation with the reality. Such aesthetical metaphysics becomes crucial when investigation of subject/object distinction comes in terms with the exploitative nature of enlightenment. Though, what must be underlined is the relativity of mimesis, that enables it to prevail. Such is critical aspect that Verdeja points out contradictory to Adorno. „Through such resistance, they point to a mimetic future where life and art will be subsumed into one another. Mimesis, then, is the complex interpenetration and ultimately assimilation of the subject with nature, with itself, and with fellow human beings.“

From this perspective, art and mimesis can be taken as eternal struggle for renewing the subject’s relation with its nature. Even though relative, the mimesis maintains its cause as a preserving of subjectivity, wheras it allows subject to reflect itself or even more so, abstract itself from the given totality. The main criticism towards can be derived from the mentioned relativity of mimesis, that supposes its certain correspondence with scientific rationality and modernity overall. „However, his mimetic authenticity does not represent the overcoming of deformed modernist rationality; if anything, it seems incompatible with the challenges of modernity and thus inadequate as a source of critique from within the modernist stance.“ Therefore the whole aspect of freedom towards subjectivity and awareness of mimesis and mimesis seems applicable to the modernity as a concept. It may very well only provide aspect in which art and mimesis comes as a peculiarity of modernity, but definitely not radical critique. For Verdeja, such Adorno’s theory’s shortcoming is fundamentally troubling. Taken such account, Adorno mimetic

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theory seems incompatible with modernist society and thus cannot provide a projection of future for mimesis, since mimesis is not so much a phenomenon in these terms, but more of a certain historicity that presumpts social development. „The future must be rooted in the present in some way, unless all we seek is destruction of the present and a return to the past. Adorno’s hostility to any positive articulation of ‘modernist’ mimesis means that he is ill-equipped to explain the basis of a free modern society. What he terms transcendence occasionally seems more like a reversion to the past or pre-modern forms of social organization, though of course he would protest any such charge.“

Such problem can be summed up as a retrospect to traditional mimesis, which, when keeping in mind the significance of enlightenment, becomes rather impossible. The relation between myth and enlightenment highlights the basic inconsistency of the two and thus renders the traditional resurgence of mimesis complicated. As the way out of this, the relativity of mimesis, that is, that mimesis as a realm of authentic art emerges as a certain reaction to the social and political conditions. It is important to underline, that mimesis serves as mediation and adjustment to the social inconsistency; there is a great deal of artistic harmony that must be transcended into a realm of social and political differentiations.

11.1 From mimetic utopia towards modernistic mimesis

As the main criticism towards Adorno comes from, rather, archaic understanding of mimesis, the means for improvement must be taken into account to, conditionally, adapt mimesis to modernity. „What is relevant to our discussion is that Adorno’s idea of mimesis maintains a radically oppositional stance toward social complexity. Rather than identifying how we could articulate a theory of freedom that speaks to modern social relations – and thus remain modern – mimesis characterizes freedom as largely an unmediated condition.“ In this regard, freedom and ability for criticism serves as a certain social mediation, that mimesis is ought to provide. Though, as it is obvious, the theory provided by Adorno comes insufficient within such demands. The main point of focus for Adorno and Horkheimer is the aesthetic complexity of the modern mimesis, whereas it emerges as a problem where traditional art succumbs to the conformist and consumerist tendencies. From this point of view it is not a matter of achieving fulfilled relation between mimesis and modernity but rather search for a realm of authentic art. Therefore, the question of modern mimesis remains

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not only unanswered, but even more so unheld. „But to return to Horkheimer: if a theory is to be critical – and not merely utopian in the pejorative sense – it must have both an evaluative component that relies on explicit, rationally justified normative principles, and also provide the grounding for practical assessments of how real social change could (and ought to) occur. Mimesis falls short on both of these accounts. It does not take seriously contemporary social complexity.“\(^ {129}\) In this regard, Verdeja, ultimately claims that the Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s theory does not provide any ground for the possible adaptation of mimesis into a modernist realm. Either way, in these terms, mimesis inevitably sacrifices its initial flight towards the establishment of naturalistic relations in society, and undergoes the significant which Verdeja seeks for. By saying that mimesis needs to be transcended, it basically means that it must be fully applied, since for Adorno and Horkheimer, mimesis is seen somewhat as being outside of the social and political totality and therefore not fully in function. At this point it is possible to state that Benjamin's view on mimetic modernity come more developed in the matter that, his claim is oriented more towards the modern aspect of mimesis, and most importantly the preservation of it. Matthew Potolsky in his work\(^ {130}\) on mimesis highlights on Benjamin’s view on relativity of mimesis in historical development. „Both Benjamin and Caillois argue that mimesis is historically and developmentally significant, and both theorists find evidence of a mimetic faculty in modernity. They differ, however, on the question of whether mimesis itself changes over time. For Benjamin, the mimetic faculty is mutable, altering to accommodate new conditions.“\(^ {131}\) Keeping in mind Benjamin’s distinct views on film-industry, which are rather positive, mimesis is found able to adapt to a certain social and political requirements of the modernity. For Benjamin, mimesis comes as a certain antidote to the, almost, psychotic nature of modernity. „Mimesis becomes a way of explaining the seemingly irrational elements of modernity, from mass political movements, where followers wear the same outfits and share the same hatreds, to economic panics, in which investors make suicidal financial decisions in imitation of others and not for their own good.\(^ {132}\) According to such statement, mimesis provides a basic need for self-reflection and subjectivity, which in mass-society might seem scarce. It is fair to say that the differences in Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s theory to the one of Benjamin might be traced to the strict distinction between myth and enlightenment, which had been questioned.

\(^{130}\) Potolsky, Matthew. Mimesis. P.143.
\(^{131}\) P. 143.
\(^{132}\) P.143.
early on in the work. Though, what Potolsky provides is the direct contradiction between the two theories that highlight the important points that need to be discussed.

11.2 Mimesis and enlightenment reconsidered

The question of mimesis in modernity comes as a specific case of psychologism that have been already stressed out by Adorno and Horkheimer in accordance with Freud. Inevitably, the problem of subjective mimesis comes recurrent in analysis of masses and culture. Potolsky states that outside the realm of art, mimesis comes no more as a suspended self-reflection; that is, a quiet mimesis tat still supposes the outsideness of the subject in the mass society, or more particularly in case of fascism. „As for both Benjamin and Caillois, for Adorno mimesis does not disappear from human life. Instead, it lives on as the repressed and mutilated other of modernity, in the identical uniforms and repeated chants of fascist mobs, and in the quasi-magical power commodities have over our desires.“¹³³ Still, both for Adorno and Benjamin the case of mimesis in modernity almost necessarily presupposes the status of social outcast. Since mimesis seeks to re-establish the subjectivity of individual and even more so his ability for critique, it contradicts Adorno‘s and Horkheimer‘s fundamentals of culture industry. The totality that culture industry is so apt at, and which necessarily implies the totalitarian nature of it, does not come into any contact with subjective reflection and reason. What is important to underline is the critical distinction that is underlined in the Aesthetic theory. When speaking of subject and object, in this case, the identification takes a different turn when in terms of socio-political development. As it is visible in Adorno and mass society, the individual as a subject is negated and made irrelevant. From this perspective point on, it is the masses that begin to form a subject matter and that only the totality can be grasped as an identity. Though, it can be maintained that the basics for criticism of Adorno can be derived from his notion of enlightenment. „For Adorno, the term Enlightenment refers both to the idealization of rationality and science in eighteenth-century and modern thought and to a longer tradition in Western philosophy of privileging abstract reason over the senses and emotion. Adorno argues that this tradition violently distances the self from nature, and subjects the outer world of things and the inner world of thought to the totalitarian administration of the isolated individual. “¹³⁴ It comes clear that from the beginning, in Adorno and Horkheimer‘s theory mimesis and enlightenment comes with a fundamental

¹³⁴P.144.
contradiction which disproves any possibility for reconciliation. Adorno’s naturalistic view on this problem may seem as an effort for a way out of this identity problem, but taken into consideration Benjamin’s perception of modernity, it is possible to state that what Potolsky asserts does not showcase the essential contradiction between Adorno and Benjamin. It is within the relation with Freud that such contradiction becomes clearer. „Mimesis is the repressed underside of the Enlightenment, the ‘biological prehistory’ of humanity from which reason arises, but which rational thought rejects.“135 Searching for other possible mediations between mimesis and enlightenment it is utmost important to underline, or rather question the scientific rationality itself. Since mimesis is regarded as pre-rational, enlightenment needs to prove itself superior which it fails to do. Such inferiority comes clear in terms of culture industry and the problem of identification.

12 Habermas and the problem of dialectics

In order to make a certain statement regarding Adorno’s and Horkheimer's theory it is essential to focus on Jurgen Habermas' critique in his work. At this point, seeking to conclude the investigation of mimetic and aesthetic theory, it is important to underline key points that Habermas provides concerning the theory. Much like Verdeja also points out, Habermas goes for strict critique of the instrumentality of nature that Adorno and Horkheimer claim. „<...> Horkheimer and Adorno nominate a capacity, mimesis, about which they can speak only as they would about a piece of uncomprehended nature. They characterize the mimetic capacity, in which an instrumentalized nature makes its speechless accusation, as an „impulse“.“137 From such standpoint, mimesis, in a way, loses its conceptuality since Adorno and horkheimer perceive it as a instinct, or a certain primordial reflection of nature that is pressumably instrumentalized by reason. It can be said that, the main problem that Habermas preludes here, is the actual lack of the particular mimetic theory from Adorno and Horkheimer. With the scarcity of the futuristic – mimetic perspectivity, the Adorno’s and Horkheimer’s theory fails, or even more so is unable to find any reconciliation with the instrumental reason. Such shortcoming can be found in Ross Wilson's work138 regarding Adorno’s theory. „Habermas charges that Dialectic of Enlightenment does not do

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135P.144.
137P.382.
justice to the progressive potential latent within modern rationality. Adorno and Horkheimer’s pessimism with regard to modern reason, Habermas contends, is due to their one-sided view of it. <...> Most importantly, Adorno has been cast as incapable of providing any account of social action. It is charged that social action, for Adorno, is merely mechanical.\textsuperscript{139} Such remarks that are made with strong reference to Habermas’ critique outlines the spectre of scarcity that Adorno’s theory reveals. It can be said that from this point the lack of certain mimetic correctness, considering its social aspects suppose the very limited ability to perceive such theory towards a certain outcome. „This raises the question of the status that Horkheimer and Adorno can still claim for a theory that no longer wants to rely on philosophy and science critically working together.“\textsuperscript{140} Based on this assumption, mimesis directly falls outside the category of rationality or even more so any ability to reconcile with the scientific reason. Though, Habermas goes so far to underline that \textit{mimesis}, for Adorno and Horkheimer, as a certain end or as something that is kept outside the instrumental sphere maintains its specificity as a particular social medium. „And even though they cannot provide a theory of mimesis, the very name calls forth associations – and they are intended: Imitation designates a relation between persons in which the one accommodates to the other, identifies with the other, empathizes with the other.“\textsuperscript{141} This perspective provides a certain way out of identity crisis that Adorno’s theory supposes when it is bound for certain scarcity of subjectivity towards a mass-view of society. Seeking ways to presume any possibility for re-emergence of individuality and intersubjectivity, mimesis can be interpreted as a sphere or a plane of consistency. Antonio Gutierrez Pozo accents to this that, overall, mimesis and artistic activity presupposes a positive outcome for Adorno’s dialectics. „The ‘new Adornian concept’ is a concept of nonidentity; in general, Adorno’s philosophy represents an ethic of nonidentity.<...> 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 conduct.“\textsuperscript{142} What Pozo asserts here is the positivistic re-perception of Adorno’s dialectics in a way that mimesis itself may have to be seen as a ground for dialectics. In relation to Habermas, it can be said that the goal that needs to be established for a certain outcome or an end of Adorno’s

\textsuperscript{139}P. 107.
\textsuperscript{140}Habermas, Jurgen.\textit{The theory of communicative action}.P. 385.
\textsuperscript{141}P. 390.
theory is commensurability between reason and differing subjectivity; that can be seen in
effort in mimesis.

12.1 Towards the outcome for mimetic reconciliation

The redirection of Adorno’s theory that Habermas' provides implies a need for change in dialectics that have been analysed earlier on. Though, it may not necessarily have to be the radical change, it is first and foremost the change in perspective regarding the question of identity and subject/object distinction. This comes as a focus point in search for positive conclusion of Adorno’s and Horkheimer's theory. Therefore, considering the, rather, essential shortcoming of their theory, Habermas makes the following proposition. „Adorno cannot elucidate the mimetic capacity by means of an abstract opposition to instrumental reason. The structures of reason to which Adorno merely alludes first become accessible to analysis when the ideas of reconciliation and freedom are deciphered as codes for a form of intersubjectivity, however utopian it may be, that makes possible a mutual and constraint-free understanding among individuals in their dealings with one another, as well as the identity of individuals who come to a compulsion-free understanding with themselves – sociation without repression.“143 It might seem that what Habermas seeks to do is newly establish the intersubjective and social relations, what seems irrelevant considering Adorno’s already pre-established mimesis. Musell, therefore contradicts Habermas' views on Adorno. „The communicative turn can be said to catalyse a distinct move away from subject-object relations to subject-subject relations. As a result of this shift, for Habermas, there is no longer any need to invoke a mysterious reconciliatory interrelation with some ‘other’ that is beyond the reaches of domination or reification, for in communicative acts we are always already interacting with another subject, that is, a subject with a voice, communicative capabilities, and so forth, who is neither unknowable nor ineffable.“144 From certain points, Habermas' strict shift for reconciliation, itself, seems irrelevant since there is no need for re-establishment of intersubjectivity. Though, it is noticeable that such strive is concerned with the re-establishment or moreover, redefinition of mimesis. Keeping in mind the strive towards reconciliation, that for Habermas seems nonexistent, or even overseen, in Adorno's theory there is still a mimetic implication of rationality. Even though Adorno and Horkheimer do not provide any specific peculiarities for mimesis considering its potential development, it

can be said that, from one point or another, search for establishment of such relations might be irrelevant or redundant. Pierre-François Noppen in his article\textsuperscript{145} questions Adorno’s assertions on mimetic rationality. „Reflection and self-reflection, as he understands them, are processes geared towards reigniting our conceptual representations, so as to make their strictly defined bounds porous again and to open up in this way patterns of meaning not otherwise available.”\textsuperscript{146} This may very well be a critical standpoint for making any further conclusions while seeking any reconciliation of myth and reason. Even though claim of mimetic rationality itself remains contrary, it nevertheless showcases that scientific reason or enlightenment’s dialectics are inevitably based on mimetic presumptions. For this reason, Habermas’ critique at the same time shows itself to be twofold, in means of its adequacy. „Because the mimetic capacity escapes the conceptual framework of cognitive-instrumentally determined subject/object relations, it counts as the sheer opposite of reason, as impulse.”\textsuperscript{147} Adorno’s basic theory supposes such a perspective on mimetic reflection. Such can be distinguished as Adorno’s own strict theoretical framework that does not really provide a presumption for reconciliation, or more so, for acceptance of mimetic cognition and perception. Therefore, it is obvious that Habermas’ critique is intended for certain reformulation in methodology. „But the rational core of mimetic achievements can be laid open only if we give up the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness – namely, a subject that represents objects and toils with them – in favor of the paradigm of linguistic philosophy – namely, that of intersubjective understanding or communication – and puts the cognitive-instrumental aspect of reason in its proper place as part of a more encompassing communicative rationality.”\textsuperscript{148} It can be said that Habermas’ main intention is to underline the importance of mimetic reflection – both self and other – in order to stand out of the, rather, phenomenological perception and cognition that can hardly be associated with pure reason or any true rationality.

\textsuperscript{146}P.98.
\textsuperscript{147}Habermas, Jurgen. The theory of communicative action. P.390.
\textsuperscript{148}P.390.
Conclusion

In an effort to answer the question of what mimesis is for Adorno, it is important to maintain the unambiguous meaning of any mimetic activity that in modern terms comes prevail: art. For art in Adorno’s theory presupposes the only place for mimesis to remain relevant. Such mutual relation between mimesis and art becomes an issue of survival. The analysis of Adorno’s theory allowed in the course of the work to re-establish the subjective individual, capable of self-reflection and reflection of others. Therefore the recurrence of the term „mass culture“ enabled us to look to the problem of the culture industry as a matter of perspective.

By attempting to shed a more positive light on mimesis and modernity, it was determined that their mutual reconciliation lies on the level of subject and object distinction which can now be regarded to as reconciliation between empirical and rational realms. As troubling as it may sound such relation already originally laid within the establishment of myth. So, in retrospect, modernity as it is perceived today, only gains its incommensurability with art and myth through the distortion of enlightenment. A look into the history (and historicity) of mimesis provides the dislocation or disjointment of the naturalistic view of reason. The complaint about Adorno’s naturalistic idealism comes as a mere criticism: it is not a matter of providing a certain mimetic scheme – the culture industry itself is already a, rather, negative scheme of such kind, but more likely an effort, in an almost in Heideggerian sense, to return back to the traditional aesthetic values that mimesis embodies.

Paradoxically, it can be observed that despite the consistent criticisms and attempts to rethink Adorno’s theory, Adorno’s works on the subject of mimesis themselves can be perceived as a search for the place of art in modernity and most importantly – what art is or should be? The culture industry answers such question by fulfilling the needs of so-called society, which itself is a product of modernity. It is in its correlation with Benjamin that Adorno’s theory becomes concerned about the problem of modern art. Adorno’s goal is not to seek for any reconciliations; quite the opposite, in fact. For Adorno the lost historical relation between myth and enlightenment showcases that there is always a mutuality between the two seemingly abstract poles.
The objectified notion of „mass culture“, with all its rigidity, stands as a cornerstone for rethinking the concept of mimesis. If we are to re-establish, or at least to rethink mimesis in modern terms, it is crucial to first of all re-establish the human individual with all of its mimetic capabilities that presume the availability for art to re-emerge in the face of culture industry. Though, from such standpoint the culture industry itself, at least for Benjamin, already implies a resurrection of mimesis on a certain level. So it is a matter of rethinking mimesis as a search for humanness in mass-society. The politicization of every realm of life contradicts the very nature of mimetic impulses of human activity. Therefore, the culture industry is the phenomenon and the problem that endangers the actual possibility for prevailance of art and any authentic human artistry.
Literature


