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Renaissance and European Classical Painting as Two Types of Artistic Creativity

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This paper presents some points for the study of painting as an activity (artistic creativity) such as: concept of the artists community what the “absolute art” is; the technology of training creative skills; an algorithm of creative drawing; subordination of figurative and poetic components of artistic drawing; practices, bordering with art, that are “a priori” of the artistic process. These points are used for the analysis and comparison of the Renaissance and European classical arts. It is justified that these types of art are produced by two heterogeneous forms of artistic activity. The Renaissance type is defined as an ontological one, where nature is a model of art, where creative elements performs figurative tasks, which uses magic and some elements of a classical creativity to create the effect of artistic painting. The Classical type of artistic creativity is characterized as a cultural-artistic one, where artistic figurative masterpieces are the model of art; the figurative element is subjected to creative tasks. The enlightened taste and national artistic tradition plays a role of an “a priori” of this type of creativity.

Keywords: Renaissance art; European classical art; artistic creativity.

Current researches which compare Renaissance painting and Modern European classics in terms of results – the specific works – despite all their differences agree on one thing: this painting belongs to the same artistic tradition and the same type of art, which originated in Antiquity. But is this true? Does formal resemblance always shows real relationship? Is it not the case that sometimes children of the same parents are not similar in appearance, and a stranger is somebody’s similar? This simple example made us doubt in the objectiveness of the common judgments and start a comparison of the

Renaissance painting and the European classics of painting, in terms of cause which produces this painting – artistic creativity.

This research tries to find the answer to the question whether the Renaissance art of painting and the modern European classics belong to the same type of artistic creativity or these are two different types and has the following tasks: (1) to identify the parameters of artistic creativity using which one could study its type, (2) to study the Renaissance art and the European classics in accordance with these parameters, and (3) to characterize each type of artistic creativity.

The results of the study are important because of the following reasons: firstly, they can either confirm validity of the existing opinions or dispose the myths from the history of art; secondly, if the study is successful, its principles can be applied to test other obviousness: for example, that the ancient and medieval art belong to different types; and thirdly, when applied to the contemporary art, its principles will help to identify the type of art.

The interest in art is great. The mere listing of the names of the authors involved in its study would take a dozen pages. However, most of these authors support the idea of the timeless nature of artistic creativity. Only few studies raise the question of the existence of different types of art. One of them is the monograph by the Russian musicologist and cultural studies expert Tatyana Vasilievna Cherednichenko "Music in the Cultural History". The Russian art historian Svetlana Petrovna Batrakova in the monograph *"An Artists of the XX Century and the Language of Painting From Cezanne to Picasso"* admits the existence of different types of painting. These studies, anyway, confirm the guess of the American philosopher and aesthetics Susan Catherine Langer, that art in a form that we understand it is an exclusively new European phenomenon [see 3, chapter 9]. Except the studies of the aforementioned authors the theoretical legacy of Leonardo da Vinci; the works by Giorgio Vasari and Giovanni Pietro Bellori; the studies of the modern theorists and art historians: Max Dvorjak, Erwin Panofsky, Sergei Mikhailovich Daniel, Olga Borisovna Dubova; the studies of the cultural experts: Leonid Mikhailovich Batkin, Vladimir Solomonovich Bibler; and philosophers: Immanuel Kant, Edmund Husserl, etc. were used in this research.

The first question which we should answer in this research – what are the "external" factors of artistic creativity that determine its specific type?

It was assumed, that these factors are: firstly, the concept of the "absolute" art that exist in artistic community, and secondly, the technologies of "appropriation" of the "absolute" art as a type of creativity.

The second question of this research – what "internal" components of artistic creativity determine its type? It was assumed, that such factors of artistic creativity are its algorithms, subordination and interrelation of descriptive-mimetic and expressively-poetic components in its "primary" product – in a picture.

The third question of this research – how to identify the subject "a priori" of artistic creativity, which determine characteristics of a subject of creativity. It was assumed, that cultural practices, bordering with art may be such an "a priori".

There were three stages of the research. The first two stages included the study of artistic creativity of the Renaissance and the European classics. The third stage was devoted to the comparison of these types of creativity and making conclusions about their artistic type. (The research has limits – only the material connected with the history and theory of painting was used.)

The results we got in this research were the following:

1. In the period of European Renaissance a universal prototype of art was nature, i.e. – the world, which is perceived to the eye, given to a man in his sensuous experience. Nature was not an ordinary term, but significant cultural concept, perceived pantheistically: the real incarnation of the divine. Science, art and magic of the Renaissance took part in the formation of this concept.

The original form of development of the techniques that are used by nature as a universal artist is experience. The experience, first of all, is a very thorough process, which includes a set of procedures. The first, the initial and the

observation. According to Leonardo da Vinci “The mind of the painter, should be like a mirror, which always takes the color of the object, which it reflects, and is filled with the images of so many objects, which are situated in front of it” (Mastera Iskusstva, 1966, p.118). The second procedure is measuring. As for nature, where every event is very valuable, the measurement was not a mathematical, but metaphysical task of identifying the divine in nature. The third procedure is to model the experience, which takes two forms: images and inventions.

Modeling by images is the third procedure of the experience and at the same time the first procedure of art. As a kind of art, modeling required a combination of pure mathematical calculation with a purity of perspective spatial modeling, multiplied by the purity of the highest skill of chiaroscuro. It was necessary to synthesize all knowledge of perspectives, theories of light and vision, to master all the known methods of its practical application, in order to get the necessary effect, when the image was more correspondent with the idea of the object than the object itself. The examples of such image-models are the technical and anatomical drawings by Leonardo da Vinci, which have all the characteristics of technical perfection. We called these images “pure empirical models.” “Pure” – because they represent rather an idea of an object than any object from the real life. “Empirical” – because they are taken from the experience, and are not imaginary symbols of nature. In “pure empirical models” expressive-poetic component is subjected to figurative-mimetic component and implemented as a technical task.

Despite the technical perfection, “pure empirical” models are not works of art. In order to become works of art, the specific content of the individual events should be returned to them. Artistic “a priori” can help here, as it allows to

“adjust” an artist to the task he has. Such an “a priori” was subjective magic that the Renaissance artists actively practiced, improving visual sensitivity (Yates, 2000, p.99). Magic allowed an artist to see in a body an action performed by the soul (“Mona Lisa” by Leonardo da Vinci). The second artistic “a priori” in relation to the Renaissance art was new, forming at that period type of artistic creativity, which later became the basis for the European classics. Hypersensitivity to the new, implemented at the level of an artist’s ability to break a bond with the current type of artistic creativity and, “overrunning” time act according to the rules of a new type, – Genius – enables artists to create images of the Renaissance Madonnas, which in their naturalness compete with a picture of *the Girl with a Pearl Earring* by Johannes Vermeer. A good example is *the Sistine Madonna* by Raphael.

The ancient art is the universal prototype for the modern European classics, and the “absolute” art is a number of masterpieces created in the tradition of figurative painting that originated in antiquity and was adapted by the Renaissance to the conditions of the New Age.

The form of “appropriation” of the method of the “absolute art” is its study: the theoretical (contribute to understanding and meaningful actions) and the practical. The first stage of the practical study is copying of the “originals”: the antiques, works of art of the Renaissance period and the later works by the artists who followed the Renaissance tradition (in fact – gesso and copies). The second stage of the analysis is decomposition of an image into individual elements and the subsequent development of each element. The perspective construction of the space, images of the geometric shapes, elements of architectural orbs, images of the human body were mastered in this way. The third procedure is a synthesis of all the skills obtained in the process of reconstruction of objects on the canvas by the image.

In case of the Renaissance art, the last preparatory procedure becomes the first actually creative task recreating the object as it is “by itself” beyond the boundaries of our sensory experience. To solve this problem a graduate of the Academy was to use all the skills that he had acquired solving technical problems, and all the history of art, which he learned by copying the “originals.” The result of this synthesis is an academic drawing – “a pure object of art”: “pure” because in the mind it represents the image, but not an object, “art” because it is literally woven from the fabric of the art, “object” – because it has its own value, independent of the significance of images. In an academic drawing visual tasks are subordinated to the artistic and creative tasks because academic drawing is always “above” the nature, always levitates above it, as a mental image of nature, valuable by itself.

Academic drawing – is also art (meaning “artistic skill”), but not a work of art. In order to become a work of art it should not be a self-sufficient image and become an image where nature is given not only as a conceivable image, i.e. objectively, but as an image perceived by senses, i.e. subjectively, according to the new aesthetic taste of the European audience. The new artistic “a priori” helped to achieve this goal: on the one hand, it was new artistic taste and the system of aesthetic education, which formed a new sensibility of the European person, and on the other – the people’s artistic tradition, which an artist received as a legacy from the generation in the form of talent. There is no mystery in the talent, except an artist’s ability to “deactivate” temporary everything that an artist got through learning, and act spontaneously, as any people’s artist acts, i.e. according to the unique “artistic” habit.

2. The Renaissance art of painting and the New European Classics of painting are different

types of artistic creativity. The first type we conditionally identified as an ontologically-oriented, striving to fit into the rhythm of the existential process, to “grasp” and to show what belongs to existence. The second type was identified as culturally and artistically oriented which is striving to “grasp” and continue the line of art. These two types of artistic creativity are different (1) at the level of what is considered by the artistic community as its model and how it is “appropriated”; (2) at the level of the algorithm of an action, and (3) the nature of its “primary product” – a drawing; (4) at the level of social practices which are used to achieve the final result of artistic painting.

The results of the study made us to reconsider some of our former opinions. For example, we supported the statement of the famous art critic Max Dvorak about the world of “artistic concept”, which in the era of Renaissance, according to his opinion, was attached to the world of “the limited spiritual existence and eternal spirituality” (Dvorak, 2001, p.149-150). According to our research, it happened later: the world which “followed its own laws, found its mission, objectives and scope in itself” (Dvorak, 2001, p.148) is the New European Classics.

In the course of the study we collected materials, confirming our hypothesis that the paintings of the Renaissance and the New European Classics, although belong to the same tradition of the figural painting but are fundamentally different types of artistic creativity. We have also suggested a number of new hypotheses and ideas. Firstly, some ideas of the methodology we applied and the conclusion regarding the possible existence of the different types of artistic creativity (art of painting), made us to assume the existence of a kind of “artistic paradigms”, similar to the scientific paradigms. Secondly, the intention to avoid psychologism in determining the qualities of the subject of artistic

creativity, led us to the idea of “the art habit”, direction. However, these ideas are to be tested in and this idea gives our research in a different a separate study.

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Живопись Ренессанса и европейская классика как типы художественной деятельности

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В статье представлены результаты сравнительного исследования живописи Ренессанса и европейской классики с точки зрения характера производящей ее художественной деятельности. Определены параметры изучения художественной деятельности, к которым отнесены разделяемое художественным сообществом представление об “абсолютном” искусстве и технология “присвоения” данного искусства как деятельности; алгоритм деятельности и субординация изобразительно-миметических и образно-поэтических компонентов в ее “первичном продукте” – рисунке; пограничные с искусством практики, составляющие субъектное “априори” творческого процесса. Обосновано различие художественной деятельности ренессансного и классического типов. Ренессансный тип художественной деятельности охарактеризован как онтологически-ориентированный, избирающий природу в качестве образца, использующий творческие элементы для выполнения изобразительных задач, привлекающий магию и приемы только формирующегося классического искусства в качестве субъектного “априори”. Классический тип художественной деятельности представлен как культурно-художественно-ориентированный, признающий в качестве искусства череду шедевров, исполненных в традиции предметной живописи; превращающий рисунок в искусство и имеющий в качестве своего “априори” новый просвещенный вкус и народную художественную традицию.

Ключевые слова: искусство Возрождения; европейское классическое искусство, художественная деятельность.
