

УДК 7.01:111.83

Issues of 'Ideal' in Modern Art and Study of Art

Marina V. Moskalyuk*

Siberian Federal University

79 Svobodny, Krasnoyarsk, 660041 Russia¹

Received 4.11.2011, received in revised form 11.11.2011, accepted 16.12.2011

The article dwells upon a topicality of understanding of 'ideal' in modern art and in the study of art. Some definitions of 'ideal' are specified. Its fundamental meaning for human existence is pointed out. It is asserted that ideal must be present in a work of art not only as non-objective reality but in its evaluative aspect, in the meaning of a high ideal since a work of art is always both a grip of spiritual content and its transformation into a concrete artistic image-bearing one. At this, ideal content in a material work of art can be extracted only in the process of perception, in a course of a purposeful human activity. Thus, ideal is always active, dynamic, dependant on a percipient's personality level. A variety of ideal concepts (eternity, love, motherhood, peace and quiet, thirst, etc.) are revealed through an artistic image. They contain universal objective meaning and highlight unique social meaningfulness of art among other forms of social consciousness, the former being a necessary and full-fledged translator of ideal. The value of a work of art is ensured by a complete embodiment of ideal. The attempts to exclude ideal made in modern artistic practices result in the lack of qualities (artistic value) and functions (translation of ideal) in works of art.

Keywords: ideal, art, work of art, artist, percipient, perception.

The research is done as a part of the grant of the Federal Target Programme "Social construction of all-Russian identity in the Central Siberia".

Introduction

The culture of the art at the beginning of the XXI century faces quite a number of unsolved problems that haven't arisen recently but have been its integral parts permanently existing in a heterogeneous field of knowledge gained by the humanities. The topic of 'ideal' has been open and inexhaustible not only for academic philosophical discourse but for a more specific sphere of art and various ways of consideration in it. A modern situation in art displays an aggravated topicality of understanding of ideal and the necessity of its integration into changing social paradigms. We

consider it to be conditioned by a contradictory complexity of art existence (both in the previous epochs and nowadays) in an accelerating tempo of globalization at the turn of XX – XXI centuries when the concept "a work of art" has been actively changed by the concept "a product of art" in which the quality of artistic value is not entirely obligatory.

Methodology and methods of research

Before regarding art and study of art it's not out of place to specify some definitions of

* Corresponding author E-mail address: mawam@rambler.ru

¹ © Siberian Federal University. All rights reserved

'ideal' that will be claimed in further argument. Such a multifaceted concept doesn't have a unique definition and undoubtedly won't acquire one. What can be treated definitely is that ideal is opposed to either material or real. In the most elementary understanding 'ideal' is something that exists not in reality but in consciousness. The statement that the substance is an objective reality while ideal is a subjective reality can't be regarded efficient nowadays as philosophy and psychology have been actively working out the concept of 'objective ideal'. On the other hand, it's important that ideal in our understanding often implies a qualitative aspect as something absolutely perfect, non-explainable by reasonable foundations, close to an ideal perceived as something inexhaustible, unachievable.

Relying on Marxist philosophy, E.M. Ilyenkov wrote in the sixties: "Definition of 'ideal' is strictly dialectical. It is something that is nowhere but at the same time it exists. It doesn't exist in the form of an outward object perceived by the organs of sense perception. It exists as a human's ability to act. It's existence equal to non-existence. In other words it's available existence of an outward object in the phase of its formation in the course of a human's activity, in the form of its inner image, need, motive and aim" (Ilyenkov, 2006, p. 23). It should be emphasized that it is the sphere of art that represents the existence of ideal in the form of "an inner image, need, motive and aim" than other spheres of a human's spiritual culture.

No matter how we would define 'ideal' in favour of either material or idealistic philosophical conceptions, its fundamental meaning for a human's existence is entirely obvious. For us it's very important that the art has always been one of the most significant forms of generation, consolidation, translation of ideal from human to human, from generation

to generation, from epoch to epoch and, perhaps, will always be. It's art that transfers ideal (that is something that doesn't exist in reality and has no form) through material, physical. Confirmation of this point of view is particularly vividly traced in visual art: sculptural forms, picturesque planes in painting, size, texture, structure and materials in architectural masterpieces, etc. excite our interest not as material objects but as means of creation of ideal, i.e. image. Further we'll mainly regard visual art though we believe the mentioned above is topical to other spheres of art to equal extent.

Results

Undoubtedly, ideal by itself doesn't exist in material. A painting will remain an object, a painting in a frame, a canvas and paints, till the moment it is perceived by a human. A purely material object – a painting – acquires some ideal characteristics and becomes a work of art that is impossible to regard as solely material only through a human. At this, perception of art is paradoxical in its essence as we simultaneously see both the objects depicted and the painting itself. The paradox is that the right identification of the object depicted doesn't mean the identity of this object to its prototype in an informational sense. It should be emphasized that an artist's transfer of a real object into a painting initially adds some non-visual ideal constituent part. It is always present and influences a perceiver (an interpreter) in different ways, making him model his own ideal world, outlasting, broadening, and developing the qualities of idealness that is available in a work of art.

In a work of art ideal is available not only as a certain, non-existing reality that is designed by a creative imagination, materialized by an artist in lines, colours, forms and then perceived by an percipient not in reality but through contemplation. In a work of art the concept of ideal is also present

in its qualitative, value aspect, in the concept of a high ideal since creative work is always a grip of spiritual content and its transformation into a concrete artistic image-bearing one.

Discussion

The fact that an ideal content in a material work of art can be extracted only in the process, in a purposeful human's activity determines an active, dynamic nature of ideal and its dependency on a percipient's personality level: Homer will give everybody – a youth, a mature man, an aged man – as much as the latter can take. So, it turns out that ideal is one of the forms of a human's creative activity determined by a form of a material world of a work of art.

In most widespread ways of interpretation of visual masterpieces there are as a rule two lines: disclosure, interpretation of meaning of a work of art through an artist's inner world (fixed to a certain extent in letters, statements, deeds, knowledge of an epoch and environment) and attempts to reconstruct an artist's inner world, his spiritual pivot through his work of art, individuality of his pictorial and plastic art. It's clear none can claim to be exhaustive and provide a fullness of final construct as their intersection and consolidation are necessary to get as deep and multi-sided view as possible. Moreover, as for the knowledge gained by the humanities in general and by the study of art in particular, a researcher's individual characteristics always imprint on a final result.

A specific character of a work of art creation process is very significant for the analysis of the concept under research. The artists nearly always realize the necessity of some inspiring start in their creative work. It can take various vague forms of creative flashes of inspiration, a call of a muse, etc. But it is obvious that the birth of a real masterpiece is preceded by some impulse, inner outburst, stimulus. It goes without saying

a creative process is not a process of a conscious and consecutive desire for enlightenment of one's soul, spiritual ascent. The art creates and realizes the possibility of the embodiment of some ideal basis of the world, materialization of a human's spiritual languor and spiritual ascend in paints and lines.

An artist's activity displays the antinomy of "freedom – non-freedom". On the one hand, it shows absolute independence in making choice and implementing messages, on the other hand, it is dependent on an ideal image born in imagination as well as on spiritual reality that doesn't let an artist to ignore, abandon or forget a maturing message. Images (ideal) reign over an artist's creative consciousness. In his turn he has to be their master in his work of art, to materialize them. A Russian philosopher I.A. Ilyin pointed out that a creative imagination is not "a subjective idea or an artist's entirely individual chimera. It is a reality, spiritual substance. It might be defined as *spiritual "prototype" or living way of existence, or state of life* [...] There are prototypical states he can find only in God such as, for example, "perfection", "non-creation", "eternity", "divine grace", "inexhaustible mercy"; or both in God and a man such as, for example, "love", "forgiveness", "kindness", "immortality"; or only in a man such as, for example, "sin", "consciousness", "prayer", "passionate struggle", "temptation", "hatred", "vulgarity", "envy", "crime", "remorse"; or in God, a man and nature such as, for example, "light", "peace and rest", "creativity", "suffering"; or only in nature and a man such as, for example, "sleep", "thirst", "drying up", "blossoming", "fading", "delight"..." (Ilyin, 1998, p. 750).

Being flesh of their epoch, artists are above it to some extent or even beyond it. This statement contains no idealization since a painter, a graphic artist, a sculptor design

their own world, creating their own laws of understanding, interpretation, transformation of a real world. An artist goes through an ideal content individually, but due to embodiment in an artistic image an individual experience becomes available to the others. They get conscious of it and develop it further.

In the quotation mentioned above I.A. Ilyin singles out a great number of ideal concepts that manifest themselves through an artistic image of a work of art. These concepts (eternity, love, peace and rest, thirst, etc.) are obviously universal. They ensure inner connection of times and peoples and are absolutely vital for existence of human civilization. What an artist expresses in his creative work contains universal objective meaning. Creations of a most subtle lyric poet are needed, clear and understandable for a percipient only when they contain universal qualities, peculiar and clear to everybody's inward life. Thus, a unique social significance of art becomes obvious among other forms of universal

consciousness the former being a necessary and full-fledged translator of ideal.

Conclusion

It is the fullness of embodiment of ideal that ensures artistic value of a work of art. Unfortunately nowadays both in direct artistic practices and in the interpretations by the study of art there are obvious tendencies of depreciation, destruction of ideal, its dissolution in 'a thing' form it needs for existence but is not limited to. The problem of 'ideal' in art and the study of art is not only the problem of its full-fledged comprehension, thorough disclosure, but also the problem of its rehabilitation. Attempts to exclude ideal from a creative process demonstrated in some contemporary artistic practices result in the absence of qualities (artistic value) and functions (translation of ideal) of works of art. Without aspiration for embodiment of ideal as well as without the goal to achieve high ideas the art in a human culture loses its initial meaning.

References

- N. Berdyaev. *The Meaning of Creativity: Experience of Justification of a Human* (Kharkov : Folio – Moscow, 2002), in Russian.
- E. Ilyenkov. "Ideal", *Historical Psychology*, 2(2006), 21-27.
- I. Ilyin. *The Way to the Obvious* (M., 1998).
- The Meaning of Life: Anthology*, ed. by N.K. Gavryushina (Moscow: Progress, Culture, 1994), in Russian.

Вопросы «идеального» в современном искусстве и искусствознании

М.В. Москалюк

*Сибирский федеральный университет
Россия 660041, Красноярск, пр. Свободный, 79*

В данной работе рассматривается актуальность понимания «идеального» в современной художественной и искусствоведческой практике, уточняются отдельные дефиниции «идеального», подчеркивается его фундаментальное значение для человеческого бытия. Утверждается, что в художественном произведении идеальное должно присутствовать не только как иная, не существующая реальность, но и в ценностном аспекте, в понятии высокого идеала, так как художественное творчество всегда есть «схватывание» духовного содержания и перевод его в художественно-образную конкретность. При этом идеальное содержание в материальном произведении искусства может быть восстановлено только в процессе восприятия, в целенаправленной человеческой деятельности. Таким образом, идеальное всегда подвижно, динамично, обусловлено личностным уровнем воспринимающего. Через художественный образ произведения искусства раскрывается множество идеальных понятий (вечность, любовь, материнство, покой, жажда и т.д.), которые несут общечеловеческий объективный смысл, отсюда формируется уникальная социальная значимость искусства среди других форм общественного сознания как необходимого и полноценного транслятора идеального. Именно полнота воплощения идеального обеспечивает ценность произведения. Попытки исключения идеального, предпринимаемые в современных художественных практиках, приводят к тому, что получаемые результаты не несут на себе качеств (художественная ценность) и функций (трансляция идеального) произведений искусства.

Ключевые слова: идеальное, искусство, произведение искусства, художник, зритель, восприятие.

Работа выполнена в рамках участия в гранте ФЦП «Социальное конструирование общероссийской идентичности в Центральной Сибири».
