

ON IMAGINATION AND UNDERSTANDING. GADAMER AND CRITICISM OF KANT'S AESTHETIC IMAGINATION*

ZSUZSANNA MARIANN LENGYEL¹

ABSTRACT. In this paper, I would like to investigate how Gadamer explores the hermeneutic potential of Kant's aesthetic theory in the third *Critique* with regard to the notion of imagination. For the first time, by making some references, Gadamer discussed the question of imagination in his *Truth and Method* of 1960, and we can read as a further substantial contribution his essay entitled „Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit“ (*Intuition and Intuitiveness*) published in 1980. Although Gadamer's approach was influenced by some Heideggerian impulses, he offered another alternative that is completely different from Heidegger's one. I shall argue that even if the question of imagination is not so much stressed by Gadamer, it proves important to the development and ontological basis of the Gadamerian hermeneutics in *Wahrheit und Methode*. My hypothesis is that through the themes of intuition and education (*Bildung*), the imagination is concerned with the human understanding and our interpreting work, thus, its significance transcends the scope of aesthetics.

Keywords: philosophy, aesthetics, Kant, Heidegger, Gadamer, imagination, understanding, thinking schemes, world, culture

Introduction

From the beginning of Ancient times, several thinkers have written about the various aspects of imagination, not to say that this issue is present as a reference point for philosophers, theologians and scholars also today, even though it has never become a centre problem in the history of European thought.

* This paper was supported by the research project no. PD 121045 of the National Research, Development and Innovation Office (NKFI-OTKA)

¹ PhD, Department of Modern and Contemporary Philosophy, Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest, Email: lengyelzsm@gmail.com

The term “imagination” can be traced back to the name “Phantasie” of Greek origin, which played a key role with its own intermediate position among the human faculties (but, especially between *aisthesis* and *noesis*) in the third part of the third book of Aristotle’s *De anima (On the Soul)*.² “Phantasie” was originally translated into Latin with the term *visum* (things seen) or *visio* (sight), but, its later Latin translation: namely the *imaginatio* that came from the Latin word *imago* (picture, effigy and counterpart etc.) is better known nowadays, and the expressed using of this new concept appeared in Latin only later, first by Saint Augustine from the 5th century.³ During the period before Kant, the power of imagination was discussed as a process of *Vorstellung* (abstract representation or idea-forming); in this aspect, it has already been put at the heart of interest in the Cartesian tradition. Imagination is here nothing else than our own sight potency (or power of vision) how we can comprehend the reality, the world as a whole. In other word, it was conceived as one of modes of perception derived from „seeing”, thus, imagination was a derived skill, which depended upon the sensory perceptions.

According to *Deutsches Wörterbuch* published by Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, the German words “Einbildung”, “Einbildungskraft” themselves with their first definitions were introduced by Christian Wolff. ⁴ Kant first succeeded in setting out the conceptual foundations of question and its decisive philosophical function, thus, his reflexion is always a reference point for other philosophical approaches. Kant did not work out a unique theory on the power of imagination, at the same time he articulated it in his several works (such as for example in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, the *Critique of Judgement* of 1790, the *Dreams of a Spirit-Seer* of 1766 and the *Anthropology From a Pragmatic Point of View* of 1798).

Period after Kant’s *Critiques* can be regarded as a flourishing age of thinking about imagination in the 19th century, however, even in that time the philosophical significance of imagination died away slowly, while its epistemological function was discredited and then the whole problem gets into the scope of psychology and aesthetics. As Matthias Wunsch notices, the reason is why Heidegger’s Kant-book

² Aristotle, *De Anima*, book III.3, trans. D. W. Hamlin. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993) 427a18–429a9.

³ Eva T. H. Brann, *The World of the Imagination*. (Savage, Md.: Rowman and Littlefield, 1991) 20.

⁴ Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm, *Deutsches Wörterbuch*. (16 Bd. Leipzig) 1854–1961; Cf.: Trede, J. H. 1972. “Einbildung, Einbildungskraft (I)”. In Ritter, J. (Hrsg.): *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie*. Darmstadt 1972, Bd. 2, 346–348., here: 347.

of 1929 (*Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*) is an important volume that he can firstly overwrite the psychological understanding of the Kantian notion of imagination by means of his criticism of Neo-Kantianism.⁵

In our everyday approach, it is firstly associated with the works of art; however, my present contribution will be about how we can describe the power of imagination related to the human understanding and thinking. What is the meaning of imagination in a philosophical sense? However, if we seek common points among divertive responses attempted by philosophers who believe in the existence of imagination, we may say that in the first place, they endeavour to unravel the “logics” and “grammatics” of imagination. For them, it raises the question how it is possible to get an insight into our own imaginative work or our imaginative ability and its eidetic moments. Therefore, in summary, how can it be reached the human qualifying for and training (*Bildung*) in power of imagination?

Gadamer seems to be most of all committed to Heidegger and the German idealism: especially to Hegel and ancient philosophy, at the same time according to Gadamer, Kant is not a peripheral or minor importance thinker in several important respects. In volume entitled *The Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer* composed on occasion of his ninety-fifth birthday, where – in addition to the analyses, critiques and contributions of contemporaries – can also be found the philosopher’ replies to their interpretations, Gadamer was exactly who missed the mention of the significance of Kant in his thought.⁶

In his famous Kant-book of 1929, Heidegger focused on Kant’s theoretical philosophy and on the Schematism chapter in his critique of reason. Heidegger explored how far Kant had reached in the field of metaphysics in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and in this respect, the humanness of reason, i.e., the finitude became essential. He saw the very core of Kant’s ontological sight in the chapter on Schematism. The task of Schematism is to describe how knowledge of being is generated by the interplay of two complementary faculties of understanding and sensibility (*Verstand, Sinnlichkeit*) or concept and intuition/ perception (*Begriff, Anschauung*). While the synthesis of knowledge clearly traces back to the activity of understanding in the

⁵ Wunsch, Matthias, *Einbildungskraft und Erfahrung bei Kant*. (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), 22.

⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Reply to Francis Ambrosio”, in Lewis E Hahn (ed.) *Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer: Library of Living Philosophers*. (Illinois, Chicago, La Salle: Open Court Publishing, 1997) 274.: Gadamer writes: „But I am missing the name of Kant here”. See also Hans-Georg Gadamer, “Reply to David Detmer”, in *Philosophy of Hans-Georg Gadamer...* 287.

chapter on Transcendental Deduction of Kant, on Heidegger's view, synthesis emerges from the operation of schematism by dissolving the intuition and thinking in a "common root". It is the imagination (*Einbildungskraft*) that is responsible for this schematism operating in experience as a „common root". Imagination does not appear as an accidental activity but rather as a fundamental form of our relation to being, and as such, it proves more decisive for life than rationality. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant distinguishes the ways of the poetical, mathematical and transcendental imaginations, however, transcendental imagination has only pivotal and absolute philosophical relevance, for it is the condition of the possibility of finite human knowledge. It is the outcome of the operation of imagination that there is Schematism, in other words: the Schemes are emerging and forming by and along which we can think at all. What Kant called Schematism, it is the process of *world-forming* (*Weltbildung*) in his Kant-book of Heidegger. By means of imagination operating in Schematism Heidegger described the *world-forming* character of our finite human being, which was nothing else than uncovering the transcendence. For Heidegger, the operating of imagination was not just another name of the human subjectivity or a new human skill, but a way of avoiding the concept of subjectivity itself.

Gadamer and his Criticism of Kant's Aesthetic Imagination

In contrast to this above-mentioned Heideggerian interpretation of Kant's theoretical philosophy, Gadamer read Kant from the viewpoint of his moral philosophy and his aesthetic theory. Gadamer's initiating point seemed to be aesthetic imagination in the *Critique of Judgement*, but Gadamer's attention must be directed toward that was not clearly achieved by Kant,⁷ insofar as something

⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, „Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit", in *Gesammelte Werke 8. Ästhetik und Poetik I*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1993) [a hereafter: GW 8] 199. Bibliographical note: Gadamer's complete works are cited with the abbreviation GW (*Gesammelte Werke 1-10*. Tübingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) from 1985 to 1995). followed by volume number, comma and page numbers. Other works published outside of the *Gesammelte Werke* are cited with full bibliographical data at their first occurrence, then with abbreviations. All emphasis is original unless to quotations otherwise specified. If there are references to both the original German text and the corresponding English translation, they are separated for example as follows [GW 1, 376; in English: 364.].

remained unspoken in the Kantian critique of reason what is the importance of practical philosophy for our knowledge and for the theoretical issues of metaphysics.⁸ It is Gadamer's hermeneutical ground thesis that against historicism, the theoretical knowledge substantially requires to apply the logic of question and answer for tradition. We come to understand our tradition only if the preliminary question can also be reconstructed to what it is the answer itself. In Gadamer's eyes, any mere critique of the tradition itself is no other than "pure shadow boxing" (*reine Spiegelfechtere*),⁹ and yet he does not proclaim the self-evident domination of tradition, but promotes a critical mindfulness turning to the truth of tradition. If there is any common point in Heidegger's and Gadamer's approach, it is that both they concentrate on the same themes of Kant, which make it possible for them to enhance the historical experience and the aspects of finitude in hermeneutical experience. According to his recollection entitled *Philosophische Begegnungen*, Gadamer was a great impressed by Gerghard Krüger's interpretation on the Enlightenment and Kant's moral philosophy (especially Krüger's two books are remarkable: *Philosophy and Moral in the Kantian Critique [Philosophie und Moral in der Kantischen Kritik]* of 1931 and *Freedom and World Relation [Freiheit und Weltverwaltung]* of 1958).¹⁰

For the first time, Gadamer discusses the question of imagination in his *Truth and Method* of 1960 by making some references,¹¹ furthermore we can read as a substantial contribution an essay "Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit" (*Intuition and Intuitiveness*)¹² published in 1980, which already implies the development of imagination with special regard to the concept of intuition and the traditions of *Bildung*, exploring this question more thoroughly. In context of these two texts, Gadamer clearly expressed his encounter with Kant. The significance of this hermeneutical Kant-Critique lies in the fact that, in introducing the English edition of the volume entitled *Heidegger's Ways*, Dennis Schmidt called "igniting philosophical imagination" concerning

⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Kants »Kritik der reinen Vernunft« nach 200 Jahren » Von hier und heute geht eine neue Epoche der Weltgeschichte aus« (1981)", in GW 4, 336–348., here: 348.

⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Gesammelte Werke 1: Hermeneutik I. Wahrheit und Methode*, (Tübingen: J. C. Mohr (Paul Siebeck) 1990) [a hereafter: GW 1] 376.; Translation: Idem, *Truth and Method*, Second edition, translated and revised by Joel Weisheimer and Donald G. Marshall, (London, New York: Continuum, 2006) 364.

¹⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Philosophische Begegnungen", in GW 10, 373–440., here: 415.; cf. Ibid. 417.

¹¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 52.; 64.; 68.; 77.

¹² Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Anschauung und Anschaulichkeit", in GW 8, 189–205.

both Gadamer and the young Heidegger's 'Aristotle Introduction'.¹³ It means that Gadamer goes far beyond an exegetical comment on Kant's doctrine of the imagination in relation to poetry.

After that Heidegger had made some remarks in his workings on art from the beginning of the 1930s, Gadamer was the first who provided a systematic introduction into the hermeneutical importance of the *Critique of Judgement* (1790), where Kant had dealt with the question of self-knowledge or the knowledge on Self through the theme of reflective judgement. Naturally, he does not follow the canon of the regular interpretations on Kant, which saw the power of judgement as a synthetizing point of human reason and as a fulfilment of Kant's critical enterprise. Rather, Gadamer regards the emerging problem "as a permanent challenge to our thought" (*eine bleibende Herausforderung unseres Denkens*).¹⁴

According to the Kant-chapter in *Truth and Method* ("Subjektivisierung der Ästhetik durch die Kantische Kritik"),¹⁵ the *Critique of Judgement* meant a turning point for emerging the modern aesthetics, because Kant's aesthetic theory reinforced the separation between aesthetics and epistemology, and so, it represents the subjectivization of modern aesthetics. Later thinkers such as Schleiermacher, Boeckh, Droysen or Dilthey were also working further under the influence of this approach.¹⁶ The test for Gadamer is to recast the Kantian aesthetics in a less subjective direction. Nevertheless, the primary target of Gadamer's critique first of all was not the Kantian aesthetics or the theory of art, but the process what caused the emergence of the idea of a pure aesthetic consciousness.¹⁷

"The radical subjectivization involved in Kant's new way of grounding aesthetics was truly epoch-making. In discrediting any kind of theoretical knowledge except that of natural science, it compelled the human sciences to rely on the methodology of the natural sciences conceptualizing themselves. But it made this reliance easier by offering the »artistic element«, »feeling«, and »empathy« as subsidiary elements."¹⁸

¹³ Dennis Schmidt, "Introduction", in Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Heidegger's Ways*. (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994) xv.

¹⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "Kants »Kritik der reinen Vernunft« nach 200 Jahren. ..." in GW 4, 348.

¹⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 48–87.

¹⁶ Rudolf A. Makkreel, "Orientierung und Tradition in der Hermeneutik: Kant versus Gadamer", *Zeitschrift für philosophische Forschung* 41. (1987) 3, 408–420., here: 408.

¹⁷ Cf. Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 94.

¹⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 47. (In English: 37. f.)

This traditional aesthetic account of art tried to grasp the art as a pure aesthetic feeling (*Erlebnis*) and aimed at the delight of the artwork, therefore aestheticians assumed that the art has nothing to do with the deeper knowing of reality, produces no knowledge, after all, it is out of validity of every truth and lie.

By contrast, Gadamer says: “art is knowledge and experiencing an artwork means sharing in that knowledge”, also “the experience of art is a mode of *knowledge*”.¹⁹ In the finishing part of his main work based on Platon, but sporadically also related to Hegel, Gadamer explored the art no longer within the category of aesthetics, but in the frame of the metaphysics of beauty.²⁰ From this viewpoint, beauty is not a pure subjective felt or a matter of taste, but the “objective” feature of the existing things. Gadamer does not restrict the Beauty to the realm of aesthetics conceived in terms of feeling, but he attempts to retrieve the Beauty in its ancient transcendental sense. Due to the fact that the horizon of work of art entirely transforms, and following Hegel in attacking Kant from this Gadamerian perspective, the beauty of work of art appears as “the sensuous *appearance* of the Idea” („das sinnliche *Scheinen* der Idee”).²¹ Hegel’s remarks on the “*Scheinen*” have two meanings in its original sense: 1. firstly, the term “*Scheinen*” means something that is misleading, not corresponding to the reality; 2. secondly, the “*Scheinen*” can also be described as a sensuous appearance of the reality, where an essence is shining forth in its full disclosure.

In the finishing part of *Truth and Method*, Gadamer’s interpretation moves toward the latter second meaning, so the “*Scheinen*” is not connected with the untruthfulness, fiction and delusion. Rather, the “*Scheinen*” pertains to the Beauty, the “*schön*”, not to say, through the Beauty to the truth. The foundation of the interconnection of beauty and truth means that Beauty is identical with the un-concealment of truth ($\alpha\text{-}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ as an *Unverborgenheit*). The appearance of truth in the work of art is nothing else than – the Beauty itself. Gadamer’s view is fundamentally linked to Heidegger’s reflections on art, which he thoroughly elaborated

¹⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 103.: “Kunst ist Erfahrung und die Erfahrung des Kunstwerks macht dieser Erkenntnis teilhaftig. ... Und ist nicht die Aufgabe der Ästhetik darin gelegen, eben das zu begründen, dass die Erfahrung der Kunst eine Erkenntnisweise eigener Art ist...?” (In English: 84.)

²⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 1, 149; see further Ibid. 481. ff.; 164.

²¹ See István M. Fehér’s analysis: „»Az eszme érzéki ragyogása«. Esztétika, metafizika, hermeneutika”, in István M. Fehér –Ernő Kulcsár Szabó (eds.): *Hermeneutika, esztétika, irodalomelmélet (Hermeneutics, Aesthetics, Theory of Literature)* (Budapest: Osiris, 2004), 264–332., especially: 289. ff. see further Hegel, G. W. F., *Esztétikai előadások (Lectures on Aesthetics)*, translated by Dénes Zoltai, (Budapest: Akadémiai Publishing, 1980) I. Vol., 114.

in his later writings two times: in his ‘Nietzsche-Lectures’²² and in his 1936 work titled *The Origin of the Work of Art*.²³ It is not accidental that at the request of his master, even Gadamer wrote an introductory study to Heidegger’s account of art.

Gadamer revived the Heideggerian initiatives of the happening of truth as a hermeneutical *Erfahrung*. Along philosophical achievements of Heidegger and Gadamer – our notion of truth has essentially undergone a transformation. Of course, Gadamer did not only take over the Heidegger’s understanding of truth as un-concealment, but he provided further important and original recognitions to the hermeneutics of art beyond the range of Heidegger’s ideas. According to Gadamer, it is important to what extent parallels can be drawn between the *metaphysics of Beauty* and the event of language (the productivity of *language* for human thought). By means of the rehabilitation of the rhetoric character of language (by Aristotle and Saint Augustine’s theory of Incarnation in *De Trinitate*), Gadamer highlights that the ontological structure of Beauty is applicable to the realm of intelligible, too. The work of art has to be comprehended in terms of language (and understanding). From a hermeneutical perspective, our experiences of reality are *interpretative*; however, it does not mean that hermeneutics should be defined in terms of relativity. Rather, it means that in Gadamer’s terms, truth becomes accessible to us in a *dialogical* form: first of all, in this way, we have possibilities for understanding the domains of reality that were regarded as marginal fields by the methodology of positivistic sciences.

This is the case with the experience of art, too. Our knowledge is irreducible to the field of the natural sciences. This notion of truth goes beyond the truth understood in the sense of *adaequatio rei* (as a *Satzwahrheit*) presented by Thomas Aquinas. In opposition to Kant’s cognitive approach to aesthetics, hermeneutics endeavours to do justice to a concept of truth that is not an act of subjectivity, not merely a private process or an epistemological configuration, but also a public process. In this model offered by Gadamer, truth exists in a *conversation* with others (*Gespräch mit...*). This position places an ontological priority on the meaning that is rooted in a dialogical interchange made possible by language itself. The *phenomenological idea of play* stands as a model for Gadamer’s hermeneutics in

²² Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*. I. Bd. (Pfullingen: Neske, 1961) especially see: 245.; 228.

²³ Martin Heidegger, *A műalkotás eredete (The Origin of the Work of Art)*, trans. by Béla Bacsó. »Mérleg sorozat« (Budapest: Európa 1988). Translation: Idem, “The Origin of the Work of Art (1935–36)”, in *Off the Beaten Track* trans. Julien Young and Kenneth Haynes, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 1–85.

that he describes the truth as a happening oriented to the human community and the tradition.

Modelled on the mode of play, Gadamer demonstrates that understanding cannot be regarded as a subjective *Erlebnis* within the experience of art; it has a “medial” nature. As Nicolas Davey writes, the imagination is central in Gadamer’s hermeneutical aesthetics, insofar as it means an essential motif for hermeneutical integration of the experience of art, for it pertains to the ontological basis of Kant’s aesthetic judgement in Gadamer’s view. Gadamer’s hermeneutic aesthetics could not function without an appeal to the imagination.²⁴

Beyond Method: Imagination and Intuition – Imagination and *Bildung*

Avoiding the use of the term „fantasy”, the notion of “imagination” as *Einbildungskraft* is situated within Gadamer’s discussion of intuition and *Bildung*. As Alberto Carillo Canan puts it, Gadamer introduces the expression “*cognitio imaginativa*”, in order to describe the interconnection between intuition and imagination.²⁵ Through the term “*cognitio*”, Gadamer asserts that art is a mode of knowledge, but it does not mean any conceptual knowledge. On the one hand, the concept as a counterpoint is excluded from Gadamer’s “*cognitio imaginativa*”, on the other hand simultaneously, it is also a deciding factor that Gadamer distinguishes the term “*imaginativa*” from Baumgarten’s expression of the “*cognitio sensitiva*”: from that sensory knowledge we get to know in a sensuous mode. It is the term “*imaginativa*” that allows us to increase the scope of intuition.

Following Heidegger, Gadamer criticizes the narrower traditional model of intuition understood as a “sensuous intuition” (*sinnliche Anschauung*) in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, and he uses a broad phenomenological notion of intuition (this is the *kategorische Anschauung* by Husserl and Heidegger), in order to render knowledge and truth within the experience of art and beyond the natural sciences.

²⁴ Vö. Nicolas Davey, “Hermeneutic Aesthetics and the Problem of Imagination”, in *Gadamer’s Hermeneutics and the Art of Conversation*, ed. By Andrzej Wierciński (Berlin: LIT Verlag, 2011) 339–352., here: 339 ff.

²⁵ Alberto Carillo Canan, “Gadamer’s Leveling of the Visual and the Verbal, and the »Experience of Art«”, in Anna Teresa Tymieniecka ed. *The Visible and the Invisible in the Interplay between Philosophy, Literature and Reality*, (Analecta Husserliana Vol. LXXV) (Springer, 2002) 199–210., here: 200. ff.

For this reason, “intuition” is not only a sensuous-visual perception, but “intuition (representation) without the presence of the object, too”.²⁶ Gadamer’s argumentation leads us from a model of intuition as a sensory perception to that of intuition as imagination. In opposition to the former, this *imaginative* intuition or intuition *via* imagination (*through* imagination) is regarded as *geistige Anschauung*²⁷ and *Anschauung des Geistigen*.²⁸ In this way, intuition is not related to a given object. In Gadamer’s terms, the Kantian concept of intuition (*Anschauung*) here means nothing else than the “representation of imagination” (*Vorstellung der Einbildungskraft*) in the *Critique of Judgement*.²⁹

In Kant’s approach, intuition is the critical counterpoint to the concept, it may be grasped as a correlative to rationalist metaphysics. This means that Kant rejected the doctrine of “intellectual intuition”, and all of this is a part of Kant’s critique of traditional metaphysic knowledge (by Leibniz and Wolff), consequently, the Kantian notion of intuition stands not in the context of aesthetics, but in the centre of epistemology in the *Critique of Pure Reason*. Similarly to Kant, Gadamer also rejected the existence of „intellectual intuition”, however, intuition as imagination by Gadamer is not restricted to its function in theoretical knowledge, but it becomes a general capacity to have an intuition (*Vorstellungs*) even without the presence of objects. As Gadamer formulates, “the sharp distinction between intuition and concept, as it is established by Kant in the *Critique of Pure Reason*, was no longer acceptable”.³⁰ From a hermeneutical perspective of Gadamer, one may say that we miss the place where the problem is located, if it is the perception in a traditional sense that we conceive as a starting point for imagination. Imagination must not be confined just to the *co-operation* of cognitive faculties, i.e. to being in service to theoretical knowledge, but is also present in the *free play* of faculties of knowing. The art theoretical problem of intuition is not equal to the epistemological inquire, but is rather related to the broader area of imagination.

For the first time, the term “intuition” and “intuitiveness” were used for the mystic’s vision of God (*Gottesschau*). From this antique lexicological background, it becomes visible that intuition here is not related to the sensuality, the interpretation of it as a sensuous givenness misleads the modern thinking. Intuition understood

²⁶ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 189.

²⁷ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 192.

²⁸ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 201.

²⁹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 189.

³⁰ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 202.

as an immediacy of givenness is a pure border concept, an abstraction from the moment of mediation. In the artistic problem of intuition as imagination, we cannot apply Plato's distinction between the sensible and the intelligible, in fact Kant also avoided it insofar as he spoke of the *free play* of faculties of knowing in § 3 and 4 of the *Critique of Judgement*. This area is not limited to the visual objects, but the linguistic work of art, above all poetry also consists an essential dimension of it. As a matter of fact, the real home of "intuitiveness" resides in the use of language, since so to speak, what is not such as seen, but is only told in a description and a narration, we can literally see "before us" ("vor sich").

The operating of imagination here is present not in the immediacy of sensitive givenness (*Unmittelbarkeit sinnlicher Gegebenheit*), but it is nothing else than the *process of bilden or constructing* of intuition (*Prozeß des Bilden der Anschauung*).³¹ In Gadamer's language, the German expression "imagination" appears as *Einbildungskraft*, which, of course, includes the world "education", *Bildung*. Imagination becomes a process of *Bildung* (cultivation and qualifying) on which all the artworks are based. In Gadamer's words, "the object of aesthetics as an artistic theory would be appropriately called *cognitio imaginativa*",³² that is to say, the experience of art cannot be understood in the realm of *cognitio sensitiva* (sensory knowledge and sensuous givenness). The original direction of questioning was reduced by the Kantian presuppositions where art was related to the beautiful, the problem is that within this view it is impossible to explore the art as a mode of knowledge. In Gadamer's workings, art appears as a happening of truth, that is why Kant's analytic of the beautiful cannot satisfy the needs of art theory, and Hegel's *Aesthetics* remains closer to Gadamer.

He criticized Kant, however, Hegel provided him points of references. The former provoked him, the latter inspired him, but both represented deep impact on Gadamer. Gadamer pays a great attention to what only becomes a real problem in the field of the linguistic. The "intuitiveness" of the narrated texts cannot be identified with images evoked by words, much rather it is similar to *the process of education (Bildung)* or to *the training process*, which manifests with and in understanding of the texts. In the realm of art, intuition as imagination is not allowed to restrict to the aesthetic concept of value, but in Gadamer's eyes, the power of intuition

³¹ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 192.

³² Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 192.

(through imagination) can get into motion where one experiences the conceptual understanding or the symbolic in a special empathy.³³

The *imaginative* intuition is not a secondary moment, but is a real part of understanding of art and our world in a privileged sense. It does not only mean that in opposition to the sciences, arts also possess a special truth, insofar as the free play of power of imagination lead us to knowledge, but it is more important that the inner intuition – which is operating here through imagination – makes the world intuited (and not only the objects in it). Hegel quested for this way of world-intuition in his *Lecture on Aesthetics*.

As a starting point, the positive significance of the intuitiveness lies in the fact that it first became possible us to anticipate the interrelation between productive imagination and understanding. The purpose of foundation of Kant's aesthetics is to dissolve the subordination of art from the conceptual understanding, at the same time; Gadamer claims that the difficulties of Kant's notion on natural and artistic beauty can be found at this point. The distinction of the objective art from the nature without object seems to be a failed alternative, because according to Gadamer, freedom from object is also present in the art and in its truth. In the case of art, Kant related the free play of imagination to the concepts, however, Gadamer indicated that, in the realm of the work of art, especially of the linguistic art – imagination is not depend on the limitations of concept, but belongs to the human understanding, beyond concepts. In this way, the free play of imagination is not simply an associative flow of mind, but its free play "implies a real *Bildung*".³⁴

Conclusion

Investigating Kant's aesthetic theory in the *Critique of Judgement*, Gadamer focuses on the artistic beauty in his works. It is noteworthy that in this extensive context of hermeneutics, Gadamer's interest in imagination was guided by the problem of understanding of art, but it goes beyond aesthetics, because it is the encounter with the *Critique of Judgement* that allows Gadamer to elaborate the notion of a dialogical understanding through the realm of art experience.

³³ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 195.

³⁴ Hans-Georg Gadamer, GW 8, 197.

In his essay entitled "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem" of 1966, placing the free play of imagination in a public and dialogic frame is an essential thought of Gadamer. Concerning the problem of method, the imaginative process already appears *as questioning* and *as ability to explore productive questions* through a dialogical interchange made possible by language. Gadamer formulates so that:

"it contains an indirect answer to the question of what it is that really makes the productive scholar. That he has learned the methods. The person who never produces anything new has also done that. It is imagination [Phantasie] that is the *decisive* function of the scholar. Imagination here naturally has a hermeneutical function and serves the sense for what is questionable. It serves the ability to expose real, productive questions something in which, generally speaking, only he who masters all the methods of his science succeeds."³⁵

³⁵ Hans-Georg Gadamer, "The Universality of the Hermeneutical Problem" in GW 2, 227.