

# The dialectic of the instrumental and the aesthetic mind in the philosophy of Theodore Adorno and its representations in contemporary art

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*Received: May 2019 • Final Acceptance: August 2020*

## Abstract

The current study aims to identify the controversy dimensions between the instrumental and the aesthetic mind in Theodore Adorno's philosophy and its representations in contemporary composition. The problem of the study is based on Theodore Adorno's readings of the contemporary and cultural scene nature related to the conflict principle between the two concepts of conflict: the instrumental mind that makes technology, machinery; and the aesthetic mind that makes art and beauty. The importance of the study lies in presenting the ideas and thesis of the Frankfurt Critical School, as Adorno was one of its pioneers. The study includes five artworks achieved by artists from the European and American West, as the researcher's selection criteria were based on observing the most famous and influencing artists in the contemporary art and on choosing artworks achieved between 1958 and 2004. The study found that most important of which is celebration of the productions of contemporary fine art in all its marginal, which elevates it to the place of artistic and aesthetic work to cut contemporary human ties with everything that is perfect and Semitic, and elevate human mind, spirit, and general human culture. Furthermore, the study found that the most important of which is the emergence of hybrid artistic genres combining different creative styles and turning a large number of artists to the practice technical specialties away from their original areas in search of innovation and fame.

## Keywords

Art philosophy, Art sociology, Art mediation.

## 1. Introduction

The two world wars that Europe experienced during the 20th century have had devastating effects on the convictions and principles of the European individual and have led to the shaking of confidence in the mind, which was directly responsible for wars. Art was the first field of culture that foreshadowed the movement of modernity based on the concepts of mind, nihilism, subjectivity, and aspiration to destroy the last strongholds of religious, value, and ethics constants. These cognitive transformations were accompanied by the emergence of modern industries and the growing desire for capital to expand. The post-war arts came in a hybrid and fragmented form of their origins and roots, unable to produce the perfect ideal models that directed the advanced technology obsession that has become involved in all joints of contemporary life and gave the artists opportunities to work with excellence and superior technical and industrial support, but on the other side it took emptying the art of its emotional and aesthetic content.

Theodore Adorno's readings focus on the contemporary cultural scene at the level of human thought, in its comprehensive form, on the possibility of delineating precise boundaries to distinguish between two fundamental approaches that govern the pathways of evolution that follow the contemporary human mind. The first is the aesthetic approach, which related to understanding nature and life and trying to work in harmony in the interest of all human societies, which Theodore Adorno calls "the aesthetic mind that sees its seeds arise with man, and his roots meet the inherent nature of living beings, and the finest are human beings who live and enjoy and know in the light of the aesthetic vision of the universe, and the life is permeated deep in their vital and human nature."

However, man was able to develop within him a vision of a stronger nature less effective and more effective, and utilitarian is the instrumental vision of the universe and life, where this object has also an innate mental faculty, which is the faculty of the search for tools and use of them to achieve near or far goals. Rather, it has the ability to develop, or-

ganize, and continually adjust tools to achieve new and more complex goals and objectives.

## 2. Study plan

### 2.1. Study objectives

- To identify the dimensions of the controversy between the instrumental mind and the aesthetic mind in the philosophy of Theodore Adorno and its representations in the contemporary fine art.
- To provide the most important ideas and philosophy of Frankfurt Critical School, which contributed to the transformations of contemporary art.
- To clarify the concept of the instrumental and the aesthetic mind in Theodore Adorno's thought and its effect on arts during the post-modern period.
- To study the analytical and critical readings of art works of the most important contemporary artists.

### 2.2. Study significance

- The present research provides presentation of the ideas of the Frankfurt Critical School.
- The research provides a reading in the concept of instrumental and aesthetic mind in the thought of Theodore Adorno.
- The research includes analytical and critical readings of the work of the products of contemporary fine art.
- The research benefits the preliminary and higher studies students in the areas of technical criticism and contemporary fine art.

### 2.3. Study problem

Theodore Adorno's reading of the nature of the contemporary cultural scene is based on the principle of conflict between the two concepts of conflict: the instrumental mind that makes technology and machinery and the aesthetic mind that makes art, beauty, and harmony. With the development of human societies, the power of the instrumental mind has increased over the aesthetic mind by industrial revolution, extensive technical development, and scientific and technical knowledge, which was directed to control nature as it was also used to control the human. Adorno

decides that the aesthetic dimension is capable of liberating the contemporary man, who has become an exiled expatriate with one dimension, and thus change aesthetic into a salvation of instrumental rationality, which has tightened its grip on man and dominated his life and mind. The current research problem can be summed up in answering the following questions:

1. What are the dimensions of the current controversy between the instrumental and the aesthetic mind in Theodore Adorno's thinking and its representations in contemporary fine art?

2. How can contemporary art reflect the thoughts of Theodore Adorno in the instrumental and the aesthetic mind?

**Study Hypothesis:** The study assumes that, in Theodore Adorno's philosophy, the instrumental mind has become dominant in comparison to the aesthetic mind. This is due to the technological developments and the predominance of capital on the expense of man—things that affected the representations of contemporary plastic art.

#### 2.4. Study methodology

This study employed the descriptive analytical approach; an approach cares for an additional, more flexible, and useful function by describing the phenomena in a realistic way through the use of observation and its different methods. This approach also implies what is termed phenomenological analysis and comparison in a more detailed manner. The reasons behind the researcher's employment of this approach were: to get into Theodore Adorno's philosophy, noting its impact on the trends of contemporary arts and the need of this study for the description and analysis.

#### 2.5. Study tools

In this study, the observation tool was used, as it is one of the tools approved in the descriptive analytical approach. By using it, the researchers observed the phenomenon of the study, which is based on examining the controversy dimensions between the instrumental and aesthetic minds in Theodore Adorno's philosophy and its representations in the contemporary plastic art, writing down everything related to them and describing them clearly. In determin-

ing the phenomenon's behaviors during the use of observation, the researchers' experiences and skills were relied on. Therefore, the researchers, by using this tool, defined his goal, collected information systematically, recorded it, and defined the activities concerned with the observation.

#### 2.6. Study limits

Given the fact that Theodore Adorno lived in Germany and America and moved between several European countries, the study was limited to spatial limits, by selecting contemporary plastic artists in the European and American West. The researchers confined them to this study by observing the most famous and influencing artists in the contemporary art, namely the British artist Robert "Banksy," the American artists Duane Hanson and Robert Rauschenberg, the French artist Yves Klein, and the Dutch artist Theo Janssen. This study was also limited to time limits by selecting artworks published between 1958 and 2004.

#### 2.7. Study procedures

The researchers applied the study procedures as follows:

1. The researchers have reviewed, in an attempt to answer the study's main question, various previous studies written in Arabic, German, and English and addressed the field of Adorno's philosophy, as well as considering the most prominent contemporary artists who were influenced by his philosophy.

2. Preparing the study's methodology and tools that are appropriate to the study content

3. The researchers took all the notes related to the scope of the study by tracking Adorno's philosophy and the most prominent artists influenced by his philosophy.

4. Determining the criteria for selecting artists and their works, as these criteria include determining the artistic works in which consumerism and its impact on mankind and life appears, considering it the facade of the instrumental mind searching for benefit and profit through the use of all ways and methods

5. Reviewing multiple works by contemporary artists in the European and

American West, and an examining of the extent to which they are compatible with the philosophy of the instrumental and aesthetic mind, which is considered the basis of the study, in preparation for selecting the study sample

6. The artists' works were analyzed after being selected in line with Adorno's philosophy.

7. Determining the study sample represented by the artists mentioned in Study Limits

8. Analyzing the notes related to the selected artists and their artworks, and then recording them

9. The previous notes were audited, classified, and analyzed, and then the results were concluded.

### **3. The concept of culture industry in Adorno's philosophy and its representations**

The failure of the labor movements in Europe and their transformation from class objectives led to the rise of Nazism in Germany. All these transformations led to the symposium on the revival of Marxism, in which the leading philosophers and thinkers participated, and led to the establishment of a social research institute at Goethe University in Frankfurt, which aimed to continue research and debate. The call for establishing critical theory can stand in front of traditional social theories that still dominate the social and philosophical thought of German universities (Buchholz, 2017).

Theodore Adorno's readings of the contemporary cultural scene are based on the level of human thought in its comprehensive form and the possibility to draw precise boundaries to distinguish between two basic approaches governing the pathways of evolution in the modern human mind. The first is the aesthetic approach related to understanding nature and life and working in harmony with them in the interest of all human societies, which Adorno called "the aesthetic mind," as he sees that its seeds grow along with man and that its roots meet the original nature of the living beings, as human beings (who live, learn, and work in light of an aesthetic vision of the universe) are ranking at the highest of them. But at the same time, man was able to develop other natural

visions—less influential, but more effective and utilitarian—and this is the instrumental vision of the universe and life (Mohamad, 1998).

#### **3.1. The instrumental mind according to Adorno's philosophy**

The most important and dangerous factor in Adorno's view is the ability of man to make tools through purely mental schemes, or through abstract ideas and perceptions arising from his need to achieve different ideas and ends, which Adorno calls the instrumental mind that leads man to harness everything and anything for his direct practical and utilitarian purposes. Theodore Adorno is one of the most prominent philosophers of the Frankfurt School, whose main concern is to deconstruct the concept of the instrumental mind and to take the procedural concept of reason as a direct analysis and thinking faculty. Adorno's thesis deals with criticizing system and relationships produced by the mind, which center on self, and revealing the contradictions of the instrumental mind, which transfers the act of the mind to the act of dominance and control on the man himself. With the development of human societies, the power of the instrumental mind has increased on the aesthetic mind, especially with the industrial revolution and huge technical development that was witnessed in modern times (Jones, 1993). Adorno believes that philosophers of light revolted against the myth of religion and revealed the manipulation of his men, opening doors of hope to the mind that moves us from the kingdom of darkness to the kingdom of lights. But this mind, in the framework of instrumental technology, betrayed enlightenment and fell into a false identity that breathed nothing but blood and accepted only the domination and exploitation of everything to turn the mind into irrationality (Mustafa & Ghareeb, 2016).

Where the instrumental mind dominated the activities and patterns of life, it took the form of the machine or the means capable of giving importance to every act until the human suffered and faced tougher control and unparalleled humanity in history. The instrumental rationality, in Western societies, pro-

duced new forms where it also used to control man, meaning that control was transferred from the field of nature to the humanitarian field (Maazouz, 2011).

This dominance reached its peak in industrially advanced societies, and the philosophers of critical theory worked on the study of the state of alienation in capitalist society. Man suffers from the emergence of the idea of reification, alienation, and automatic repression. Thus, aesthetics became a salvation of the instrumental mind that have tightened their grip on man and dominated his internal and external dimensions (Mustafa & Ghareeb, 2016). The instrumental rationality opened the doors of art on technology, advertising, consumption, and politics. Adorno sees technology as a tool for the dissemination of art and delivery to the largest number of the public, and in a record time, where the controversy and thought of enlightenment extended to overcome the pessimistic character that left behind the atmosphere of the two world wars within the framework of instrumental rationality in which the mind has become a tool of control (Biro, 2011).

The happiness promised by the Enlightenment turned into injustice and misery under the totalitarian systems, so Adorno focused on the controversy of the mind and legend, and he emphasized the need to separate art from politics and the consumer market in the sense that it is not used as a tool to achieve political goals. It affirms the independence of the art work, and not to accept the interpretation of any text from outside, because Adorno's real art is art that is not subject to the laws and rules of reality and it maintains his independence and his ability to criticize. The true independent art of Adorno is the one who can triumph over the question of meaning and the constant criticism, not the preemptory answers and absolute aesthetic realities, nor to closed and rigid patterns. Therefore, he attached particular importance to constantly reviewing the formulation of the meaning of aesthetic truth, the mysteries of technical interpretation, and the questioning of origins and methodologies of aesthetics that are adopted today and are prevailing in the daily and human reali-

ty. They market the concepts of domestication and contempt of peoples, the imposition of a false ideology to conceal the facts, and the penetration of control and exploitation and contempt under the pretext of science, enlightenment, and civilization (Abd Al-Jabbar, 2016).

This has led to the influence of the mind and the exploitation of the individual and society under the cloak of science, technology, and urbanization, and how it has made a certain class, category, or official institutions of science and technology an instrument of exploiting the individual and society with the worst exploitation. Therefore, Adorno transmitted human art and thought to cultural industries and commoditization, and he criticized modernity and its implications for postmodernism, which Adorno considered to be the art of negation in the first place, which believes in the cognitive aspect of the disappearance of meaning through fragmentation or fractional method (Cobb & Abromeit, 2014).

On the other hand, Adorno and Max Horkheimer formulated the concept of cultural industry, where the concept was formulated in the light of three major concepts, the first of which revolves around the concept of materialism and the expansion of the Marxist concept to encompass cultural production rather than merely material production. Then, making culture involved in capitalist production as a whole is George Lokac's concept of reification, with the extension of its significance also to include the structure of the capitalist society rather than restricting it to class consciousness alone. The reason for criticizing the concept of cultural industry was to emphasize the concepts of homogeneity and symmetry in the overall products of mass culture in order to establish in society a pattern of dynamic connection between the requirements of production of the cultural text and the nature of its consumer life (Adorno, 1991).

Mostly, it has become possible to address the community only through media cultural products in the framework of the cultural industry, which is guided and directed by the principle of advertising, where the capital marketers and planners have alerted of its impact and seriousness in terms of

forming public awareness that characterizes it. This structure becomes now a product that is manufactured. This led Adorno to put the critique of popular culture within Marx's critique of commodity fascism in his joint article with Horkheimer, titled "The Industry of Culture, Enlightenment and the Deception of the Masses," which was in their joint book "The Dialectic of Enlightenment" (Noeri, Adorno, & Horkheimer, 2002). The goods the culture industry produced are not measured by the value in use, but by the abstract value determined by the market.

All this is in the context of consumption, which assumes ready patterns of masses in the contexts of the dominance of money and goods, especially in the capacity of the industrial society to transform the real culture into a mass consumer culture. If the philosophy of enlightenment calls for the use of the mind in everything, Adorno called for using the mind in a new field, which is the critique of the same mind in its use as a social structure of domination and repression. Adorno considered that the philosophy of Enlightenment in the 18th and 19th centuries, confused by the absolute uses of mind (Moneer, 2010).

Thus, the cultural and artistic production of the advanced industrial and technical society is transformed into a mechanism that absorbs various industrial techniques and expresses the power of industrial capital and anesthesia, which is a popular culture that satisfies collective needs but becomes a means of domination due to the development of technology and communication and its indirect control in the obligatory participation of millions in the process of production and consumption and their consent without resistance. This type of industrial culture pumps today's factories selling cultural goods and is aimed to controlling the taste and the mind of members of the community and turn them into passive recipients unable to criticize through the consumption of fast, tempting pleasures. The media and modern communication displace individuals from their reality and make them run agonizingly be-

hind the bright civil goods, regardless of their living conditions. The danger they cause lies in cultural goods that create psychological needs that can't be satisfied through industrial products (Moneer, 2010).

### 3.2. Adorno's aesthetic philosophy

In Adorno's aesthetic theory, sports, media, television, fashion, and other means of advertising provided for individuals new and diverse alternatives produced by advanced technology which is rich with technical capabilities that have led to a wide expansion of the arts, especially in the techniques of printing, photography, film, and finally audio and video technologies. But, at the same time, it has led to fragmentation of the arts and the spread of entertainment arts instead of the enjoyment of fine art and deep insight into it (Fawsi, 2014). Adorno's opinion also applies to music, which is supposed to remain faithful in giving credence to telling the truth, because it is the last innocent expression of truth in art (Moneer, 2010).

But, modern music, fine arts, and literature stand today on the verge of what can be called art because it makes a coincidence or incident one of the basic elements of it, and it is a tendency to a new job in modern consumer society after losing its old positions for the power of advertising. Adorno decides that the alienation of the art by the art itself does not mean silence the arts, but that means the art of the manufactured culture becomes an art that is not slender because it is now transformed into goods and CDs, pictures or videos of Beethoven, Mozart, linguistic works and books that can be purchased in the form of a pocket book (Leppert & Adorno, 2002).

In the same mechanical way, provided various other arts such as jazz in America as an example of mass culture that spontaneously evolved by the masses are a problem in themselves because the masses are in fact not composed of independent individuals but by persons supported by their economic subordination and labor conditions in consumer industrial societies and they have to run behind the sweeping mainstream, just as happen with deceptive entertainment music (Markham, 2017).

According to Adorno, the imagination faculty in art connects sensitivity and the world of reason. When art abandons imagination, it also abandons about the aesthetic, which reveals itself in the autonomy of art and finally falls in the capture of reality, which art seeks to understand and overcome it. Conversely the abandonment of aesthetic means to abdicate responsibility in creating the other reality from within the existing reality and this is what Adorno called the industry and falsification of the moral position which is represented of what we call the guilty pleasures (Mahdi, 2018).

On the other hand, Adorno explains his attitude from the relationship between art, function and pragmatism, and asserts that art has always been a commodity but it has never been a mere commodity. In contrast, the culture industry is only a commodity without the need to prove that the manufactured art achievements becomes covered all aspects of contemporary individual life, and it is an art that repeats itself in a tired and tedious manner, but contains moments or few scenes that are rare or valuable (Hao, 2010).

The aim of Adorno's aesthetic experience is making it shocking to reject reality which steeped in negative dialectics. This is what makes art a revolutionary function in Adorno because the arts must provide a critique of the rigid rationality that modernist societies give in. The artistic work must not be subject to the domination exercised by those regimes that have produced many works that call themselves artistic, but they are not art, but rather a culture manufactured to suit the hierarchical order of consumer society. Therefore, the task of art is the creation of a magical and critical aesthetic world that stands in the face of the turbulent reality and works to revolutionize it, in which the modern capitalist industrial societies will not succeed in suppressing man to the point of rot (Lechte, 2008).

Adorno's aesthetic theory tries to preserve the unique essence of things, liberating it from any manufactured holistic culture dominating on the human, where the work of art transmits us to the world that philosophy aspires to

and can't reach. This imaginary world is not an illusion or a metaphor; it is a simulation of reality. Of course it's not the reality of modernity and postmodernity, but the reality that should have existed (Abd Al-Jabbar, 2016). And other works that consider an extension of the manufactured culture, where it is a way to remove the essence of real art which is the imagination of art or what Adorno later called, removing art from art. Therefore, Adorno's negative aesthetics and dialectical theory is not aimed to creating a different world as imaginary Utopia can't be achieved on the ground, but aspire to elastic Utopia, and the art has his own way of doing so. Aesthetics can imagine a better world. It may not be created in front of our eyes, but at least it is unraveling the current world of lies and contradictions, which appear strongly in the public suffering of all by the regimes which are taken from of liberalism and rationality disguised by them; irrational and brutal. He highlights the role of art where it has to tell us that things should be different, the world should be fair, and that man is free from the values of oppression, injustice, and slavery, which calls itself false enlightenment.

This is the value of art and the responsibility of the artist is not to accomplish as much of the beautiful scenes through photography, painting, or other creative means, but at least to persist, and even criticism of the values of the world system with its control and suppress; and seeking to free humans from it. A society in which a human being lives freely is not impossible. What we suffer from daily is impossible and illogical, and art, as aspiring to this new world, is not about naivety or fantasy, but it is the ultimate rationality (Cobb & Abromeit, 2014).

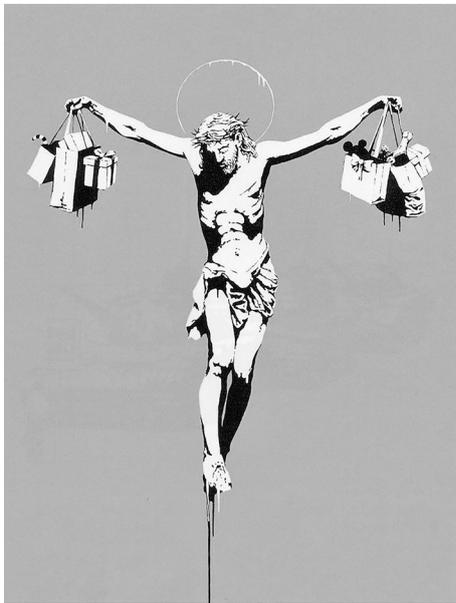
#### **4. Analytical framework of the study**

##### **4.1. Implications of Theodore's philosophy in contemporary art**

In this context, we will address the most important artists who were influenced by Adorno's philosophy with an analysis and critique of their art works, linking them to the concept of instrumental and aesthetic mind in contemporary art.

#### 4.1.1. The artist: Robert Banksy

Banksy is a famous and English graphite artist, and unknown in the same time, where he believed his name Robert Banksy, born in 1974 and his origin from the town of Yet, near Bristol. However, there is no confirmation of the true Banksy identity and his autobiography remains unknown. His paintings appeared in many locations in England, especially in Bristol and London city (Dickens, 2019). In this work (Figure 1), the artist depicts the famous iconic figure of Jesus in the poignant steel scene where he was suspended between the sky and the earth, his arms stretched to the sides, his head resting on his left shoulder, while the artist depicts the legs of Christ to the limits of his knees where the colors flowed down to the bottom of the painting in a way that simulates the scene of blood flowing from the amputee. Liquid blood droplets also appear along the arms and down the neck, and the head of Christ is surrounded by a round halo with droplets of color hanging in a vacuum without a cross, tied from his hands shopping bags that are popular in the stores and appear from it gifts, candy and drinking bottles, while appearing on the other side of Mickey



**Figure 1.** *Consumption Christ*, The artist: Robert Banksy, dimensions, 50x70 cm, The materials: Silk cloth on paper, Date: 2004, Tate Gallery / London.

Available at: <http://www.blogs.buprojects.uk/2015-2016/rachelrichardson/wp-content/uploads/sites/83/2015/11/Screen-Shot-2015-11-08-at-22.23.17.png> 20.05.2019

Mouse's famous cartoon character. The idea of art work based on the famous image of crucified Christ, he appeared with shopping bags in his hands instead of nails, suggesting consumerism, which killed him. It is a very powerful message, since Christmas is the celebration of the birth of Jesus, and there are the signs of Christmas, in the cane of candy, in the shopping bag, while Jesus criticized several times in the Bible, the emphasis on material things at the expense of the soul, and he also expelled sellers and bankers from the temples. This philosophical paradox shows disgust at the consumer-based brands and traditions during Christmas, which appear through the candy stick and Mickey Mouse logo that appears in the shopping bags and candy sold at birth. They are shaped like a Jesus stick to represent the shepherds in the Christmas story and justify their sale in the Church.

This is the main example of early consumerism and by using of religious events for profit. The existence of Mickey Mouse doll indicates to represent of big brands, corruption, and manipulation of public profit by big companies. Banksy uses Disneyland symbol to prove that they are selling people a happy dream, his work indicates that consumption is christened by major consumer symbols such as Mickey Mouse and the candy industry, which represents the greatest beneficiary of religious events and the obsessive consumption in contemporary human life.

#### 4.1.2. The artist: Duane Hanson

Duane Hanson created a statue (A shopper) at the end of the post-war economic boom. In the late 1960s, the first supermarkets appeared, and people were able to buy many things in the same place. People no longer had to cook, because they could buy ready-made meals. Processed food became very popular and soon took over freshly handmade meals. Hanson's sculpture is made of polyester resins, fiber glass, oil paints, clothes, and a real shopping cart (Figure 2). It represents a middle-aged obese woman wearing a short blue skirt that reveals her legs, a pink blouse, a small headband to keep her short blond hair in check, and a cheap necklace made of artificial



**Figure 2.** *A shopper*, the artist: Duane Hanson, Dimensions: 166x55 cm, the materials: Industrial plastic, shopping cart and accessories. Date: 1970, Cultural Centre / Washington: Available at: <http://art-and-you.over-blog.com/article-30506063.html> 20.05.2019

beads. Hanson focused his attention on two important positions. Firstly, the shopping cart, which is burdened by the purchases it contains, bursting with mostly ready-made canned foods from famous brands; secondly, the woman's body - fat and greasy, she's wearing light blue canvas shoes and has a cigarette in her mouth as she leads the vehicle languidly. The scene is generally designed to evoke feelings of distaste, because this woman is overweight and her figure is compared to the food boxes overflowing from the cart, and her tight clothes highlight accurately all her body details. She looks like a machine that buys a lot and eats too much but will still probably buy more food (Buchsteiner and Letze, 2007).

Hanson focused his extraordinary creativity on showing small details that represent the true content of the message which he wants to convey through his statue by exposing the woman's skin, covered in small bruises and varicose veins. On her right arm, she has a small medical patch to treat and conceal those bruises; she looks ugly and tired, and her eyes express the misery suffered by contemporary man, caught up in the spiral of consumerism, a mechanism which crushes individuals and transforms them into mere numbers in a mathematical matrix which

is calculated and adjusted according to the great equation, where the result needs to be more profit in the pockets of the companies' owners who dominate the economy and everything that is related to it. It is the interface of the instrumental mind which seeking benefits and profit in all ways and methods, even at the expense of man. At a closer look, we realise that the artist only used canned food - there are no fruits or fresh vegetables in the cart. The lady doesn't need to cook, only reheat pre-cooked meals. However, she does not seem satisfied with this boisterous attitude, because she looks sad and a bit tired, and the artist can confirm that this lady behaves like a robot, subject to the social status and the ideals of the mass, whose authority is represented by the instrumental mind which controls the individuals' and society's fate.

#### 4.1.3. The artist: Robert Rauschenberg

Robert Rauschenberg's first works were the first steps of aggregation art, which later developed and became an independent art movement within the various postmodernist currents, trends, ideas, and techniques (Figure 3). Through his unconventional use of materials, the artist aims to assert his bizarre criticism and strike a bold blow



**Figure 3.** *The fine work: Coca Cola Scheme*, The artist: Robert Rauschenberg, Dimensions: 26.5x25.5x5.5 inch, the materials: Wooden shelves, Coca Cola bottles, wooden statue, metal wings, paper and colors. Date: 1958, Contemporary Art Museum / Los Angeles. Available at <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/484418503649872470/?lp=true> 20.05.2019

against the artistic traditions inherited from the past. He believed that there is always something hidden behind the glamorous sheen of things, industrial signs, and symbols. In this work, the shelves of an old cupboard are lined with three bottles of Coca-Cola - one is red and yellow, another is green and brown, and the bottle in the middle looks clean, without smudging colors. Above this row of bottles, the artist sketched an engineering scheme of nine adjacent rectangles representing a modern house or a large building with adjacent rooms separated by thick walls; this sketch is closed tightly on all four sides, indicating that getting out of it is not possible (Rauschenberg and Joseph, 2003).

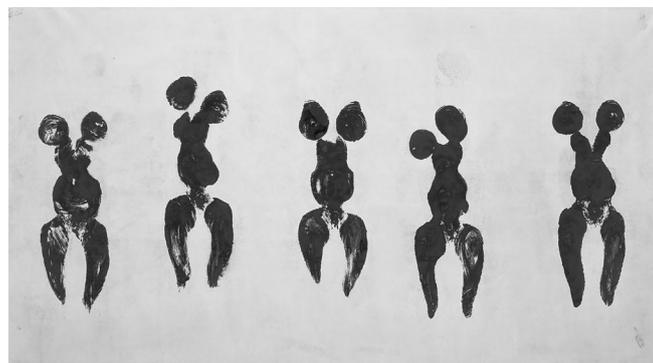
The artist used a pencil to write under the word (Plan), which of course refers to the Coca-Cola scheme of placing the man in a closed space he can't escape from. This explanation is completed by the lower part of the work, where is a dark brown wooden shape that resembles a human head cut off to look distorted and without features, and which is a reference to contemporary man - stylized, without eyes or a mouth, just a tool for consumption, a rigid structure with no decision-making skills, thoughts, or willpower. On the sides of this work, the artist added metal wings in a rising movement, which is another symbolic reference to the fact that this scheme has wings, so it is capable of being carried away to any place in the world without barriers. This evokes transnational companies such as the Coca-Cola brand, which is present all over the world, through the arms and claws of the hidden mind behind it, which moves the strings from behind the curtains.

Rauschenberg's work features different materials put together in innovative artistic structures that promise the birth of a collective and hybrid art pattern lacking the existence of a clear central creative mind or technical style, as it is based on the idea of grabbing the attention and alienating the spectator, who remains puzzled by the details of the artwork, which may or may not have a specific meaning. The artist tries to collect things and write experiences gathered from the most vulgar

activities of daily life, described best as remnants of the consumerism era by the likes of empty bottles and crushed wooden shelves left behind, neglected and marginalized.

#### 4.1.4. The artist: Yves Klein

Yves Klein's work (Figure 4) personifies female bodies through dark blue prints on white canvas in a very unmistakable way by clearly displaying the distinguishing traits of a woman, as it focuses on features such as prominent breasts, abdomen, and legs. The fine works of Yves Klein depend on the real human body as a materialistic source of inspiration, and a representative act that gives the ability to sense the rhythm of the vital soul that inherently lives within us, which represents the meaning of the movement and imitates reality by reducing the traditional language of the artistic work in exchange for active participation among a group of elements within the substratum of the art show. The body, in its present and expressive entirety, shows that the psychological and the intellectual are on the same axis, which is depicted by the artist without any exaggeration, either as a direct display through interactive performances or implicitly through the photographs that the artist takes during each production stage, or even through the works that result from the movement of bare, colored bodies on drawing canvas. Body art may appear as a renewed style reminiscent of the



**Figure 4.** *The fine work: Women in Blue, The Artist: Yves Klein, Dimensions: 5.165x5.282 cm, the materials: Bodies colored by blue on canvas, Date: 1960, Museum of Modern Art, George Pompidou Centre / Paris. Available at: <http://www.yvesklein.com/en/oeuvres/view/595/anthropometrie-de-l-epoque-bleue-anthropometry-of-the-blue-period/> 20.05.2019 Screen-Shot-2015-11-08-at-22.23.17.png 20.05.2019*

ancient tradition of painting faces or naked bodies found in Greek or Renaissance art; it creates artworks in which the beauty of the body, its vitality, and its motor functions are the focus (Banai, 2014).

Yves Klein avoided using any traditional materials or painting methods for his fine works. Instead of using the brush to draw the models, he used the models' bodies, which he called living butterflies. He dyed the women's bodies, which - by applying pressure on the canvasses - transformed their figures into prints. Klein believed that the body is a natural center and a source of bioenergy; he applied this principle to this work, and through these paintings he reduced the human body and its surface to a symbol. The human body has an important role in consumer society, which seeks to exploit man. The human body is used to advertise products, and is also something that gives sensual pleasure; man has become a thing or a purpose, and this hints at its decrease in value. The art of the flesh has emerged in plenty of forms and manifestations, where through the human body the artist expresses the thoughts, culture, and philosophy peculiar to the era of consumerism, which exploits man for

advertising and commercial purposes. The body is transformed into a commodity that is marketed, sold, or leased for the monetary revenues it can yield; there is no regard for human values, feelings and ideas anymore. Contemporary man's physicality and spirituality are entirely subject to the control of the instrumental utilitarian mind, which seeks to reduce the human body to a thing that has superficial needs and desires.

#### 4.1.5. The artist: Theo Janssen

The fine works of the Dutch artist Theo Janssen are classified within the dynamic are stream. He constructs giant structures of bamboo chopsticks, linked together by rollers and springs, covered by layers of cloth or transparent plastic and designed to form giant fairy animals that combine the bodies of dinosaurs and marine creatures on the one hand, and have many legs, mimicking creeping insects. The movements of Janssen's creations have many varieties. Some movements are propelled by small motors, and others move by the force of the air, wherein the artist includes some shapes that resemble sails that are pushed by the air causing the movement of light structures that appear to the viewer as



**Figure 5.** The fine work, *Beach Monster*, the artist: Theo Janssen, Dimensions: 37x11x22 meter, the materials: Bamboo, paper and cloth, Date: 1999, The artist's private collections. Available at: <https://www.wbur.org/artery/2015/08/19/strandbeests> 20.05.2019 *anthropometrie-de-l-epoque-bleue-anthropometry-of-the-blue-period/* 20.05.2019 *Screen-Shot-2015-11-08-at-22.23.17.png* 20.05.2019

if it is moving on its own, like it longs live again when the air moves. This fine work, entitled 'beach monster' has strange, ugly piles of bending pipes up to the top that create a strange visual effect. When it is sitting, motionless on the sand, the observer does not know the specific goal of this huge engineering architecture, but when the air blows on the beach, it comes to life in an astounding way, walking across the beach as if it were moving of its own accord (Rees, 2011).

The art of Janssen represents an anachronism (Figure 5). It is a remnant of a time before modern civilization, electricity, motors and fuel became a way of life in contemporary societies. This mythic beast has many opposite legs on both sides of its huge body. It moves in the same way that insects and reptiles move. It is terrifying when it walks alone with the force of the air pushing it along the coast. The artist Janssen believes his work to be a superior engineering achievement more than a beautiful work of art. It is subject to measurements and engineering calculations and very complex mathematical processes in order to control its movement, balance and center of gravity, air pushing angles in the moving art and the simple mechanisms that camouflage it deliberately so as not to reveal to the public the energy source and the movement driving these objects forward. The artist acknowledges that his mind for these frightening movements originally looks at the possibilities of constructing geometric structures capable of generating self-movement or with the simple help of natural forces, or small mechanical engines. For him, this is a practical and technical issue. First of all, he doesn't care about the aesthetic structure except in its final stages. Whereas the outer structure that covers the surfaces of these large vehicles is often not beautiful, it is no longer a source of horror or surprise for people (Rees, 2011).

## 5. Results

### 5.1. Summary of results

The products of fine art reflect the manifestations of industrial development and the tremendous technologi-

cal progress witnessed by the contemporary world, which, in turn, produce different artistic styles and trends resulting in innovative techniques in the fields of industry, media and communications.

1. The emergence of hybrid artistic genres that combine a number of different creative techniques and styles and transform a large number of artists into practicing technical specialties, away from their original fields of specialization in search of innovation, development and fame. The researchers concluded with this result by analyzing many artworks that have become like a fashion or a new and strange form of art, promoting the value of the artist at the expense of the value of the artwork itself. Therefore, we find that many contemporary artists use different techniques and engage in political or media trends in search of personal fame and away from the requirement of the aesthetic mind that cares about promoting the value of mankind, rather than the artist's fame and benefit. This is due to the development of the machine and its tools' exclusion of human beings and replacement of them; thus, becoming a machine (inhuman) production.

2. The logic of the instrumental mind is associated with the principles of interest and benefit, industry, marketing and large scale production to meet the wide variety of needs of the largest number of recipients in various fields. This led to the emergence of technical names quickly becoming shining stars and then disappearing after a short period. The researchers concluded that this resulted in the domination of material on all art products, as art's primary goal became material profit at the expense of humankind itself. The instrumental mind, that Adorno's philosophy believed in, praised, promoted and considered as a way to the salvation of humanity and the achievement of luxury and happiness, has become out of control due to the development of science and technology into an instrumental, all-encompassing nature. Thus, humankind became a thing, like the rest of material things, as many philosophers, such as Jean-Marie and Guy-

an, who declare that human industry will become more incompatible with art (Abul-Enein, 1995). This is due to the development of the machine and its tools excluding the human beings and replacing them, becoming solely a product of (inhuman) machinery.

3. The products of contemporary fine art focus on the effect of trauma to the recipient and sensory experience. Emptied of the goal and adopting visual effects methods to activate the senses and disrupt the aesthetic mind to seek the meaning and real aesthetic value. Since the beginning of Modernism, the artist has become focused on the form of the artistic work, rather than its aesthetic and human content, as it became the form that merely attracted the person visually, without having any deeper meaning. Furthermore, as mentioned in the first point, art has become interested in fashion and form to create an effect, apparently without having any goal except the artist's fame and material benefit.

## 5.2. Discussion

The production of contemporary fine art celebrates everything that is marginal and banal, raising it to a place of artistic and aesthetic work in order to cut the ties of contemporary humans with everything that is ideal and supreme that elevates the mind of humankind's spirit and overall human culture. The researchers have concluded this result from the fact that consumerism is the dominant feature of our contemporary society and it seems to be an increasing cultural feature, as the interest in selling, or simply displaying, images, sounds and words, has become an instrumental act and not borne of the aesthetic mind, which considers art as unrelated to the dominance of the instrumental mind; as envisioned by Adorno.

The dominance of the instrumental mind is clarified in the contemporary artists' methods of choice in his/her subjects and artistic instruments, which provide superficial ideas that work within the limits of external form, without incorporating any significant or important, meaningful content. The researchers have concluded with this results through reviewing many con-

temporary artistic works related to material employment and making art as a commodity. Thus, art has become an automatic production and instrument for industry and marketing. In other words, it became an ephemeral recreational aesthetic.

The authority of the instrumental mind seeks to transform the human body into a mere commodity of aesthetic or utilitarian use. It is presented to justify the sale of any large or small commercial commodity, until the body itself becomes a mere tool for drawing or copying symbols and signs of sex, lust and human life from its surfaces to the depth of conscience and feelings, and the human thought beneath it. This has been observed within many international companies that seek to market their products using the body as an active, artistic product via linking it to the subject of the product itself, in order to achieve a certain impact on the viewer and attract him/her as a consumer with the aim of increasing their financial profit.

The philosophy of the instrumental mind brings down the prestige of the religious, spiritual and culturally sacred in the contemporary individual and the installation of industry, trade and consumption symbols are elevated and respected as holy idols, revered and perpetuated at the level of contemporary plastic production. Therefore, many artworks bearing religious symbols and texts from the holy books have emerged for marketing, as we find, for example, that Communist China, which does not have a specific state religion, has made machines to produce sacred paintings for Muslims and Christians alike, only to support its economy.

The innovated technical techniques play the most important role in the formulation of contemporary art works, where the work of casting, plumbing, engineering and electric motors, mechanical and pneumatic parts participate in the art industry and methods of installation, coloring and reproduction. As mentioned in the previous conclusion, industrialized countries have intentionally produced machines for the production of artistic paintings and replicating them to strongly match their original copies in order to in-

crease their sales. The dialectic of the instrumental and the aesthetic mind is subject to a difficult equation that produces the truth of the instrumental mind's control, which is supported by the strength of authority, money and power, and its need to harness the aesthetic mind to achieve its utilitarian and commercial purposes and to benefit from the aesthetic mind's ability to address the human senses and motivate it to experience beauty and art. Thus, these consumer products are now interfering with daily life, using their aesthetic form. Furthermore, they rather became a cultural commodity, causing a shift in life experience, from experiencing aesthetic and mental perception; therefore, becoming a part of consumer context.

### 5.3. Recommendations

1. The researchers recommend the necessity of providing modern sources and books of contemporary art because the Arabic library lacks these.

2. There is a need to hold academic seminars and research conferences on the latest developments in contemporary fine art.

3. Translation of books and special articles for schools on trends of modern criticism and its close association with the concepts of contemporary art and its transformations and philosophical references.

### 5.4. Suggestions and implications: Researchers suggest the following studies

1. The impact of critical theory in the philosophy of Theodore Adorno on the trends of contemporary Arab composition.

2. The theory of manufacturing culture between Western and contemporary Arabian art.

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