

# Modern Aesthetics and Its Paradoxes

## A Study on Agnes Heller's Theory of "Sensus Communis"\*

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**Abstract**—According to Agnes Heller, as an independent subject, aesthetics was a product of the epoch of bourgeoisie. Aesthetics became a universal philosophy to describe and comment aesthetic field, aesthetic, objectification of beauty, and the arts of its own framework, with its common ideology and universal theory of preference based on its own system. In modern society, aesthetics is necessary and will never be reformed. Heller affirmed the unshakable status of aesthetics as an independent subject, and she also realized that there were paradoxes that couldn't be eradicated in aesthetics itself. Heller holds that the legitimacy of modern aesthetics is based on a "Sensus Communis" about value. However, it was doubted that such kind of a "Sensus Communis" of modern society belongs to historical philosophy category, which was presupposed and lack of absolute universality. At the same time, it was of a strong subjectivity and variability. Heller admitted that it was the source of the paradoxes of aesthetics and it can never be eradicated, but it was neither proved that aesthetics should be canceled.

**Keywords**—*Sensus Communis; Agnes Heller; modern aesthetics; historical philosophy; legitimacy*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Art and beauty have been recognized and perceived since the existence of human society, but aesthetics was formed as a discipline until the emergence of bourgeois society, which is inseparable from the needs of modern society for aesthetics. The birth of aesthetics declares the formation of artistic autonomy, which makes the outline of beauty and art clear and legible. For the ordinary aesthetic public, art can not only be touched, but also have the basis of judgment. At the same time, aesthetics is also questioned in modern society. This kind of questioning comes from at least two aspects. First, people think that the concept of art and beauty are contrary to each other; on the other hand, although the historical philosophy aesthetic based on the "Sensus Communis" of value overcame its own paradox, the cause of paradox is irreducible. Heller believes that modern aesthetics is necessary and unchangeable.

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### II. PARADOX BETWEEN AESTHETICS AND ART

As an art philosophy, aesthetics aims to provide people with a universal norm to judge the aesthetic value of art works. In principle, it can also guide art creation. Aesthetics makes aesthetic practical in modern society. As an art philosophy, in theory, aesthetics makes aesthetic break away from subjective judgment and provides guarantee for the accuracy of aesthetic value judgment. At the same time, aesthetics has become a cage of art. With its solemn rationality, aesthetics requires art to behave in its limited scope without overstepping — this is contrary to the principle of freedom and sensibility of art. Modern art requires breaking free from the cage, constantly breaking the shackles of concepts, and exploring new artistic life in the unknown. Once these new art forms are confirmed by aesthetics, it means that they are captured in the form of concepts and become prisoners of aesthetics again. Thus, for modern artists, true beauty exists only for a moment.

The above can be used as a brief summary of the paradox between aesthetics and art. People's doubts about aesthetics are based partly on this paradox. Kant believes that there is only aesthetic criticism in art and no metaphysics, which has a wide range of influences in aesthetics circle. Combining the paradox of aesthetics itself — as a paradox of historical philosophy, radical impressionists and postmodernists demand that artistic philosophy be replaced by art criticism, and the discipline of aesthetics is fundamentally eliminated.

Heller's main reason for the necessity of aesthetics is that the alienation of human beings caused by the bourgeois era has made the "Sensus Communis" between people deficient — the whole era is full of ruthlessness, arrogance and subjective taste — the "evil" taste of the historical era calls for the emergence of philosophical aesthetics as the arbitrator of the riots. The ruthless and arrogant modern taste revealed by Heller is intrinsically closely related to the inherent passion for absolute freedom and restlessness of art. It is always ready to part with the enlightenment modernity, which is also the infinite charm of modern art. This "evil" taste is not completely rejected in Heller's aesthetic thoughts, but she adopts a more gentle expression to present this restless "evil" taste of art as a positive spirit of reform that is constrained by rational reflection — this concept is

embodied in her thought of "aesthetic modernity"<sup>1</sup>. However, this "evil" taste has been intensified in the post-modern trend of thought. It requires completely getting rid of all norms and restrictions to obtain absolute equality and freedom, which is called "unreflected postmodern concept" by Heller, and it actually is a more arrogant and naive grand narrative, so Heller denies the existence of the essence of "postmodernism" (historical stage, content, etc.). Heller only regards postmodern as an attitude, and its mature form is a reflective post-modernity — it not only reflects on modernity but also reflects on post-modern itself, so it is only a kind of "post-modern perspective"<sup>2</sup>. As a result, postmodernism is actually regarded as part of modernity and is also restricted by enlightenment rationality.

Heller integrates the unity of reason and sensibility into the aesthetic modernity, showing us the way in which the paradox between aesthetics and art is resolved — although in a less perfect way. Aesthetics and art use an opposite and complementary dynamic relationship to solve (but actually just alleviate) the contradiction between the two sides. On the one hand, artistic creation does not strictly (or even completely) follow concepts and norms; on the other hand, art philosophy always enrich its own conceptual system through reflection on new art forms to make itself conform to the new trends and new fashion of aesthetics. In terms of the relationship between art and aesthetics, the process of rebellion and conquest is repeated between them. This relationship is similar to the relationship between normal science and the scientific revolution in the scientific field. Thomas Kuhn believes that normal science is based on the assumption that scientific community know what the world is like and the success of most undertakings depends on the fact that natural science community are willing to defend this assumption. Scientists often suppress important new ideas, because new ideas must undermine the basic commitment of conventional study, but the true nature of conventional research guaranteed that new ideas cannot be suppressed for a long time. When a conventional problem that should be solved by known rules and procedures can't be solved by the most outstanding members of the scientific community after repeated research — it is the anomalous period when the scientific community cannot further avoid destroying the existing traditions of scientific practice, and begin unconventional research, eventually leading the scientific community to make a series of new commitments to establish a new foundation for scientific practice.<sup>3</sup>

The alternating evolutionary model of normal science and scientific revolution can be used as an example to explain and interpret the dynamic relationship between aesthetics and art. However, the restrictive relationship between aesthetics and art is looser and weaker. In fact, aesthetics do not have a substantial constraint on art creation activities, but merely serve as a frame of reference for art

history. Thus, this "revolution" between art and aesthetics occurs far more frequently and swiftly, and the cycle of upgrading of aesthetic concepts is much shorter than the scientific revolution.

In any case, in Heller's view, the soul of the social public has a thirst for art, a thirst for the "anti-image" of the fixed daily life, a thirst for the rich totality and rich group living characteristics of the public, and a thirst for a purification experience: the "sublimation" of everyday life beyond alienation<sup>4</sup>. Therefore, aesthetics is a demand of modern society.

### III. THE CONDITIONS FOR MODERN AESTHETICS

Heller's elucidation of the necessity of aesthetics was first established in the examination of the conditions for aesthetics. The emergence of aesthetics stems from the lack of "Sensus Communis" in modern society — the society needs art philosophy to provide the public with a universal norm for aesthetic value judgment. Therefore, aesthetics came into being in the process of transforming the pre-bourgeois society into bourgeois society. In the pre-bourgeois society, artistic ability is an instinct that is internalized in people's lives, which is integrated with religion, morality, customs, etc. — this is a universal and deep "Sensus Communis". The aesthetic judgment is carried out under the unconscious state, so the concept of art is superfluous. In the bourgeois society, people's lives are increasingly divided, and the "Sensus Communis" becomes a kind of deficiency. At this time, the demand for aesthetic value judgment is produced.

Hegel first recognized this transformation of bourgeois society. In his preface to the book *Aesthetics*, he elaborated the feasibility, scope and methods of aesthetics as a science and the conditions and basis for its production. Hegel combines the historical context of the transformation of the Western world into a modern society, and talks about the necessity of aesthetics: "especially the spirit of our modern world... has reached a higher stage, and art is no longer the highest way of an absolute concept. Art creation and the unique ways of its work can no longer meet our highest demands."<sup>5</sup> This paragraph is for the development of modern society. He believes that before modern society, the function of art was to free the true meaning of the phenomenon from the shape and illusion of the virtual world. Art is the higher and more realistic objective existence than the everyday real world, but in modern society, religion and rational culture have reached a higher stage than art. Therefore, art is no longer the highest way to understand absolute ideas. At the same time, because modern life emphasize sensible culture, driving people to grasp some general ideas to deal with individual situations, both in terms of will and judgment, the general forms, laws, duties, rights

<sup>1</sup> See Fu Qilin: *A Study of Agnes Heller's Thought of Modernity Aesthetics*, Chengdu: Bashu Publishing House, 2006.

<sup>2</sup> Agnes Heller: *The Theory of Modernity*, Tr. Li Ruihua, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 2005, p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> See Thomas Kuhn: *The Structure of the Scientific Revolution*, Tr. Jin Wulun, Hu Xinhe, Beijing: Peking University Press, 2003, p. 5.

<sup>4</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich: "The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics", see "Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools", Tr. Fu Qilin, Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 3.

<sup>5</sup> Hegel: *Aesthetics*, Tr. Zhu Guangqian, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, p. 13.

and rules become the determinants and important factors of life. In the past, art directly stimulated the enjoyment of beauty in people's minds, but nowadays it requires people to think about the content and expression of art works and whether they are appropriate. That is to understand art works in a scientific way — art has been separated from the state where beauty and art works are integrated, and transferred to people's ideas. "Art for modern people are already the bygone. Therefore, it has lost its true reality and life, can no longer maintain its former necessity and lofty status in reality." <sup>6</sup> In short, good days are gone forever. According to this, Hegel believes that modern society needs aesthetics more than ever.

Heller conducted a more detailed analysis along Hegel's understanding. She believes that there are four factors that "inspired" the emergence of aesthetics as an independent discipline: first, the emergence of unique activities for the beauty and its objectification; second is the lack of Sensus Communis based on the "organic society" formed "organically" in bourgeois society; third, art is separated from daily life; fourth is the universalization of commercial production of art works.

The first factor that "inspires" aesthetics means that art becomes an independent and self-sufficient activity that is no longer attached to theology or religion. Heller divides this factor into two periods, namely the pre-bourgeois society and the bourgeois society in the strict sense. In the first period, "elegant culture" was separated from all daily life, and "specialized craftsmen" were separated from other social classes, indicating the awakening of aesthetic ideology; in the second period, the integration of bourgeois activities based on the rationality of purpose eliminates the people's inherent standard of "producing according to the measure of beauty", and art as a unique "production branch" compensate for the lack of beauty in the rational spiritual world of computational efficiency. For the second factor, the bourgeois era liberated from past norms and constraints is infinitely individualized, turning into a ruthless and arrogant historical era full of subjective taste. The "evil" taste called for the emergence of philosophical aesthetics as the arbiter of rioters. For the third factor, in the context of the constant differentiation of society that lead to the lack of the "common" attribute of art, art should be non-atomic, intersubjective, non-special, and accessible without special skills and knowledge. Its communicability builds the connection of human beings — the paradox of art itself calls for an art philosophy to help solve problems. For the fourth factor, art accepts to follow the rules of commodity actualization to realize itself based on supply and demand, but the quality of art itself takes a back seat. At this time, not only does art need aesthetic interpretation, but the interpretation itself becomes a kind of construction behavior.

<sup>6</sup> Hegel: *Aesthetics*, Tr. Zhu Guangqian, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, p. 15.

<sup>7</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich: "The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics", see "Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools", Tr. Fu Qilin, Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 1-5.

The four factors that "inspire" the emergence of aesthetics reflect the complex relationship between art, aesthetics and modern society, especially the lack of "Sensus Communis" in modern society, making aesthetics a problem. Before the bourgeois society, the integration of art and life wasn't a special field. In Heller's words, "the beauty lies in life", and it is rooted in deep social ideology like morality and religion. In modern society, people need to use the value of Sensus Communis to judge the aesthetic value of art more than ever. However, this "Sensus Communis" value is pre-established without absolute universality. It has a strong subjective color and is also changing — it changes with the taste of history.

#### IV. HISTORICAL PHILOSOPHICAL AESTHETICS BASED ON "SENSUS COMMUNIS"

Now, a sharp question is presented to us: since the lack of "Sensus Communis" in modern life has become so obvious, how can aesthetics based on "Sensus Communis" are made possible? The purpose of aesthetics is to solve the lack of "Sensus Communis" and provide general rules for the judgment of aesthetic value. However, since aesthetics itself is based on the "Sensus Communis", if aesthetics becomes a problem because of the lack of "Sensus Communis", then logically, for the same reason, it is impossible for aesthetics to exist as an art philosophy. Of course, what can best explain the possibility of modern aesthetics existing as an independent discipline is the modern aesthetic itself. In the mid-18th century, the Wolf School separated "aesthetics" from philosophy as a science <sup>8</sup>, and it becomes a self-sufficient system till now. However, this reason clearly can't guarantee that aesthetics will still have a place in the post-modern rebel movement.

According to the predicament of modern aesthetics, on the one hand, its purpose is to satisfy the value judgment needs of general public that lacks "Sensus Communis", and to convey the "Sensus Communis" of value; on the other hand, aesthetics needs a "Sensus Communis" of value common to social groups as the premise to establish itself — this "Sensus Communis" cannot be obtained from contemporary society, so we can only turn to the philosophy of history to seek answers.

Over the careful analysis of Heller's aesthetic theory, it can be found that the possibility of aesthetics is rooted in its historical philosophical attributes. Aesthetics is an art philosophy. Therefore, in the study of aesthetics, art needs to be grasped through human reflection. In this way, aesthetics will inevitably have the brand of human beings, which in fact is the brand of historical philosophy. Hegel talks about the basic methods of aesthetic research in *Aesthetics*: one takes experience as the starting point and the other takes the idea as the starting point. According to the principle of unity of universality and particularity in metaphysics, Hegel argues that aesthetic research should unify these two research methods.

<sup>8</sup> Baum Jiatong first used the term "Ästhetik" in *Aesthetics* in 1750.

The first method requires a sufficient understanding of the ancient and modern works of art with unlimited scope. Since all kinds of works belong to its era and nation with its own special environment, art research needs profound history and specialized knowledge. The main points of history are selected and aggregated to summarize general standards and rules. For those strange and singular works that are not applicable to general standards and laws, it is necessary to judge by using the mind supplemented by "the knowledge of art history". The second method is Platonic's way that completely uses theoretical thinking. First, it requires recognizing the beauty itself, deeply understanding the concept of beauty, realizing the universality and kinds of objects. Its method is the conceptual role of thinking.<sup>9</sup>

Hegel injects the general standards and rules obtained from historical knowledge into the empty concept of Plato, and the two are united to form his own historical philosophy aesthetics. From Hegel's method of artistic research, it can be seen that aesthetics belongs to the category of historical philosophy. First, it needs to extract general standards and rules from special environments such as times and nations. Second, it also needs to make abstract thinking of concepts based on objects proceeding from general standards and guidelines. Through the methodological foundation laid by Hegel for aesthetics, on the one hand, aesthetics has preserved certain standards and rules concerning the history of various art types, namely the original "Sensus Communis". On the other hand, according to this Sensus Communis, it can guide artistic activities and make value judgments.

On the basis of Hegel, Heller gave the aesthetics the "preservation function of 'species value'", and at the same time compared the art to the "reservoir" that replaces the "species value" of life.<sup>10</sup> Heller believes that in modern society, art assumes the new function of creating human connections. Based on non-atomic and intersubjective characteristics, art is made to meet the public's need for collective life and purification experience and become the reservoirs of "species value" for atomized modern people who lack social and public life — aesthetics is used to solve paradox, prove the reason for the existence of this reservoir, and explain the historical validity of art works. When Hegel interprets the legitimacy of aesthetics, he compares art to a key: "In the works of art, various nations have left their richest insights and ideas; the art of beauty is often a key to understanding philosophy and religion, and for many peoples, it is the only key... It is the first medium to make up for the splitting of the soul and the 'this shore' caused by the mind."<sup>11</sup> The "reservoir" of the species value that Heller said is actually Hegel's "key" here.

<sup>9</sup> See Hegel. *Aesthetics*, Tr. Zhu Guangqian, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, pp. 18-28.

<sup>10</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich: "The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics", see "Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools", Tr. Fu Qilin, Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 3-4.

<sup>11</sup> Hegel: *Aesthetics*, Tr. Zhu Guangqian, Beijing: The Commercial Press, 1986, p. 11.

From Hegel to Heller, various aesthetics are actually presented in the form of a historical philosophy. Heller believes that only Kant insists that beauty does not have metaphysics, but only have one kind of judgment. In addition, from Hegel to Xie Lin to Kelzen Gol, and Lukács, each important aesthetic is also a historical philosophy — each historical aesthetic theory puts art into system of human activities. It is complacent about using a technical means to strip the veil of art mystery, which explains why the taste of aesthetics is so capricious — the lyric poetry occupies primacy in Hegel's system, Lukács sees epic and drama higher and Adorno holds "music center theory"... Heller cited examples of the same art work that obtained excessive or low evaluation in different eras, and held the attitude of resentment when looking at Schlegel and Lukács and others who changed their attitude to the same work of art due to changes in the historical environment. The level of aesthetics is actually a historical bias.

#### V. THE DISADVANTAGES OF HISTORICAL PHILOSOPHY AESTHETICS

The historical and philosophical attributes of aesthetics provide a basis for their own possibility and legitimacy. However, this historical philosophical attribute also brings disadvantages to itself — the aesthetic value judgment of art philosophy cannot rely on the "Sensus Communis" in modern life (because it does not exist), but it is based on a "Sensus Communis" of historical memory. This also determines that aesthetics is not "pure", but with historical bias and subjectivity. In the eyes of Heller, this historical bias and subjectivity cannot be eliminated.

Originally, according to Hegel's viewpoint, although art only presents an illusory image to people, in the deeper terms, it brings the highest truth to people, and one is ruled in history as well as an eternal power that govern in history, even in the modern art theory, the essence of the absolute truth of beauty is recognized. Baudelaire believes that one half of art is modernity that is transitional, short, and accidental, and the other half is eternity and immutability.<sup>12</sup> Heller believes that this is confirmed in the aesthetic judgments that are free from various social factors in Aristotle's "Poetics" and Bovalo's classic items. However, in bourgeois society, aesthetics has evolved into a universal philosophy, and evaluated and interpreted the "aesthetic field", "aesthetic", "objective beauty" and the art within this framework based on the general ideology and universal theoretical preference inferred from its own system. According to the metaphysics of art, Hegel ranks the specific art categories according to his time.

However, from the mission of aesthetics and the core of its legitimacy, this historical bias of aesthetics is inevitable — its interpretation function determines that it is a metaphysics that judge based on concepts and universal principles. The function of "reservoir" of species value determines that it is a historical philosophy with prejudice;

<sup>12</sup> Baudelaire: "The Salon of 1846: Selection of Baudelaire's paper on Aesthetics", Tr. Guo Hong'an, Guangxi Normal University Press, 2002, p. 424.



and the so-called *Sensus Communis* of value, in the modern society that is divorced from the old age and constantly diverging, on the one hand needs to obtain the rules of aesthetic value judgment and dogmatization in the pool. On the other hand, it should inject the artistic innovation with strong personal and current taste into this “reservoir”, and legalize this new taste through the “reservoir” to expand it into the general concept shared by the public. Therefore, modern society does not have the *Sensus Communis* of value in the absolute sense and the so-called *Sensus Communis* is essentially a presupposition concept with certain contingency.

In addition, from the historical era setting the level of art, and the socially recognized theorists judging the art according to the changes in the historical environment and personal taste, it can be seen that the aesthetic concept has a personal subjective color. Even in many cases, the personal taste of the esthetician was imposed on the public, pretending to be a common concept of the times. Heller also made a detailed analysis of this aesthetic concept with personal subjective color. Heller defined the general norm in aesthetics as “concept” and defined subjective (individual or group) factors as “taste”. Heller pointed out that aesthetics was first established by estheticians, who deduced from his historical concept, affirmation or negative evaluation of a single historical era to interpret his single value judgment of art, art branch, and art work. Almost every esthetician sets different levels for art. She also acknowledges that the concept of aesthetics is nothing more than a combination of “taste” and “concept.” Therefore, the aesthetics of historical philosophy is biased, so it does not have absolute objective impartiality.

Although historical philosophical aesthetics has various drawbacks, since art is an eager demand internalized in the human mind, in modern society, aesthetics is indispensable as a science for judging and explaining the value of art. At the same time, the commercial production mode of modern social art works makes the value of art work depend on supply and demand, and its structure takes a back seat. Under such circumstances, there is an urgent need for philosophical interpretation of artistic works, so this philosophical interpretation has also become an act of constructing works of art. In fact, the commodity society has created a new situation for artistic self-discipline, which further strengthens the second period of the first factor stated by Heller and the social needs of aesthetics in the three factors: on the one hand, aesthetics needs to set norms for art to ensure the smooth progress of aesthetic value judgments (even art production) to meet the increasingly diverse public demand for art in daily life. At the same time, art is a form that communicates increasingly differentiated people, pass on common values, and unite social consciousness. On the other hand, it is precisely because of the commodification of art under the premise of the lack of this “*Sensus Communis*” that aesthetics is more urgently required to explain and construct art works that is relatively unfamiliar to the public.

## VI. THE IRREFORMABILITY OF AESTHETICS

Because the two paradoxes mentioned above about aesthetics — the “*Sensus Communis*” paradoxes between art

and aesthetics and historical philosophical aesthetics — can never be perfectly solved, and they are most intuitively presented as confrontational gesture in front of people, rather than the unity of opposites that has emerged after analysis and reflection. Federer refutes aesthetics: “There is no art, only various arts.”<sup>13</sup> For Federer, the concept of art is an arbitrary abstraction as well as a myth of rationalism, which forces all things to be identical and be integrated into one system. However, the aesthetic judgment of identity generated from this myth is ineffective and meaningless for the living concrete art. This aesthetic view has a one-sided rationality in the perspective of self-innovation of art, but in fact it contains more sharp contradictions.

Heller refuted Federer's “there is no art, only various arts.” from the opposite side. Heller also cited impressionist criticism represented by Godier, which has the same claim as Federer. They advocate abolishing aesthetics and only retaining art criticism because art analysis should be independent of all philosophical “premise”, or at least independent of the specific existence and characteristics of the appreciated artistic works of the entire artistic function. The idea of impressionist art criticism has been widely supported. For a time, people cheered that the assumption “inductive concept of art” “only relies on works”, breaking through the “lifeless abstraction” and becoming a common requirement<sup>14</sup>. The impressionistic art criticism was once popular — now it gets a new lease of life in the post-modernism with the flavor of mundane life.

This aesthetic view of impressionism seems to have certain rationality, and it presents a posture of an aesthetic reformer, which essentially returned to Kant, and it also implies a double contradiction. First of all, Heller believes that there is no “freedom from abstraction” under any circumstances, but only confusion of concepts. The concept of “induction” by impressionist criticism cannot be separated from the philosophical premise, but these preconditions are not clear; on the other hand, impressionist criticism emphasizes the power of pure judgment, and does not advocate special tastes. Sometimes, such random judgments such as “I like it and so much for it” hardly involves the work itself, but only expresses the individual's taste. Therefore, this judgment only characterizes the subject rather than the artwork. According to this, Heller believes that art criticism does not have the qualification to replace aesthetics that does not have the conditions for external reform.

Moreover, there is no possibility for aesthetics to have the internal reform. The above part used the relationship between normal science and scientific revolution corroborate the dialectical unity between aesthetics and art, and solved (mitigated) the paradox of historical philosophical aesthetics itself — although in an imperfect way — the “*Sensus*

<sup>13</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich: “The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics”, see “Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools”, Tr. Fu Qilin, Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 14.

<sup>14</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich: “The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics”, see “Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools”, Tr. Fu Qilin, Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 14.

Communism" in the category of historical philosophy itself has the same functional nature as normal science. Heller's modern aesthetic theory has touched this relationship along Hegel's path. It can be said that she almost solve this paradox, but Heller did not think that the world was peaceful now. Considering the current situation of alienation in modern society, the so-called "Sensus Communis" is not a universal value that is truly rooted in the present life, but a myth that is separated from the social foundation. It comes from historical philosophy, with contingency and subjective color. It forces to infuse a universal norm inferred according to the personal taste and historical bias of the esthetician into the aesthetic public. Therefore, although the "Sensus Communis" exists, it is always in a contradictory situation.

However, we should still see that aesthetics is not completely the collection of old ideas, and it also contains vitality, because on the one hand, aesthetics applies the laws and norms abstracted from the universal experience of the past era to the current aesthetic value judgment. On the other hand, it continues to draw nutrients from the new artistic image, which is both pre-built and constantly updated. Heller focused his attention on the root cause of this paradox, namely the alienation crisis caused by modern society. In the end, she came to the conclusion that aesthetics cannot be reformed, but this does not mean that modern society can abandon aesthetics.

## VII. CONCLUSION

The basis of the aesthetic legitimacy elaborated by Heller and Hegel is basically the same. In particular, Heller and Fehr's article "The Necessity and Irreformability of Aesthetics"<sup>15</sup> can be seen as a supplementary explanation of Hegel's "Aesthetics" in the context of postmodernism by contemporary scholars — that is in contemporary society, is there conditions and necessity for the existence of aesthetics, or is it legal? Heller and Fehrer used the title of the article to indicate their standpoint, but because of the relationship between the times and historical contexts, aesthetics need to face more problems. Therefore, although the article is short, it actually involves more questions. If Hegel and his contemporaneous aesthetic work are regarded as the "baptisms" for the newborn "aesthetics", Heller are giving them "initiation rite."

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<sup>15</sup> Agnes Heller, Frenz Fich et al. "Reconstruction of Aesthetics — Collection of Budapest Schools", Tr. Yi Junqin, Fu Qilin. Harbin: Heilongjiang University Press, 2014, page 1-22.