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Kreativ as an Academic Problem of Modern Society

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This article provides a comparative analysis of the terms “kreativ” and “creativity” in various philosophic-cultural traditions to answer the question: what is kreativ in modern Russia - a popular borrowed word or a new phenomenon of the epoch?

Keywords: kreativ, creative, creativity, creative activity, spiritual culture, Russian mentality, utilitarianism, Post-modernism.

Integrating into the global Humanities it is difficult to ignore the term “creativity”, widely used in the theory of human activity, the latter being recognized worldwide. The term is translated into Russian as «творчество», which is treated as a full equivalent to the English word [36, p.162]. But the modern tendency is to transliterate this word and use it in the translated monographs and works by Russian researchers as “kreativ” with the last stressed syllable. Since the language indicates all innovations in the society, the following problematic question arises: is “kreativ” a popular borrowed word or a new phenomenon of the epoch?

In fundamental works western researchers give only descriptions of the notion “creativity”. In the preface to the Russian edition of the book by Ch. Landry he stated that the creative city was any settlement – no matter the country or continent – that could exist with greater imagination, in a more creative and innovative way [32, p.7]. The words ‘creative’, ‘creativity’, ‘innovative’

and “innovation” are synonyms for Ch. Landry. J. Segel is also sure that a “createur” is the one who creates, who does not stagnate and is ready for a professional experiment. L. Teveno in his work underlines his interest in various types of creativity and the Humanities – revolutionary, even heretical, and standard, accepted by traditional scientific disciplines.

Although a similar approach is used for a frame description of psychological techniques and general approaches to the Humanities, modern urban processes and concepts in advertising, it is not sufficient from the point of view of Russian philosophers, investigating the problems of creation, creativity, creative abilities and Russian spiritual-creative tradition.

The Russian tradition of reflection in creative work is one of the best-investigated in the global Humanities. Within this tradition “creation” is understood both as an individual’s activity and as values created by the individual. The values can turn from individual facts into cultural

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phenomena. This understanding is presented by M.G.Yaroshevsky in his work [48]. The ideas important for this tradition are the degree of cultural contribution, the value of the creative act and its creative spiritual component.

The point of view stated above is appropriate for “artistic” creation. In the academic textbook “Aesthetics” by E.G.Yakovleva described the process of artistic creation in the terms of “creature”, “inspiration”, “emotions”, “spiritual pleasure”, and “tortures of creation” [46, p.238]. According to the Orthodox and artistic reflexive traditions (romanticism, Russian symbolism, etc.) the creator has a genius, God’s gift, being an oracle of the highest inspiration and cultural self-expression of the nation. The foundation of Russian cosmism and works by Russian symbolists of the XX century brought a reflexive notion of “Russian spiritual culture”, which is the basis of many fundamental works in Russia. A. Liferov and O. Voronova suggest that the spirit of individualism and the strive for profit are alien to many Russians and the sense of justice, self-sacrifice, the priority of the spiritual values, the sense of collectivism are a part of the Russian mentality [30, p.13]. The latest works by Oleg Ghennissaretsky present the tradition of sacred spiritual creation, accepted by Russian arts and theological studies. It is related to the idea of “holiness” as a cultural value. According to the author the peculiarity of the Russian spiritual tradition in creation is recognition of synergy, i.e. integration of the creating individual, his will, with the Superior Will – co-creation of a human being and the God.

Many researchers admit that creative abilities are a part of the Russian mentality, its cognitive and behavior patterns. Applied psychology states that Russian children are superior to American children in originality – one of the signs of creativity [13]. Taking this into account, the Russian tradition to consider creative thinking a

mixture of deduction, insight, intuition leading to a new idea or discovery proves to be true. Moreover, this can explain the crusade against “kreativ”, taken up by some Russian philosophers and publicists. First they declared “kreativ” a fashionable word (too simplified, from our point of view) and then they are still trying to find the difference in the notions. S. Shargunov warns against commonplace of “kreativ”, mentioning its suppleness and adaptability as the main dangers. “The sign of “kreativ” is triviality, splitting-up the world, a shameless demonstration of details. “Kreativ” makes attempts at killing the Sense” [45, p.5]. (Note: Here and further on the quotations are translated by the author.) But the most disgusting thing is a desire of getting profit.

Profit and utility oppose creation in the Russian philosophic, publicistic and cultural traditions, as they are considered temptations. Extremely negative perception of modern utilitarianism and pragmatism are connected not only with the problem itself, but mainly with the peculiarities of utilitarianism development on the basis of Russian philosophic and theological thinking and ethical traditions and customs.

Domination of Orthodox ethic doctrine and presumption of state interests mean oblivion of utilitarianism. Less than 20 years ago we entered the epoch where “the spirit of industrial capitalism is – maybe for the first time – estimated positively” [41]. No wonder that modern ethic conflicts arise in that aggressively defending tendency of the modern national philosophic tradition. Tradionalists do not distinguish the hyperbola of utilitarianism and its reasonable forms, to say nothing of distinguishing utilitarianism and pragmatism. Therefore, it is important to highlight the fact that it is pragmatism which considers the development and renovation of experience as the main moral aims, lets creative strategy into all spheres of culture, spiritual values included. Unlike utilitarianism, pragmatism is not limited to

practical innovations but allows creative freedom, admitting the high value of the arts.

Speaking of the main reason to deny the notion “kreativ” by the Russian culture we can’t but mention the fact that this term is normally applied to the things far from cultural and spiritual values. Moreover, splitting up the world as a way of creative thinking and the applied character of a creative activity is recognized by Western scientists but in Russia it is considered to be a foreign – limited to the Western culture – phenomenon.

The influence of Post-modernism on the Russian youth cannot be ignored. It reflects the main tendencies of the epoch that philosophers characterize as the final stage of Post-modernism – “the old age and a following death of culture, a transfer from alive culture to dead civilization’ [4, p.201]. Post-modernism manifests sociodynamics of culture with anarchy, constructivism in the game with former cultural values, the hyper-reality as an illusion, which is more real than the reality itself, “dehumanization” of the modern culture, threatening with an explosion of cruelty. But together with this Post-modernism the question of cultivation of humanity in the informational and hyper-technical world arouse. Here a human being breaks the limits of biological species. One must admit the contribution of Post-modernism – the undoubtedly high necessity of self-development and self-treatment, the awareness of being different, interest in the irregular and detached, the

understanding of the sign and language relativity; all these making various innovations possible.

Unlike a creative act, “creativity” – a phenomenon of the epoch of Post-modernism and the information “galaxy” - are considered by Western scientists to be a systematic process, wide-scale and endless practice, a constant interaction between different types of creativity – mainly economic and cultural. According to R. Florida “creativity” is not equal to “intelligence”, it is the ability for synthesis, a game creating new suitable combinations; a game proceeded by the analysis of data, concepts and facts; a game developing present stereotypes and so it is a game of a provocative socio-cultural character. The creative activity is often aimed at the solution of specific pragmatic tasks, when creators are asked to help. So, for “kreativ” as activity analytical techniques, actions and constrictive synthesis, or creation are important.

There are numerous romantic myths of creative geniuses, developing few to perfection and destroying many others – if creativity is an inborn quality, then neither efforts nor education can help one become part of the creative elite. “Kreativ” as activity allows everybody to join it after some preparations. Thus, it is more perspective for the modern society where there are so many problems demanding creative solutions. “Kreativ” is characterized by its pragmatic aims, analytical techniques and even creative practice, that is practice first of all, not a mysterious act.

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