

Nikolay Raynov and humanistic psychology: Articulated insights on creativity

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Abstract. This study applies a particular theory of creativity - the humanistic view proposed by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow - to examine a case, such as Nikolay Raynov's texts on the history of visual arts. This method matches the observations that the art historian discusses in his writings with the content of the concepts that psychologists developed to study creativity. More specifically, the comparisons illustrate the elements of the creative attitude and the notion of integrated creativity through insights into the inner, subjective dimensions of the creators' artistic achievements.

Keywords: Nikolay Raynov, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, creativity, visual arts

Introduction

As a psychologist, I have not studied a particular form of creativity, like scientific creativity, or a specific domain of creative endeavour, such as architecture. For many years, my investigation has focused on human creativity's psychological mechanisms and the individual, group, and environmental factors that influence people's creative behaviour. It is that perspective on creativity - creativity as a human manifestation - that informs my reading of the texts of Nikolay Raynov, where he discusses visual arts, their masters and achievements. A reading that is not interested in historical facts, fine arts tools or artisanship, but in the creator - the person behind the artist who contributed the greatest artworks¹.

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1. Creators' documents in psychological research on creativity

The psychology of creativity has traditions in studying and using the creator's accounts and writings. Scholars take biographical and autobiographical evidence, memoirs, written documents, letters, interviews and observations as sources of information in their search for conceptualizations of creativity or as guidance in generating hypotheses later tested in empirical studies or experimental settings.

Graham Wallas based his famous four-stage description of **the creative process** (*from preparation to incubation and insight, and then to verification*) on the analysis of the writings of the French mathematician Henri Poincare and the German physician and physicist Hermann Helmholtz, who described how their most important new thoughts came to them (Wallas 1926, cit. from Sadler-Smith 2015). In support of his conclusions, Wallas also quoted the French symbolist poet Remy de Gourmont and supplied verses by Shakespeare and Robert Graves that describe the poet's work. Wallas' 1926 book, aptly titled "The Art of Thought", conceptualized the creative process as a sequence of steps or stages leading to a new invention, new generalization, or a poetic expression of a new idea. The introduced creative process model continues to captivate the public's interest and remains a cornerstone of the field of creativity.

Nowadays, in a study focusing on *social psychological barriers* to the creative process, Teresa Amabile (1994) made use of the personal accounts of 120 researchers working in R&D laboratories across industries in more than 20 corporations around the world. They were part of teams developing new products or processes in their industry or adapting/improving existing ones. Researchers asked both team leaders and team members to describe two cases from their work, one of a successful creative project and the other one of an unsuccessful project. Recorded interviews were content analysed to discern circumstances that enable or block workplace creative behaviour.

Other scholars rely on creators' accounts as a source of information on *creative abilities*. They look for an answer to the question - what is the nature of human potential to produce creative outcomes? Paul Torrance analysed autobiographical materials (memories, stories, pieces of evidence describing the history of outstanding creative achievements) to identify those creative thinking and problem-solving skills that have contributed to the discovery of a new solution which is both original and effective in dealing with the problem (Torrance, Safter 1999).

On the other side, John and Mary Gedo, guided by their interest in the *creator's personality*, examined the lives and achievements of eminent persons to analyse the relation between individual's characteristics, the unique features of their life path and their creativity (Gedo, Gedo 1992). Among the cases they studied was the case of contemporary American painter Roger Braun. Six hours of recorded interviews with the artist and his letters informed the authors' observations and conclusions. The study of Goya aimed to show how the painter responded to a succession of severe physical illnesses and mastered their consequences for his physical capacities to live and work through an analysis of the changes and trends in both the form and content of the artworks he created.

This analysis relied on established catalogues and scholarly publications on his work and life. The authors took the same approach in the case of Rene Magritte, where publications written by him or about him, catalogues of his works, and letters and memoirs from the artist's friends and contemporaries were used (Gedo, Gedo 1992).

In the spirit of this tradition, this paper explores the texts of Nikolay Raynov, himself a painter and a writer, who studied the trends and the achievements in the history of arts. Raynov's reflections on visual arts and his perception of creators' contribution to the advancement of their field are examined from a novel perspective, however. It focuses on the creator as a *creative person*, i.e., someone *who expresses the inherent human quality of being creative*. This interest is grounded in humanistic psychology and its understanding of creativity as a manifestation of the whole person. American psychologists Carl Rogers (Rogers 1959; Rogers 1980) and Abraham Maslow (Maslow 1968; Maslow 1971) developed this approach to creativity to the fullest.

2. Humanistic psychology on creativity

Both Rogers and Maslow believe that at the roots of creativity, we find "men's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities ... - the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature, to express and activate all the unique capacities of the individual" (Rogers 1959, 140). This is a healthy, productive tendency towards self-realization, to become oneself most fully. It is self-actualizing that brings about the expansion of an individual's creative capabilities. "It is this tendency which is the *primary motivation for creativity* as the organism forms *new relationships* to the environment in its endeavour most fully to be itself" (Rogers 1959, 140). Contrary to the contemporary psychology that "... has mostly studied not-having rather than having, striving rather than fulfillment, frustration rather than gratification, seeking for joy rather than having attained joy, trying to get there rather than being there" (Maslow 1968, 73), humanistic psychology turns its focus toward the study of healthy, self-actualizing people and the conditions that facilitate personality's growth and creative behaviour.

The humanistic approach sees creativity as a manifestation of the person as a whole rather than a specific action or event related to a particular content or subject matter. "We must become more interested in the creative process, the creative attitude, the creative person, rather than in the creative product alone" (Maslow 1971, 95). Thus, creativity is not limited to predefined, conventional domains of human endeavour - one can be creative in everything. Yet, creativity development requires personality growth towards self-actualization, mental health and full functioning, and acquiring specific knowledge and skills.

In his definition of creativity, Rogers points to the emergence of a novel product that is a relational product, i.e., growing out of the uniqueness of the individual, on the one hand, and the materials, events, people or circumstances of his life on the other. „Creativity always has the stamp of the individual upon its product, but the product is not the individual, nor his materials, but partakes of the relationship between the two" (Rogers 1959: 139). The way Nikolay Raynov describes his creative life path illustrates this concept:

“... I read philosophy but graduated decorative and graphic arts; ... I thought that my vocation was reading but I was forced to take up writing. I owe my deepest gratitude to the Seminary which taught me to keep silent, meditate and look for the superior in man ... I was looking for traces of lost spiritual movements, encountered dear people whom I dare not to discuss, I saw things that my pen is unable to describe ... I studied many languages. I needed many sciences. Once my impressions wore out, I gave them to others - this is how my books appeared one by one. Many of them contain confession; whoever can read will see me, what I am and what I have been ... I am neither a writer nor an artist and cannot say I have come under anybody's influence. If at a certain point I learn how to write and paint properly, I shall have to thank the East and antiquity” (Raynov 1919; cited from Fileva, Nikolova, Raynova 2019, 171).

A humanistic understanding of creativity builds upon the psychotherapeutic experience of Rogers and Maslow, who demonstrated that personality growth liberates one's resources and strivings for creative expression and productive behaviour. It also finds support in self-insight and people's accounts of their subjective experiences. Maslow did personal interviews with the so-called self-actualizers: those evolved individuals who have reached a high level of maturation, health, and self-fulfillment, who are the healthiest, fully functioning and most fully human (Maslow 1968; Maslow 1971). One of Maslow's observations was that the so-called peak experiences - the moments of highest happiness and actualization, which happen in different relationships, situations and activities - occur more often in their lives. These peak experiences may accompany parenting, love encounters, mystic revelation, aesthetical perception, contemplation of nature, therapeutic or intellectual insight, certain forms of sports achievements, as well as the moments of creative illumination and aha-experience when a solution appears, an idea emerges, words come, and resolution takes shape in an unexpected and seemingly unrelated way.

This evidence allowed him to outline the subjective dimensions of the creative experience. Additional information comes from Maslow's research with students whom he invited “to think of the most wonderful experience or experiences of your life; happiest moments, ecstatic moments, moments of rapture, and then try to tell me how you feel in such acute moments, how you feel differently from the way you feel at other times, how you are at the moment a different person in some ways, about the ways in which the world looked different” (Maslow 1968, 71). Furthermore, people wrote him unsolicited letters after reading his published papers and gave him personal reports of peak experiences. Based on all this information, Maslow (1971) outlined the characteristics of the creative attitude, describing the creative moment, the source of intellectual or aesthetic creativity, which is the emergence in the act of the self-actualizing personality.

Highlighting the creative attitude further supports the differentiation that Maslow (1968) makes between two phases, two aspects of creative behaviour. Primary creativeness is related to inspiration and insight, experiencing the birth of a new, original idea, the moment of creative finding or discovery. Secondary creativeness relates to working out and developing a new concept and its

realization into a reliable and valid solution. Primary creativeness is a universal human capacity, part of our human nature, inherent to all human beings, and has its place in every human activity and occupation that engages, draws in, and leads us to creativity. It emerges from one's openness to experience - an awareness open to the interactions with the inner and outer worlds, internal locus of evaluation, and the ability to play spontaneously with images, colours, forms, and relations (Rogers 1959). Secondary creativeness builds upon hard work, discipline, exercises, training and education, patience and persistence. It depends on observation and self-study, judgement and critical attitude, construction, acceptance and rejection.

It seems that Nikolay Raynov, who separates the craftsmanship from the creative strength in an artist's work, shares this perspective on creativity. As he says, it is one thing "to reach the *superior technical skillfulness*," and yet another "to give the *sincerest creations*" (Raynov 1947b, 73). In the chapter dedicated to impressionism, he will write the following: „Manet ... is not perfect neither in drawing, nor in colouring, but he has *the merit of a creator* who discovers new ways" (Raynov 1947c, 121).

This paper will further re-create a dialogue between the humanistic theory of creativity and Raynov's considerations of the creative achievements in the visual arts.

3. Matching humanistic concepts to artist's reflections

Raynov's texts on visual arts (Raynov 1947a; Raynov 1947b; Raynov 1947c; Raynov 2009) and comments on his work (Raynov 2009; Fileva, Nikolova, Raynova 2019) provide the material for the present study. It aims to illustrate the concepts of humanistic psychology with evidence from artist's writings. The paper examines, in particular, the notions of creative attitude and integrated creativity (Maslow 1968; Maslow 1971; Rogers 1980) and demonstrates how Nikolay Raynov's writings echo with reflections on the artists and their oeuvres. The proposed analysis of these qualitative data by the illustrative method (Neumann 2014) provides a better understanding of the examined case and generates support for the applied theory.

3.1. The creative attitude

According to Maslow (1971), the main prerequisite for creativity is the ability **to become immersed in the present**, to become lost here and now. For the person driven by inspiration and creative strivings, there is but the here-and-now and their relation to the object of their creative passion, interest, crush, or occupation. Being "submerged" in the intensity of the present experience, out of time and space, they become one with the observed reality: a fascination with the matter-in-hand and exaltation that brings about a revelation. This concentration or absorption in anything that is interesting enough to hold one's attention entirely is the simplest version of the peak experience. Since this experience focuses the person's entire attention, they may engage wholly and participate fully in it. All this underscores the importance of attention and the

direction of our attention. “The ability to focus conscious attention seems to be one of the latest evolutionary developments in our species” (Rogers 1980, 127).

3.1.1. Narrowing of (self) consciousness

Immersing oneself in the present is associated with a loss of self or the ego or is experienced as a transcendence of the self.

Giving up the past. The best approach to a problem we face here and now is to give ourselves to it all, study it, dig into its nature, and penetrate its intrinsic interrelationships. We need to discover the answer to the problem within the problem itself rather than draw it from our memory by analogy with similar situations in the past. The past is not an inert, foreign body that the person carries around for making references. We are our past: it is active and alive within us as it has created the person who we are now, the person who acts as we act now and sees things in the way we see them now.

Giving up the future. We use the present to live in the present - to look at, listen to and perceive what is part of our lives here and now - and not to prepare for the future. Then we are involved with the present: we follow what has attracted our attention, not what we think will be engaging in the future, what we will need tomorrow, or what will fit well with what we are doing now. It is the way to let the future, which is already within us, part of our present selves, emerge from our present contribution.

Narrowing of consciousness. In such moments, we become much less conscious of everything else, of the rest of the world, because we are concentrated on the matter-in-hand here and now. We are less distractible; we become much freer of our ties to other people, of our neurotic involvements with others, and thus, we become much more ourselves and genuinely experience ourselves. We are free of outside (i.e., foreign to our nature) influences. We have no audience to play to, no role to perform. Then, we are free to devote ourselves to the problem at hand.

“That would imply not trying to paint *beautifully* as the mannerism does in the West and here at home, since beautifying is a killer to the *genuine* art. We have to paint *honestly*, with good-natured *openness*, without technical *cunning*, and without looking to produce something nice in a *conditional* sense, something ‘pretty’” (Raynov 2009, 187).

Narrowing of self-consciousness. When people are totally absorbed in something outside themselves, they tend to become less conscious of themselves and less self-aware. They are less apt to observe and judge themselves like spectators or critics. The usual dissociation into a self-observing ego and an experiencing ego disappears, transcending for a greater unity and fuller integration of the person.

3.1.2. Innocence

The *innocence* of perceiving and behaving is akin to seeing the world through a child’s eyes. It is the child whose perceptions and actions have not yet been burdened by education and socialization. An innocence devoid of a

priori expectations, devoid of the notions of 'should' or 'ought,' devoid of the influence of fads, fashions, dogmas, habits, or other societal representations of what is deemed proper, normal, and right. It is the innocence of children who are open to receiving whatever happens without indignation, surprise, shock, or denial.

Innocence of perceiving, however, should not be interpreted mechanically. See, for example, what Nikolay Raynov has written about Henri Harpignies (1819-1916): "He watched and remembered, then sat down to work. He did not seek to give *realistic reproductions* of what he saw but *to create based on what he saw and contemplated*. That is why he loved to tell his friends and students: 'Nature serves to be studied - and when one gets to know her, after questioning her often, he returns home and creates works.' As to his contemporary landscape artists, the painter used to say: 'Today's landscape artists *are not aware enough: nature does not speak to them; they paint unconsciously, like machines*'" (Raynov 1947b: 69). On the other hand:

"This extraordinary artist has the gift of an *extraordinary vision*: the world, as he sees it, contains not only *more colours* than *ordinary eyes* notice but also *more lines, planes, even more objects and beings invisible to us*" (Raynov 2009, 162).

Acceptance and a positive attitude. Then, we give up criticism and thus negativity - we do not reject, approve, choose, or judge. We let the subject of our interest be and penetrate our minds, hearts, and souls. By letting it be itself, we approve of its existence and accept its essence.

Behind the apparent passivity of the state of acceptance, there is an active attitude of noticing, paying close attention, and perceiving accurately and in a differentiated way. Fine observations are strengthened by persistence and purposefulness. This is how our senses unlock our creativity and release the source of our inspiration.

"Until then, French painters conveyed shadows with *uniform* dark colours, reminding of ink, soot or asphalt. Manet saw this as *a mistake* made by *poor observation*. As long as the eye sees and distinguishes details, the object shall be illuminated, though very dimly lighted: the shadow - in the sense of unconditional darkness, cannot exist. *The shaded areas of the object do not sink into the darkness* shown in black. Although less illuminated, they retain the basic colour of the object, except that this colour darkens in the shaded area. In addition to this, there are reflections and glare emitted from the illuminated parts as well as from the surrounding light objects; all of these alter the supposed nature of the shadow" (Raynov 1947b, 122).

Aesthetic perception rather than abstraction. Abstraction is more about judging, analysing, selecting, and rejecting than is the aesthetic attitude of savouring, enjoying, appreciating, caring, and adoring in a nonintruding, noncontrolling way. The end product of abstracting is a mathematical equation, chemical formula, map, diagram, blueprint or concept, which moves us further from the direct experience of reality. The end product of aesthetic perceiving

is the totality of a perception in which everything is apt to be equally savoured, and nothing is more or less important than the other.

Creative perception is not a categorization; it is an identification. It is not about imposing a priori views or enforcing concepts but about perceiving them deeply and devoting yourself to what you see. It is about studying a thing as if you see it for the first time, and then after a while, the answers will reveal themselves. The creative attitude allows us to see the beauty in everything around us and discover the inner order and harmony in things.

“There is no other artist as perceptive as Rembrandt. He is able to *grasp at a glance the inner core of the object and the most hidden propulsive force of the being* - that distinct life which makes them what they are. With just two or three brush strokes and a couple of lines drawn with a feather or a cutter, Rembrandt sums up a typical image of an animal, a tree, or a human. But he *does not assemble concepts, but visual representations full of character*, defining precisely within the circle of the given what is to be implied” (Raynov 2009, 161).

Taoistic receptivity. For Maslow (1971), receptivity is not just about noninterference, or “letting things happen.” It is also about the creator’s respectful attention to their matter-in-hand - taking it as an end goal, as something that has a meaning and a value in itself, not like a means to an external purpose. Showing respect to the problem, to the materials, to the situation or the person involved. It also means deference, or surrendering to the authority of the facts, to the law of the situation. Such an attitude is necessary for perceiving or understanding the full concrete richness of the matter-in-hand, in its own nature and in its own style, without imposing ourselves or our representations upon it.

“Rembrandt is a painter with an exceptional vision, as there are musicians with exceptional hearing. He sees many more colours in the world than other painters do. And he sees shapes under a much more complex view. Alongside the world visible to all, he perceives another, invisible to us, constituting the inner essence of the first, fused with it from within. This is why visibility is extremely complex for Rembrandt and difficult to assemble. Such an art needs new tools. There is a need for an expressive language that *neither describes nor tells, but suggests*” (Raynov 2009, 150-151).

3.1.3. Trust, spontaneity, courage

Fears dissolve. The state of absorption liberates us from fear: our anxieties, concerns, and even physical pains are no longer overwhelming when our profound interest engrosses us in the task at hand. At this moment, we are courageous, confident, and healthy.

Strength and courage manifest in stubbornness and strength of character, independence and self-sufficiency. Such a state implies less fear and inhibition and a lesser need for defence and self-protection; popularity becomes a minor

consideration. Becoming more courageous makes it easier for us to let ourselves be attracted by the mystery, the unfamiliar, and the novel, by the ambiguous and contradictory; it becomes easier to be drawn by the unusual and unexpected. Confidence, strength, and courage are needed when you cannot see what is coming or awaiting you at the next step. The courage to go where no one has been before, to try something that you haven't tried before, to go for something no one else has tried before, and you have no certitude either where it will take you and how it will end, or how you will feel while you are doing this.

“As a completely *free* creator, Rembrandt was *seeking his advice only*. He is a *free conscience and an independent mind*” (Raynov 2009, 164).

Trust versus trying, controlling, striving. Imply a trust in the self and trust in the world that allows one to give up temporarily straining and striving, volition and control, conscious coping and effort. To permit oneself to be determined by the intrinsic nature of the matter-in-hand and the here-now implies relaxation, waiting, and receiving. The usual attempt to master, dominate and control is antithetical to genuine creative perception. This is especially true concerning our effort to control the future. We must trust our ability to improvise when confronted with novelty in the future. Trust involves self-confidence, courage and a lack of fear of the world. This kind of trust in ourselves when facing the unknown future is a condition of being able to turn wholeheartedly to the present.

“... ‘self-liberation’ through the discovery of the *supreme Self* ... Not the petty Self who is miserly, eats, self-eats oneself, is jealous, hates and envies; not the little toothy, blood-eyed Self who bites, defends, grabs and amasses. It is the other one - *the grand Self*, that communicates with God, the people and the earth at the same time, *the splendid Self*, which the masters of the portrait have been able to find in the most insignificant person, even in the fallen man” (Raynov 2009, 81-82).

Playing with the elements of experience: to associate and combine things unusually; the freedom to use the world of symbols to express one's impulses, needs and desires, and satisfactions. Being able to improvise, i.e., not being afraid of a constantly changing situation; being able to improvise in an unfamiliar situation where you find yourself for the first time. The ability to play, to imagine and enjoy imagining. Permit oneself to experience pleasure from the creative play and the joy of discovering what will emerge from this - being spontaneous frees one to express oneself and permit oneself to be oneself.

“For Veronese - as for Shakespeare and all genius artists - *historical truthfulness matters little*. Art is neither a science nor a popularization of science; it is not a servant of history. Veronese's purpose was to show people that there is more than grief, adversity and violence in the world. ... His *colourful harmonies* sing about *carefree joy* and happiness. He *sings about happiness* as something divine, as something destined to everyone” (Raynov 2009, 108).

Fulllest spontaneity. Suppose we are entirely concentrated on our creative interest, fascinated with it for its own sake, and have no other goals or purposes.

In that case, it is easier to be wholly spontaneous and fully functioning, to let our capacities flow forth effortlessly from within, without conscious volition or control, of themselves by their internal organization. Our capacities adapt to the nature of the problem most perfectly, and our approach will change flexibly as the situation changes.

Fullest expressiveness. Complete spontaneity guarantees honest expression of the object's nature, the essence and form of the phenomenon, and the uniqueness of the organism that perceives the object and studies the phenomenon. There is naturalness, truthfulness, lack of guile, and genuineness in expression.

3.1.4. Depth and wholeness

The source of new ideas, primary creativeness, is found in the depths of human nature. Our immersion in creative perception enables this process of deep reach and opens up the flow of inner psychological communication.

Lessening of defences and inhibitions. Our inhibitions also tend to disappear. So, our defences and the brakes we put on our impulses lessen, as well as our defences against danger and threat. Creativity requires freedom from the outer pressures and the inner fears, worries, rules and accepted norms. Creative success implies establishing one's own rules; it is discovering and responding to the rules implied by the inner nature of the things, as exploration and experimentation of their essence are a part of the creative process.

The deep roots of the creative insight. The creative vision is not solely a mental process; the creative idea is not just a combination of elements of knowledge found in the world. Genuinely new ideas and discoveries, different from the present ones, originate from the unconscious. Creativity springs from the deepest layer of our personality, unique experience, and the wholeness of our being. A person with a creative attitude shows courage in the face of these sometimes frightening emotions, feelings, images, ideas and experiences inside of us, which we do not always understand to the fullest and do not want to know better. Although we could listen to them, look at them and try to articulate somehow their origination, development and fading away.

“Many have struggled, so to speak, to decompose Raphael into its constituent parts. But *he cannot be divided into parts. There is something huge, native, his own, Raphael's, that remains undivided*” (Raynov 2009, 59).

Permission to dip into primary process. In the creative process, the poetic, metaphoric, mystic, primitive, archaic psychic content and the childlike capacities to react serve the person. They work in unison with the analytic, rational, and conceptual mind.

Creativity is an act of the whole person. When in the service of their creative interests, the person is most integrated, unified, and totally organized. Creativeness is, therefore, a systemic quality of the whole person; it is not something added to the organism like a coat or a fancy dress.

“It is curious that he (Leonardo da Vinci), a gifted man, did not consider his artistic skill the main of his gifts. It was more important for

him to be a *complete* person, so he *combined the knowledge of nature with that of the mind and the body*, and with their help, he *created*, while at the same time, he *subordinated both knowledge and creativity to deep humanity*" (Raynov 2009, 32).

Fusion of the person with the world. The web of interrelated characteristics we discussed separately can help us understand this fusion - when the subject and object of creativity become one - as a natural event rather than a mysterious, esoteric one.

In answering question № 3 of a survey that Spiridon Kazandzhiev proposed to him, Nikolay Raynov (2009) will share the following: "When I go to nature with the intention of drawing, I always look at it in a frame - vertical or horizontal, which reflects one or the other piece of it. It is quite another attitude towards nature when I am in it without the intention of painting it. Then I *indulge in it directly, uninterestedly, and experience it much more deeply*. While in the first case, I perceive it from outside, through my senses, now I breathe and live through it *without a frame, without restriction, freely, in direct contact and immediate affinity with it, up to a full immersion in it*" (Raynov 2009, 11).

3.2. Integrated creativity

The above analysis laid out the parallels between Nikolay Raynov's approach to visual arts creators, their creative processes, and achievements, on the one hand, and the humanistic approach of Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, who see the creative attitude as an inner condition for creativity, on the other.

These two different disciplinary perspectives share an interest in the creator as a person and recognize the elements of the creative attitude in the creator's way of relating to the object of their work. This is undoubtedly a valuable validation of the psychological understanding of the role of the inner conditions for creativity. When a writer who is also an artist embraces the same perspective in reviewing the contribution of individuals, groups and epochs to the history of visual arts, this finding emphasizes the importance of primary creativeness and personal involvement with the creative process. The personal involvement with the creative work imprints the mark of uniqueness in the new developments and peak achievements.

Furthermore, these authors share an integrated view of creativity. As important as primary creativeness is, more than inspiration is needed; getting creative results requires much work, effort and time. Immersion in the experience, insight, and illumination do matter, but they are useless unless they are followed by a period of elaboration and implementation of the idea or the vision in a product that is accessible to communication and available for usage (as a drawing, a sketch or a painting). Creativity requires a productive synthesis of the creative vision with creative thinking, the creative attitude with creative action, and primary and secondary creativeness. "That creativity which uses both types of processes easily and well, in good fusion or in good succession, I shall call '*integrated creativity*'" (Maslow 1968, 144). To put it otherwise, "That which *has existed in creator's inner world*, like a shining net of colours, playful

lines, vibrating shadows and unreal ghostly images, now must *become a painting*: a squared plane of paper or canvas covered with dye spots ... There is in the soul of the artist *a yet unpainted painting*, visible only to him. This painting needs *to be transferred to the canvas* for all to see. To convey his visions to canvas, the artist needs dexterity, training, gift, and aesthetic feeling (Raynov 1947a, 15).

The artist spending time and effort to make the painting as he would like it to be, their incessant work on mastering their craft and furthering their skills - these critical factors in producing outstanding artistic achievements are present in explicit and implicit ways throughout the texts of the writer Nikolay Raynov. They will re-emerge in his accounts of his artistic work. Nikolay Raynov writes this in response to the survey proposed by Spiridon Kazandjiev: "In its working process, the artist happens to feel strongly about the limitation of art and its powerlessness. Often, I wanted one thing, but something different emerged due to the powerlessness of art. This deception no artist can avoid. It is the reason for the incessant search for perfection and improvement of an art's technical and expressive means" (Raynov 2009, 12).

Conclusions

The parallels discovered revealed an interesting - and maybe unexpected - aspect of Raynov's encyclopedic oeuvre. His history of visual arts underlines the creator's presence - of the person, the human being that the creator is. Whether in the overview of ages, in the description of artistic movements, or in analysing the geniuses of the Italian Renaissance, Raynov focuses on the deep, inner roots of the creative pursuits and examines the mark that the artist's inner world leaves on the creative product. As Raynov refers to it, this inner or spiritual dimension emerges in his writings on the visual arts achievements. As Maslow (1971) would put it, he can perceive realities to which others are blind; he stands out as more penetratingly receptive to his favourite art. In Raynov's texts, we discovered an observer who has delved into the mental processes behind the master's brush and has put into words his insights about the artist as a human. This inspired viewer looks with his mind, sees with his heart and speaks with his soul about the great masters that shaped the history of arts. He appears as a model for what Carl Rogers (1980) calls a person-centered way of being.

While Maslow describes the subjective perspective through the individual's psychological processes, Raynov uncovers the richness and uniqueness of the subjective experience incorporated in the artist's works. Self-insights and insights into others' creative works are an exciting and valuable source of knowledge about positive personality functioning and understanding of individual development. "Don't you think that if we pay more attention to the powerful people in whom the spirit of Michelangelo lives, the sublime Self within us will begin to speak, and it will begin to talk to them, question them, and guess their answers? Michelangelo is one of the few artists who dared to go all the way to reach those heady heights where the good and the beautiful become one ... this is where Michelangelo's giants call us. This marble humanity tells us that something great resides inside each of us - and we must awaken it" (Raynov 2009, 82).

Very much like the mystical revelation, the creative moment and aha-experiences, aesthetic perception is experienced as pleasant and valuable, a “self-validating, self-justifying moment which carries its intrinsic value with it; it is reported as worthwhile, desirable and wanted” (Maslow 1968, 80). To the extent that these experiences have the potential to change our views of other people and the world, they can free us for more creativity, spontaneity, expression and idiosyncrasy. “When we contemplate a piece of art created by a genius master, we enter into *direct contact with a great spirit*. We look at life *with different eyes* after we get to know art; we organize our private lives differently; even nature appears to us as art has trained us to see it” (Raynov 1947a, 12-13).

The proposed synthesis clarifies a specific case - Nikolay Raynov’s writings on visual art history - and illuminates its particular features. It also generates unique evidence for the validity of the employed concepts of creativity. The elements of the creative attitude, derived from psychological insights and clinical observations, are re-discovered in the aesthetic observations and insights on the subjective mechanics of the most significant art achievements.

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