

7. THE ROLE OF ART IN HUMAN DEVELOPMENT

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Abstract: *Throughout history, mankind has motivated in different ways the need for expression through artistic language, art thus gaining a large number of different functions. This makes the purpose of art to be difficult to define/abstract and to quantify in a single concept. Precisely because there are many unique and different reasons for which art was created, trying to delineate/outline the role of art is more difficult, excluding completely the idea that due to its diversity, the purpose might be considered vague.*

Key words: *language arts, art functions, the role of art, the motivation for art*

The Roles of Art

The attempts to delineate or to identify the role of art are multiple, as the functions assigned to art over time are most diverse: arts conveys realities; art conveys feelings; art conveys points of view; considering the work of art as an object in itself; art has a meaning if it is placed in a specific context; art with a decorative-ornamental function; art as ornament to indicate social status; the function of inspiring faith and cultural growth; the function of determining a new perspective, a new way of looking at reality; the magical function; the glorification function; the ability to record historical events; the ability to determine the design of some functional objects; the illustrative function; defining and illustrating beauty; the ability to define and reflect the present time and the culture of the space where it is conducted; the function of redefining art; the ability to express and explore feelings and ideas, whether they are positive or negative; art represents the aspirations of the artist who creates it; art provides a forum of ideas to interact with; art is a source of employment and income generation.

The relationship between art and the economic environment in the analysis of Giovanni Schiuma

Claude Levi-Strauss (1962), French anthropologist, analyzes the purpose of art departing from the motivational criteria, grouping the functions of art in non-motivational and in motivational. Giovanni Schiuma (2011), in his analysis regarding the relationship between art and the economic environment, explaining the concept of Levi-Strauss, says that non-motivational functions are linked/ related to the instinctual nature of the human being. This category identifies the functions in which art has an intrinsic value, not being motivated by extrinsic purposes. "In this regard, art denotes those activities, outputs and creative experiences that man must have by their very nature, regardless of the specific external utility. [...] Art's motivated goals refer to a conscious and intentional assignment of utilitarian functions to works of art"¹. In order to develop, the non-motivated purposes are those that transcend the individual, as they are specific and integrated for the human being, involving elements and

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processes at the level in which senses and emotions are activated. From this perspective, art has an important function on the scale of human evolution.

Non-motivational purposes of art

1. The need of human nature to seek and appreciate beauty would determine one of the non-motivated functions of art. At this level, art is not appreciated/perceived as an object or as a process, but as an internal awareness and appreciation of harmony, balance, rhythm (2), it is perceived as an existential dimension of the human being, beyond utility.

2. The need to appreciate and to live the mystery, to experience spiritual life, is the second non-motivated function. Art encourages, determines the opportunity to explore beyond reality, it is a way to enter occasions to experience with the self, the universe, the unknown. Albert Einstein said in one of his essays that mystery is the source of all artistic and scientific truths and that "the most beautiful thing we can experience is the mystery" "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed. It was the experience of mystery -- even if mixed with fear -- that engendered religion. A knowledge of the existence of something we cannot penetrate, our perceptions of the profoundest reason and the most radiant beauty, which only in their most primitive forms are accessible to our minds: it is this knowledge and this emotion that constitute true religiosity. In this sense, and only in this sense, I am a deeply religious man... I am satisfied with the mystery of life's eternity and with a knowledge, a sense, of the marvelous structure of existence -- as well as the humble attempt to understand even a tiny portion of the Reason that manifests itself in nature."²⁹⁸(2)

1. Art is a way to establish relations with the world and the other individuals, to communicate with the others. This non-motivated function can be analyzed from the perspective of the individual's need for social affiliation (4), his need to not be alone, from the perspective of the theory of man as a social being.

2. The function of expression of human imagination through the use of forms, symbols, ideas, feelings, also has a non-motivated aspect and it involves the use of an informal, non-grammatical language. Formal codes, writing and speaking are used in contemporary art, but not necessarily as independent elements and for their basic function which targets communication, but as elements of visual language with the role to mediate between forms and ideas.

3. Art has a symbolic and ritual function to express cultural values of the society. Out of the specific social and cultural context, its manifestations no longer have the same meaning, they are decontextualized and they may cause confusion, rejection and even repulsion, which is often the case of contemporary art. But equally important is the fact that art, through its symbolic and ritualistic nature may determine social-cultural remodeling.

²⁹⁸. Einstein, 1954, pp. 8-11

Motivational goals of art

Motivated goals of art take into consideration the conscious intentions and actions of the artist or of the creator. They are deliberate actions, caused by ideas external to the subconscious, often being a deliberate result of reason (5).

1. The communication function of art is motivated by the intention of its creator. Art, seen in the simplest manner, is a form of communication. Departing from the classic and simplified pattern of communication, there is an idea or an emotion that has to be transmitted and a state to be created /recreated, received. Both the idea transmitted by the transmitter, and the state created to the receiver are acknowledged sooner or later.

2. Art has the capacity to determine, to express certain conditions outwardly, particularly to induce emotions. This function is greatly explored nowadays due to the contemporary individual's need for strong emotions, leading to the dismantlement of the previous border between art and entertainment (6).

3. This avant-garde function of art is motivated through obvious and declared actions aimed to determine change. These changes can be political, social or cultural. One of the declared functions of art in the early twentieth century was to use visual images to induce change in political mentalities and to determine freedom of thought (7).

4. The capacity of art to address a personal psychology involves a function motivated by the therapeutic nature of some creative manifestations through emotional and energetic outbreaks of the act of creation. These outbreaks and rebalances, which take place during and after the process of creation, can be explored in a semi-conducted manner by a therapist (physiotherapist, clinical psychologist) through art therapy, the involvement of art in the healing process is as obvious as possible. In this case the product resulting from this process may have an aesthetic value, but the useful value is very obvious, being the subject of analysis of the internal processes involved in its production in order to establish the intervention directions in the attempt to balance the individual's personality. At the same time, art is liberating latent energies that smolder inside the creative human being and whose inner force depends upon the intensity of the unleashed energy during the creative process. This continuous struggle between the internal creative forces is cyclical and is energy consuming and it represents the engine of the entire creative universe. Many artists were located within the boundary of madness, of pathology during their life time, bringing to life valuable creations that had the force to change the very destiny of its creator, of the predecessors, and of art in general.

5. The motivating role of art in developing values and in determining cultural evolution can be easily mistaken for art's avant-garde feature, but it does not necessarily mean the same thing. Social investigation, subversion and/or anarchy raise issues, ask questions starting from various social aspects, but without precise political purposes. Under these conditions, the function of art is simply to criticize some aspects of society; the analysis could start from the idea that if there is no criticism, there is no progress, no evolution. Free manifestations of graffiti or the artistic manifesto are two forms of expression

often found in public spaces, performed more or less with the permission of the authorities. But precisely this violation of permission in the case of the two examples shown above allows to highlight the critic nature of the action.

6. Art as propaganda or commercialism² (8) is another direction of analysis from the perspective of the motivating function of art. Art as propaganda involves the subtle influence of the great mass of people. The commercialization of art or consumer art can have two meanings: art used for trade between people, with its extremis: *consumism* or *consumerism* (excessive concern for the purchase of goods), "to market and sell products"³; the accessibilization of art, the orientation of art towards mass culture, advertising. The two directions - art as propaganda and consumption art - have in common the fact that both influence emotions, consumer's state, the purpose of art is in this case being the subtle manipulation of the viewer through his emotional response to a particular object or idea.

7. Art as an indicator of health (of the individual and/or of society) - "art as fitness indicator"² is not really a new or unexplored concept. Aesthetic ornamentation of other species is generally the result of the need for sexual selection and attracting the partner, rich ornamentation being an indicator of the individual's health. The American psychologist Geoffrey F. Miller (2001) starts from the premises that human artistic capacities evolve in the same direction, more specifically, he investigates how aesthetic judgment involves choosing a life partner. His theory is based on the biological aesthetics of Darwin, Nietzsche, Veblen, Boas, Gombrich and Zahavi, and he revives the emphasis on traditional, classical art, on virtuosity and on representation, unlike the fugitive creativity celebrated by modernist art theory. Miller suggests that aesthetic judgment evolved as a functional part of social and sexual cognition, and not as a side effect of perceptual psychology. The ability of the human brain developed based on the need for survival of the individual and of the species.

Considering the value of art as a factor and a means of communication and its biological roots in the early days of Homo Sapiens, its function in human life may be explained. The origins of art in the practice of the primitive human being are important in discussions regarding the evolution of art and of the human brain, with relevance to the biological motivations shared by humans and animals². Art cannot be seen without being displayed and there might be established a connection with biological motivation associated with procreation. According to this theory, artists, by exposing their works, equally express their genetic merits; more attention is given to their work, the more its value increases and the more they are appreciated, all of which are qualities that reflect cognitive skills, abilities, skills, talent, creativity². Going further with the analysis, it appears that any activity is influenced by the meanings and the quality of the impact that sensations have in the human mind. Human consciousness, as well as the interaction between people, and the interaction between people and things can be considered as a result of the aesthetic experience. Art configures and expresses feelings, human emotions, it communicates and transfers sensations in social and interpersonal relations.

Conclusions

Art, through its nature is aesthetic and it is based on the development of the sense of human existence. From this perspective, any work of art, from the most complex one to the simplest one, expresses the vitality of an individual's life, the vitality of human kind as a whole. Thus, art takes on the quality and the complexity of the emotions that impregnate and surround the social human activities.

Throughout history, mankind has motivated differently the need for expression through artistic language, art, thus, gaining a large number of different functions. This makes the purpose of art to be difficult to define/abstract and to quantify in a single concept.

Precisely because there are many unique and different reasons for which it was created, the attempt to delineate/outline the role of art is more difficult, completely excluding the idea that because of the diversity, the goal could be considered vague.

Today we live in a complex world, perpetually changing, with a multitude of scientific and technological discoveries, in which plenty of artistic manifestations appear and disappear at a rate difficult to follow, a world where there are new concepts that try to define the condition of modern man. Consecrated terms have their meaning modified and/or new terms appear, anchored in a reality specific for the times we live in, called postmodern, characterized by globalization, visual dominance, the diminishment up to dissolution of boundaries between culture and subculture. Therefore, the role of art is changing, it gains new meanings or new determinants appear, determinants that will give rise to new exploration areas and therefore to new functions of art in the development of the individual or of society in general.

(1) The need for harmony, rhythm, balance, purity, beauty is an aesthetic necessity, according to *The theory of human motivation* proposed by the American psychologist Abraham Maslow in 1943. The theory was first published in *Psychological Review*, 1943, 50/4, 370-396. The psychologist develops the initial ideas and he publishes them a few years later in "*Motivation and Personality*" (the first edition in 1954, the second edition in 1970 where he revises his theory and he adds new ideas, the third edition in 1987). The general theory is based on the individual's need for self-accomplishment, which implies the strong desire of the individual to develop to his full potential. In order to reach this level, hierarchical needs must be satisfied first and they are felt differently. At the base underlie physiological necessities, followed by safety necessities (stability, protection), affiliation necessities (need for love and belonging, fear of loneliness, religious needs) and self-esteem needs (respect). These are deficiency needs, they are strongly felt by the individual, and if they are unmet, this leads to strong imbalances of individual personality, therefore it is imperative that they be met in order to pass to the following levels of achievement of human beings. Cognitive, intellectual necessities (it means the auto stimulated need of human beings to know, to learn constantly, to explore, to understand), aesthetic necessities (order, symmetry, harmony, purity) and self-

accomplishment needs (self-actualization, the need for correlation, balance between knowledge, affectivity, action, the state of general harmony of the being), which are related to *meta-motivation*, being born due to forces beyond the basic needs and which explore and reach the full human potential.

(2) Aristotle in *The Republic* considers that imitation is one of our nature's instincts, together with the instinct for harmony and rhythm. Individuals moved by these instincts develop their special skills up to various degrees, and, through more or less rude improvisations, give rise to poetry. Although Aristotle speaks in his work about poetry, ancient Greeks referred to art in general.

(3) Albert Einstein's essay, "The World As I See It," was posted copyrighted on the website of AIP - the American Institute of Physics <http://www.aip.org>. The original essay was published in "Forum and Century," vol. 84, pp. 193-194, the 13th series of the forum, *Living Philosophies*. A more recent copy can be found in A. Einstein, *Ideas and Opinions, based on Mein Weltbild*, edited by Carl Seelig, New York: Bonzana Books, 1954 (pp. 8-11).

<http://www.aip.org/history/einstein/essay.htm/> 17-08-2012 at 00:29 pm

(4) The need for affiliation in Maslow's theory implies the individual's need to establish affectionate relations with people in general, but also with a certain group in particular (family, friends, religious community). The lack of love and the failure to establish harmonious relations with the others causes social maladjustment.

(5) Ideas can be generated by the conscious, the rational, but on the one hand they may have deep roots in the unconscious. It may be considered that the rational cannot create any definitive break with the subconscious, which, eventually, one way or another, will find the appropriate means to gain access to consciousness.

(6) Art has always had also an entertaining role, but now more than ever the contemporary individual, in a demanding society based on competence, in which normal relationships between individuals are modified, and some deficiency needs are not met normally, seeks to chase away boredom, loneliness and to feel relieve from emotional stress by any means. Applying strong stimuli is one of the ways taken into consideration, but the boundary between art and entertainment is pushed to the limit because the modern individual often does not go to a concert for the effect of musical arrangements, but for the therapy of the auditory or visual shock specific for contemporary performances.

(7) In 1924, André Breton published his first "*Manifesto of Surrealism*" in which he fixed clear benchmarks of the designed and developed art movement: the renunciation to traditionalism, full freedom of expression, antiacademic protest, removing premeditated activity of the spirit in the act of artistic creation, exploring the unconscious through conscious actions.

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