

Art and Creativity

The Concept of Spiritual Creativity

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Abstract—Creativity is one of the main manifestations of spirituality. We may certainly say that there's no spirituality outside of creativity, and only because of it, philosophy, religion, and art attain their spiritual meaning and development. The highest form of creativity is self-cognition, self-making of a human. Aesthetic creativity is not external to the spiritual and human nature, but it is their constitutive force. Beauty is as important for the spiritual development, as are truth and good: the harmony is created in their unity in love. That is why the great Russian writer and thinker, F.M. Dostoyevsky said, repeating Plato's idea, that "beauty will save the world".

Keywords—art; spiritual creativity; spiritual archetype of the mankind; beauty; morality; self-cognition

I. INTRODUCTION

In the broadest sense, creativity encompasses all the spheres of human life, not only spiritual but also material. However, any truly spiritual human activity is a creative process, as creativity is one of the main characteristics of spirituality. We may safely say that there is no spirituality outside of creativity, only because of it, philosophy, religion, love, and conscience find valid meaning and development.

Creativity is always an answer to the unknown, for it is transcending. It is qualitatively different from the mechanical process in which everything is being repeated and from the biological process, in which there is only a reproduction. Creativity is a qualitative leap, where the new has the old as the premise but cannot be directly derived. The creative act is possible because of freedom, being its implementation. The very movement of thought is creativity (philosophizing) that is happening not so often. Spirit is useless and worthless without matter, being just an empty form. In spirit's connection with matter, creativity emerges (F.W.J. Schelling). Creativity is free, not predetermined and, therefore, incalculable. "Try to predict a scientific discovery, not to mention the work of art. The higher it is, the more unexpected, surprising, wonderful it goes. There are notions to explain it retrospectively. But they fail, not reaching beyond the background, foundation, on which it saw the light

of the day. Its birth is a God-Man mystery" [1. P. 163].

True creativity is rationally impossible and is not apprehensive; it is always spontaneous, and realized as a part of the canon. I. Kant defined spontaneity as the human ability to productive imagination based on which mental acts occur. In Schelling's philosophy, true creativity finds its source in the sphere of the unconscious, we may add, super-rational. In the spiritual sense, creative spontaneity, in the work of the consciousness, is expressed in the self-revelation of the meanings that seem to be born suddenly and out of nothing. This creative spontaneity is based on intuition, which precedes the research.

II. THE BEGINNING OF ART

Art in general (visual art in particular) originates in the Paleolithic age. Only at the end of it, the ancient people began to depict, draw and cut with animals being the subject matter. In the Mesolithic age, the art themes became more diverse: we are aware of the works of art, depicting groups of people, yet, the individuals lack faces and are not distinguished. Special attention was paid to ritual clothing. The transition to the settled lifestyle brought to life such art as architecture. In prehistoric times, the role of art was even more important than now: in the absence of science and philosophy, art encompassed almost all the experience and knowledge of the world. With the retreat of the glacier (9-10 thousand years ago), the modern era began. The world of the settled farmers changed. The leading role in the visual art was passed to the ornament – art, associated with dimension and figure. Distant signs of written characters started to appear in the ornament. Writing first evolved approximately in 3300 BC in Sumer (ideographic writing), in 3 000 BC in Egypt (hieroglyphic writing), and in 2000 BC in China, although alphabet was developed by the Phoenicians and was perfected by the Greeks only in the first millennium BC.

Apparently, creativity emerges alongside an individual. The making of the first artificial tool and even use of natural tools in the work are the creative acts. The transition from instinctive activity to work is related not only to material necessity but also with creativity and resourcefulness. However, art arises much later than this moment. Art is acquired fully only when it is aware of its own distinguishing features and proceeds from own goals and objectives when it

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is "art for art's sake". This occurred after the emergence of civilizations, somewhere during the "Axial age". That is why art in the proper sense of the word is historically equal to philosophy and the higher forms of religion.

However, that doesn't mean that there wasn't a creative process in the pre-Axial age. After all, the temples are being built since the dawn of the cities, cultures, and civilizations. The point is that art didn't play an independent role back then and wasn't allocated into the special sphere of spiritual activity. Art was official, implementing religious inquiries and completely subordinated to religious interest. There was no place for independent artists, scholars, and philosophers, while true creativity occurs only when an artist realizes his own spiritual demands, driven by the personal interest of self-cognition and fulfillment, not dictated from without. The truly independent forms of art appear only in Ancient Greece. The Egyptian pyramids are, in the first place, the houses of worship and only in this framework, they may be viewed as works of art. Unlike the pyramids, the tragedies of Aeschylus, or even the works of Homer and Hesiod, are something independent. In this sense, art expresses its essence only when it's done for the sake of art. This is also true for all the forms of human spiritual activity. It gets realized only when answering the internal needs and objectives, philosophy for philosophy and religion for religion.

Historical development of the concept of beauty lies in its deepening transition from external forms to internal, from the body to soul, and from sculpture and painting to poetry and music. The principle of *kalos kagathos* (Ancient Greek: *καλός* for "beautiful" and *ἀγαθός* for "good" or "virtuous") was dominant in the ancient world, uniting aesthetic and ethical merits. Yet, the latter was reduced to socio-political understanding. Antiquity was based on the principle: "a sound mind in a sound body". However, the Ancient Greek sages, moving from epic to polis ethical values, strived to focus on virtue and not on valor and wealth. Virtue comes to the fore in the field of ethics, instead of military prowess and beauty of the outside.

Socrates sought to develop further the notion of *kalos kagathos* and beauty, transferring it from the sphere of society, external to an individual, to the inner, mental, spiritual plane. The principle of inner-spiritual comprehension of beauty prevailed in the world religions. Christianity is based on the principle of *Philokalia* ("in weakness, God's will is happening"). A person may be ugly and physically sick but may have a beautiful soul and, therefore, be pleasing to God. Beauty is inseparable from good and truth in the spiritual traditions of humanity. This unity is starting to disintegrate only in the new time because of the complexity and contradictory nature of the social and spiritual development of mankind.

III. CREATIVITY AS SUCH ART

If, in a broad sense, creativity can cover all human activity, in the narrow sense, it is a special kind of labor, cultural and creative activity engaged with the formation of values and symbols. This creative work ends with the creation of works of art; it is aimed at it. Creativity in the

true sense of the word is realized in the aesthetic attitude to reality, which is reflected in the ability to perceive and appreciate beauty. Aesthetic appreciation is nurtured, shaped and formed along with the spiritual development of an individual. It doesn't much reflect reality and human life but rather expresses the aspirations and ideals. It is not passive, for its essence is in the creation of something new. This is how creation differs from science, that discovers the laws of nature while art creates beauty and sublime. Although, creativity is inherent to science.

Thus, creativity in the strict sense of the word is realized exactly in art, for only in it creativity is free from external and preset goals, seeking to express beauty, ideas, and meaning as such. Art is supposed to realize the spiritual needs of an individual, not material or any other. By building a house, individual aims at strength, warmth, convenience, etc., but, by building a temple, he primarily cares about splendor and beauty. Ideally, all forms of human labor shall approach creativity in art, for by creating beauty and living in the world of beauty, individual cleanses and perfects the soul.

We shouldn't consider a person's spiritual sphere in analogy with the material one, which is not self-sufficient and realizes the bodily needs. Construction, e.g., couldn't be for a construction's sake, it is necessary for people and their needs. Quite different is the spiritual realm, as it is initially in and for an individual. Therefore, the more autonomous it is, the better it serves an individual and society. In this regard, the slogan "art for people" is equivalent to art's destruction – no wonder this slogan was dominant under totalitarian regimes and in ideological societies. In fact, art, in this case turns into a service mechanism of power, seeks to use art for self-justification and self-sustainment of the ruling regime. In this case, true art is being suppressed, and legal art degenerates. The result is quite opposite: when we say "art for art's sake", we call art for the expansion of its potential, and artists for self-realization, as only then we experience "art for the people". If we start with the slogan "art for the people", we will destroy the inner creative motive, and the result is not art, which is then destroyed, made to serve a totalitarian power, turning into "art for power".

Art feels bad not only in totalitarian regimes, where it is forced to fight its way like grass through asphalt despite the authorities and the dominant ideology exposed to violence and censorship. Art also feels bad in the conditions of market economy that is not interested in art's development and prosperity. If priceless art works turn into the subjects of sale, business takes notice, hunting after profit and prestige. Art is able to survive and adjust adequately only in a welfare state.

It should also be noted that true art is always elitist. This doesn't necessary mean that pieces of art could be created and comprehended by only select individuals (A. Schopenhauer). True art, as well as the essence of religion and philosophy, is open and created to all. Spiritual truth cannot be hidden, selective, or turned into the secret. It is widely available, yet not everyone is willing to relate. Art is a gift of spirit. It is offered and must be donated to everyone for free, pro-bono, but a person is so corrupted and spoiled,

that he doesn't want to accept the gift. That is why, only those who want to enter elite, creating and comprehending art. Spiritual communion is voluntary, but people try to escape freedom (E. Fromm) because it carries with it responsibility. Run away from beauty, for it reveals disgrace. Hide from faith, as it discloses imperfection and opposition to the spiritual ideals. Avoid thinking and philosophizing because they are laborious. Elude truth because it reveals the lie of existence.

Kant reduced art to imitation while Schelling and the German romantics, on the contrary, put art above nature. However, their interpretations of genius are similar. I. Kant wrote that genius "gives art rules", "is the favorite of nature" [2]. Kant wrote on the nature of genius's creativity: "Genius himself cannot describe or scientifically justify the way he creates his work – he sets the rules just as nature; that is why the author of the art work, owing to his genius, doesn't realize himself, how the ideas have come to him, and it is not in his power to arbitrarily or systematically make them up or tell the others, how to create similar art works". We may learn everything, stated by the genius mind of I. Newton, "but it is impossible to learn how to create inspired poetry". Talent is enough for science, while art requires genius. This doesn't mean, of course, that there are no geniuses in science. Genius is just excessive for science, turning science into philosophy and art.

G.W.F. Hegel puts art below philosophy and religion, believing that art is burdened by sensitivity, i.e. expresses the spiritual idea in a form, inadequate for it. Philosophy only finds an ideal form for an ideal – concept. When an artist expresses a spiritual idea in a material form, there is always an inevitable estrangement and callousness: intention never equals implementation. Unlike Hegel, Schelling believed that philosophy as philosophy itself can never be generally important, and objectivity is given to art only. Art leads to the cognition of a human as a supreme being, while philosophy leads to the cognition of the human mind. Thus, what Hegel sees as art's drawback, Schelling sees as art's advantage because, of the sensual form, art becomes widely available to the public and increases its exposure to people. This state is so amazing and exciting, that it leaves a profound impression. Thus, catharsis occurs – purification and purgation of emotions granted by art. Schelling comprehends art as a special kind of spiritual cognition of the Absolution [3].

The German philosopher, a contemporary of Schelling, Arthur Schopenhauer equally appreciated art. He placed music particularly high, separating it from all other arts. If I. Kant called music the "game of sensations", for Schopenhauer, as for the ancient Pythagoreans, who had heard the melody of the celestial spheres, music acquires a demiurgic, world-building meaning and character. Music is more primary than the world that arose based on its rhythms.

IV. SPIRITUAL CREATIVITY AS SUCH SELF-COGNITION

Speaking of music and poetry, we approached the third level of understanding creativity and art – "spiritual art", i.e. self-cognition. Spiritual creativity is the creation of ideas,

meanings, and symbols. It represents self-cognition and is nothing else but the deployment of the essence of an individual. The highest form of art is the creation of self in the act of self-cognition.

However, such pure creativity doesn't exist, as even a spiritual meditation is possible only because of certain symbols and ideas, determining, thus, a sphere of realization. Although, this doesn't mean that spiritual creativity cannot be considered as a concept, regardless of the spheres of its activities' implementation. However, the path to such a principled outlining of the concept of spiritual creativity lies in a description of how it carries out different roles in various spheres.

Spiritual creativity is everywhere, and philosophy and faith are the poetry of spirit. N.A. Berdyaev defines philosophy as "the art of cognition in freedom through the creation of ideas..." [4]. Actual spiritual creativity as self-cognition occurs in three spheres: philosophy, religion, and art. Philosophy and religion express the creative experience of self-cognition in theoretical (conceptual and symbolic) form, whereas art - in practical.

Despite the fact that the highest form of creativity is self-cognition, self-creation of an individual, aesthetic creativity isn't external to the spirituality and human essence but is rather their constitutive force. Creativity is not a service in relation to metaphysics and ethics, but permeates them, filling them with life. Beauty is as vital to the holistic spiritual human development as truth and virtue: harmony is created by their unity in love. That is why the great Russian writer and thinker Fyodor Dostoyevsky said, repeating Plato's idea, that "beauty will save the world".

V. CREATIVITY, ART AND MORALITY

This is justified by creativity, setting a human potential in motion, leading him on the path of self-cognition, i.e. the deployment of the own essence. The human essence is in humanity, so there is an inevitable humanization of a human being. To create oneself is to seek the maximum expression of self-humanity in every deed [5].

Creativity and art with the necessity relate to morality.

But how it is then possible, that in real life genius and evil and art and misanthropy are compatible? Evil and immorality may infect creative nature, distorting it. An individual doesn't always find himself in the state of creativity: by departing from it, he may instantly turn into a villain.

However, an empirical life of a human and society is weaved from contradictions, that invade a creative individual and art itself, corrupting its purpose. If such an individual follows the path of evil, he contradicts his creativity, destroys it and his own personality. Such a person is awaited by woes and internal conflicts, and if he doesn't turn to good, then he dies first as an artist, second, as a personality, eventually leading himself to a physical death [6].

There is also a problem of the perception of art, especially its newest forms, because the new always

contradicts the old, which resists life. The canons of classic art do not always meet the needs of modern society and people. Life nowadays is extremely dynamic and contradictory, an individual's orientation in society is hampered. Art doesn't exist somewhere on the moon, it exists in real life if art is alive and active. Therefore, art doesn't only create something new, but also symbolically reflects the existing phenomena. The 20th century begot new, unprecedented forms of art, opposing the classic canons of harmony and beauty, but art is demanded and needed today. This "chaotic" art is closer to life.

However, along with the new canons of art, pseudo-creativity emerges. It is difficult at times to recognize it, as it can actively and massively influence people, especially the young ones. Salvation from pseudo-creativity lies within the field of perception of the classic works of art, general cultural sphere, moral and spiritual development of an individual.

VI. CONCLUSION

Art is a concentrated expression of the aesthetic relation of an individual to reality, manifesting through the concept of beauty that is permeating all aspects of human activity and representing the essence of art.

Spiritual creativity creates beauty in everything, especially in art, and beauty is the highest expression of harmony and perfection. According to V.I. Solovyov, beauty is one of the parties of the spiritual archetype of mankind, along with virtue and truth [7]. This was deeply understood by Plato, who said that beauty has "the ability to be visible and to inspire love" [8]. The philosopher wrote, that "the lover of beauty is called amorous", that exactly through love to beauty there is a spiritual ascent, as described in his Symposium. Virtue, truth, and beauty are the three aspects of a spiritual life of an individual, with the highest form of beauty being born from the flowering of the soul. Plato and Dostoyevsky speak about the necessity of beauty, becoming the symbol of all human ideals as a developed person seeks expression of love in the same measure as the manifestation of beauty.

In "The Brothers Karamazov", Dostoyevsky deepens the concept of beauty and shows that it is not devoid of contradictions. As long ago as Heraclitus said that harmony holds the contradiction in itself: the cosmos is the most beautiful entity and the scattered litter at the same time. Dostoyevsky thought of beauty proceeding from the soul of a man, his psychology, and spiritual development. The true beauty and its understanding are not given simply so, they should be suffered thoroughly, just like faith and love [9].

Spiritual creativity is a matter of love, for it represents a human's attempt to connect with eternity. When we love a particular person, we perceive the eternal in him. Beauty forms concrete and temporal on the basis of universal and eternal. In a state of spiritual creativity, an individual creates his own existence, co-creating, resembling the Creator. An individual realizes himself in the cognition of his own essence and deployment of mankind's spiritual archetype. Beauty is the manifestation of the eternal and the infinity in

something concrete and specific; love is the reveal of eternity in transience.

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