

Translating the Ideas of the Artist as a State of Uncommon Awareness: The Eternal Creator of Space and Time beyond Canvas Appeal

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Abstract

This paper discusses the greater unfoldment of the *mind* of the artist as beyond asylum cases that most theorist and critics have argued for. By establishing a scope that exemplifies a symbolic resonance of an idea from the subconscious, the paper as well posits that the problem of semantics in describing the artists *experience*, *observation*, *beauty* or *form*, and *context*, are one of such technical reality that are gravely challenged as delayed mental illness. The objective of this paper has been to refute mental illness as acceptable analysis on the artist, but used in a stark way the terms that psychoanalytically communicates the parallel worlds that are only remote in their individual expressions of art have been established. The creative fields in art extols greater energies welling from a deeper but richer consciousness that may not be readily understood by all, are but sensitive to generally acceptable discussions, yet this paper draws references from Jackson Pollock's *Shamanistic* views, Wassily Kandinsky's *Spiritual Triangle* and other established theories that have connected this type of inspiration as acceptable conceptuality that drives arts towards religiosity, production and consumption.

Key words: Mind, asylum, symbolic, mental illness, psychoanalytic, consciousness, shamanistic, religiosity and spiritual triangle.

1. Introduction

The paper advanced here is that *idea*, or imagination, as they would be used interchangeably, is important for even the most triflingly creative expressions. Idea or imagination stems from the *mind* –which in older enlightened religious consciousness, is described as the *Chitta* –a faculty distinguishing *form*, *beauty*, *color*, and *memory* recall, and in turn, inspires art. The attributes of the mind are abstract to the majority of us, but the individual need recognize that, the mind is not independent of physical organs for the expression of art, and through art, culture is conceived, which had in remarkable ways, enthused several ancient religious and ethnic practices over time, with art and the artist as the *medium*.

This is phenomenal, of the physical senses which works dependently with a transcendental consciousness to express art. The greater the unfoldment of the mind, the greater the questions that seeks to challenge the sanity of artistic expressions to the larger community. “As history shows us, many of the world’s most brilliant and creative minds have also struggled with what we perceive to be “mental” issues. Some great examples are Vincent van Gogh, Allan Poe, and Frida Kahlo, just to name a few”, (Walia, 2015, p.1). His assertions describes a genetic link between creativity and mental illness. In that particular study, it discusses the creative links parallel to mental illness; in the form of bipolar disorder and schizophrenia, as reviewed in the journal of *Nature Neuroscience*. It discovered that the interrelatedness between individuals in the national artistic societies of actors, dancers, musicians, writers, and visual artists, all bore this unusual traits of bipolar disorder as it was especially higher in those defined in the creative fields.

Until now, this type of understanding clearly deposits the artist as some sort of creative *shaman*, when compared for instance, with the type of thinking Jackson Pollock had put forward, after considering his *No. 1, Lavender Mist*, 1950; (see fig. 5), believing that his paintings extols psychic energies that are beyond his natural comprehensions. Granting his perceptions on this discuss, he in the same way averred that, this type of subjective preponderance, can place the artist in to the role of a *medium* or *Shaman* who lets the spirit come through him. “It is a well-known psychological fact that an individual may have such an unconscious identity with some other person or object,” (Jung, 1964, p.7). This is what the French philosopher, sociologist and anthropologist, Lucien Lévy-Brühl (b.1857) called a “mystical participation”.

What is interesting is that, this type of idea eventually transforms into powerful creative events that are vital and responds into alternative expressions avowed from the thought streams of the Modernist Art movements. Their scopes in the art, is as *subconsciously* exemplified as it echoes each individual’s perception of the world we live in, in a rather symbolic transition. Thusly, the closely selected art works discussed here is regulated by

such need and prejudice of what the eye processes as ideas, and dutifully associates with the subconscious, from what is then filtered to create that which is finally seen as art or the spiritual in art. What this means in turn, is that, “It selects, rejects, organizes, discriminates, associates, classifies, analyzes, [and] constructs. It does not so much mirror as take and make,” (Goodman, 1968).

Henry M. Sayre in his *A World of Art*, regulates this type of understanding, as he portends that, “Many of us assume, almost without question, that we can trust in the reality of what we see. Seeing, as we say is believing. Our word “idea” derives, in fact, from the Greek word *idein*, meaning “to see,” and it is no accident that when we say “I see” we really mean “I understand,” (Sayre, 2003, p.12).

As artists, visual material inference controls our opinion of the world around us –clearly, we do not always understand what we see, which makes us to be increasingly suspicious –inquisitive –employ mystical means in the understanding of the world in a single viewpoint, yet almost all of us can agree that, we have always been rummaging or sifting through ideas, primarily by seeking to address those fleeting problems around us, whose resolution presents to the *mind* with multiple *ideas* as solutions, may be perceived differently by the listener or observer. This approximately examines the problems of semantics. It seems that hardly any one of our various ideas rarely utilize the same techniques in advancing an understanding about the arts on current issues. This general claim may also be a truism.

Conversely, the resolve from the artist is practically metaphoric, rather than direct and common-placed, as their intent is psychoanalytically delivered in a multifaceted visual space that speaks privately to each audience. Significantly, this type of approach, has made artists interested in spiritual subjects by nature, and has redefined their ideas and repositioned the audience and critics into contemporary debates on what art is or is not. “Rather, it questions the process that makes it art” (Ades, et al, 1999), especially when such ideas are ready-mades, like Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven and Morton Schamberg’s *God*, c. 1917, using a plumbing trap upturned in a box, as he responded to the uncertain mood of Marcel Duchamp. This type of feeling is subjective, as it necessitates an initiation of personal activity of thought. One ceases to assert his thought against the tyranny of images, aesthetics and restrictive opinions –but then, opens up his attitude to the supreme form of mental activity. On the other hand, the follow up is usually placed within the context of story-telling; opinionated with an individuals’ critical assertions, gathered from and around available theories. Such story-telling is reminiscent with the Yoruba god, *Ogun*, who rules over iron and the deep woods, and is also considered to be the guardian of truth and justice in Voodoo lore. Schamberg’s god, clearly reflects this character.



Figure 1. Morton Schamberg and Baroness Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven, *God*, c. 1917, plumbing trap and a box.

The artist looks at the price of his experience which can be bought for what its worth. But hardly does he pass the exact message as they come from the *deep well* of his ambiguous but fluid inspiration in the ethers of his mind. The eye of the artist, is thus described as the window for expressions that transmits from Soul, using visual language to deeply understand and interpret the central idea that redefines the people, events, and places that are branded in his imagination. This notion is centered on his subconsciousness, the type of visual circumstances that undeniably questions the motive of the artist at the very platform of sanity.

It is believed that, his critics rarely realize that the truth must be taken with sacrifice and understanding in the desolate places where none exist but the artist himself, through his numerous journeys from the subconscious levels. The critic and audience must look to themselves only for the experience that enlivens the Soul, for the secret of creativity in his thoughts, as it interacts with brush, oil and methods, is that it is neither natural nor clearly revealed. The latent unspoken message is placed on the canvas without so much of a fanfare, because of a critical disposition to understand those uncommon revelations. Reason and logic as we all know them always change under the influence of time and space continuum in our universe, especially that of the artist. The artists' knowledge is always in a constant flux of creativity, touching the very fabric of creation; but it is always difficult to understand, even in plain spoken or written English; that is, there is the problem of semantics as earlier mentioned. No two ideas or techniques presents the same results for the artist. When the eternal individuality of things or his ideas are put to creativity in expressions on canvas, his inner being is in abeyance.

2. Art Beyond Asylum

The artist sees the realm of eternity, especially when his method exceeds beyond the threshold of realism, then at every moment of given knowledge, he knows not merely the particular thing but the mode in which it is real; the mode in which all things are reality which are in the realms beyond the physical, and in which alone they are real. The mode is, of course, that, freedom in expression and knowledge of the subconscious are eternal, persistent in our minds and real as the gift of sight. But it would be nice to have in hand some reasons for thinking it so.

To hear one's own self shriek with terror as he approaches the borders of places unfathomable to the frail minded, exists in boundless worlds where time is an illusion, and the void drowns the soul amidst on-looking shadows. This presents arts in one of its numerous expressions as "Art is madness", as considered from the Metropolitan Museum of Art publication, *Art is...* (2012), the work of Vincent van Gogh, *Corridor in the Asylum*, 1889, when compared with one of such graphic example to this type of phenomenon, in the painting by Giorgio de Chirico's *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street*, (1914), enlivens the question about the artist's sanity. However, the sanity is intact, only that there is a shift in consciousness –a leap into a reality that many fear to step into, if only for a second longer –where time, space, and reason could be bend at will, and the many mirrors of oneself could only be understood as a microcosm of the larger universe, from a pin-hole in the mind's eye. Considerably, in Chirico's painting, a little girl rolls her hoop toward the ominous black shadow of a figure lurking behind the wall, was one of the artist's metaphysical brooding moods –a realm of reoccurring memory, mythology and truth, as evoked from his subconscious self.

This, as according to Andre Breton, "De Chirico claimed not to understand his own paintings. They were simply images that obsessed him, and they conveyed the *irremediable anxiety* of the day," (Rosenstock, 1982, p.113). Thus, the artist oftentimes, presents to us a world of irremediable happenings; visual riddles between conscious and unconscious mutation of representation calculatedly made abstract in its actual sense. Such equivalences of the subconscious level by artists of the modern art era: Surrealism, Dadaism, Cubism, Futurism etc., cannot be made visible in any camera's viewfinder. They were based on the omnipotence of dreams from Freud's subconscious. In other words, such happenings would only become verbally ambiguous. "In recent years, the works of such artists were moved away from the use of material understandings, yet deeply concerned themselves with haunting presences that are barely detectable, and yet somehow persistent" (Coffey, 2001).

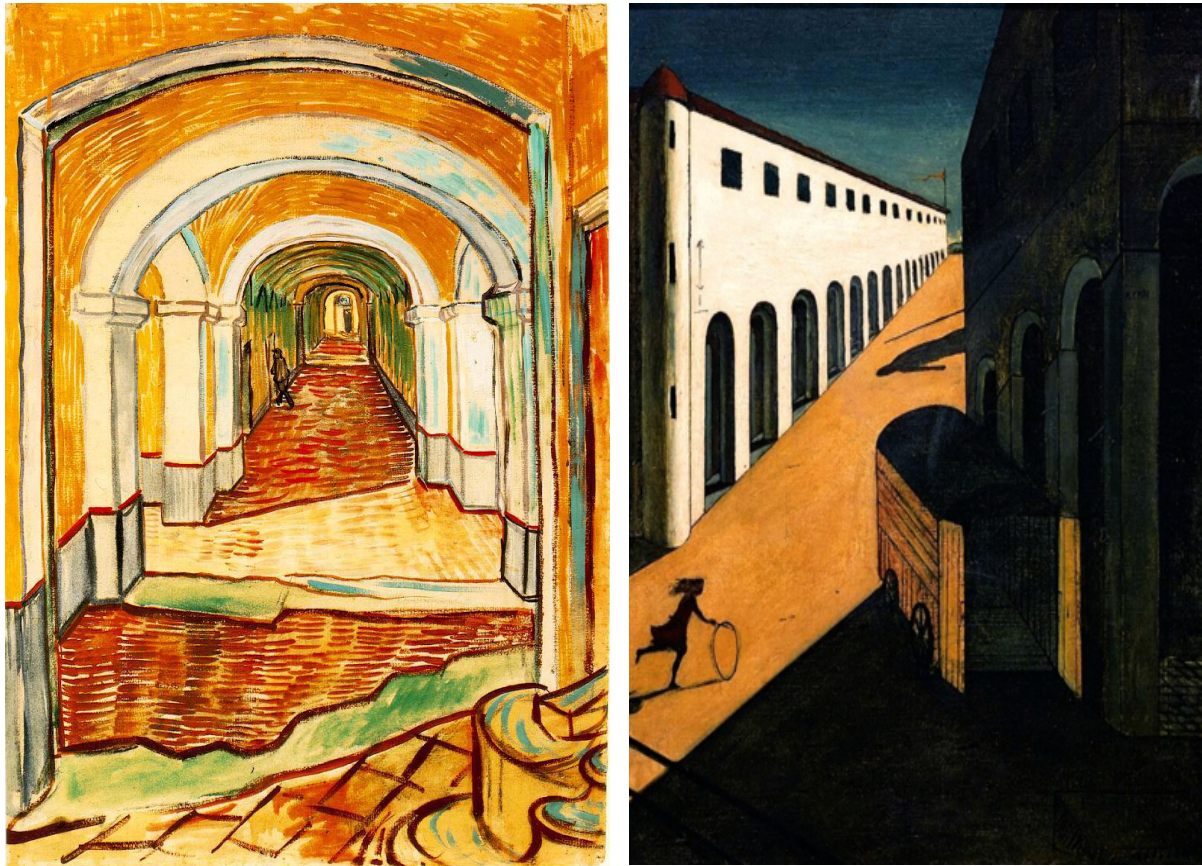


Figure 2 . Vincent van Gogh, Corridor in the Asylum, 1889, Oil color and essence over black chalk on pink laid (“ingres”) paper, 25 5/8 x 19 5/16 inches. www.wikiart.org. and Figure 3. Giorgio de Chirico, *Mystery and Melancholy of a Street*, 1914, oil on canvas.

Considering the 'psychoanalytical' enquiries of Surrealism, which is clearly linked with the aim of expanding the potential of the mind by reconciling the opposing states of dream and reality by representing elusive images, symbols, ideas, and invention with understood meanings, Sigmund Freud was able to develop techniques allowing individuals to release their imagination through his exertion of work with free association, dream analysis, and the unconscious, which ultimately became of great importance to the Surrealists. Works such as *Melancholy and Mystery of a Street*, (1914) by Giorgio di Chirico, and Salvador Dali's *Sleep* (1937), especially of Dali's works, were more interested in stripping art of tradition and in finding new ways to draw and establish new reasons to paint than in importing tribal art into their art world.

However, Deborah Wye describes such works as conjuring up “human longing, extending from the mystical to the intellectual, from the poetic to the existential in meditative realm” (Wye, 1990), thus bringing the viewer into what the American painter, Jackson Pollock in 1967, interprets his paintings as a reflection of the primeval essence of his inner-self being “possessed.” He felt that, his paintings had occupied the character of psychosomatic existence which he also considered can interconnect its energy, and therefore, places the artist in the role of a medium or Shaman who lets the spirit come through him from a meditative realm.



Figure 4. Salvador Dali, "Sleep," 1937, oil on canvas,



Figure 5. Jackson Pollock, *Number 1 (Lavender Mist)*, 1950, oil, aluminums and enamel on canvas, National Gallery of Art, Washington.

2.2 Kandinsky's Triangle in Context

The artist is completely seen as a *Shaman*, as he makes his works embody the concept of latent religiosity by invoking worlds of untold spirituality. In further opinion, such unspoken worlds are yet to be explored because of our dependency on material culture limiting the viewer's conscious submission to such worlds. It is only by unhinged outlook to independent ideas from the external necessities, as Wassily Kandinsky asserted, that the ideas behind the artists canvas can be engaged; thereby alienating and excluding the rest, his opinions becomes private: subjectivity –thus, resigned from popular happenings around us, and the identity of the spiritual becomes an established point of view –creating a new thought for the art piece.

Michelangelo also entertains similar views in a quote:

True art is made noble and religious by the mind producing it. For those who feel it, nothing makes the Soul more religious and pure.

According to Peter Selz (1957) he notes that, "Matisse's free uses of color for its own sake were manifestations of the turning point toward a spiritual art" (Selz, 1957). However, the Russian abstractionist, Kandinsky indicated that through his images, Matisse sought after replicating the divine through the means that belong to painting, these being *color* and *form*.

In his essay, *Notes of a Painter*, Matisse shares comparable views to Kandinsky, in that he believes "harmonies and dissonance of color can produce very pleasurable effects" (Chipp, 1968). He stressed this conviction in that, the main tenacity of color was to serve pure expression. "This form of expression and pleasurable effects were, as Kandinsky described, inner necessity" (Lindsay and Vergo, 1994).

Through the use of several analogies, Wassily Kandinsky distinguished how the creation and perception of art can be put into two striking categories, these, as he described as Internal Necessity (IN) and External Necessity (EN). Lindsay and Vergo, (1994), went on to describe how this can be achieved or understood, by accurately using a diagram of a rather large acute triangle, divided into unequal parts, with the most acute and smallest division at the top.



Figure 6. Henri Matisse, *Red Studio*, 1911, oil on canvas, Museum of Modern Art, New York.

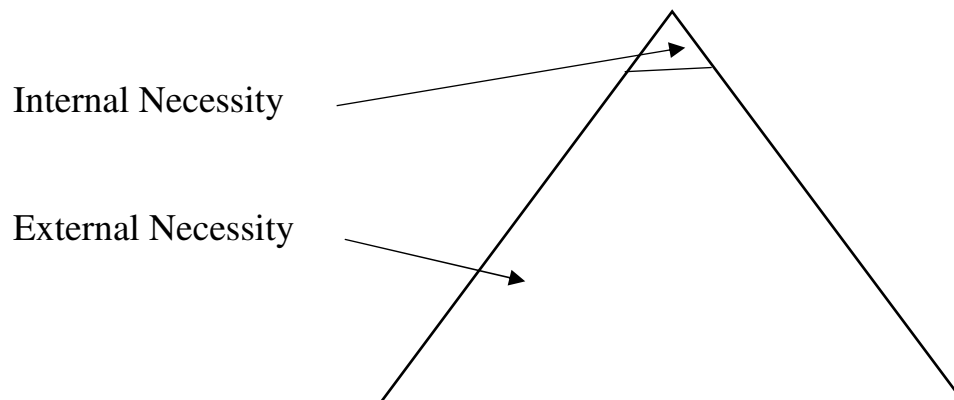


Figure 6: External and Internal Necessities of the Spiritual in Art.

Thus, Edmonson, (2010) argues that, Kandinsky's approach to spirituality can be viewed as occultic, while Mike King, asserts that, "Theosophy in establishing a "brotherhood" is capable of understanding and disseminating occult knowledge," (King, 1998). However, it also consists of transcendental elements that could be spotted within the creativity of art. This means that those at the bottom of the triangle, due to an excess awareness of the material or external consciousness, have rarely attained spirituality as they have either refuse or apparently been deprived of knowledge of the internal, that would have elevated their consciousness to a knowledge of the voice of soul to its cage. More so, Kandinsky asserts that, those at the top of the spiritual or internal scale have attained this spirituality through some level of experiences and struggles through means that are relatively internal and inaccessible to some of us. This, he further states that, internal necessity arises from three mystical sources, these being:

- i. Every artist, as creator clearly expresses what is peculiar to himself
- ii. Every artist expresses what is peculiar to his/her time
- iii. Every artist as servant to art objectively expresses what is peculiar to art, universally.

Putting this internal necessity into creative ideologies, or practices and in the research painting, Kandinsky asserts situations where Cezanne, exercised his ability of accessing the internal in the world of the external, seeking new forms, expressions –making dead objects come internally alive, in terms of lines and colours, thus creating an internally painterly expression.

This paper acknowledges these relationships of internal and external necessities clearly applied in arts, where idea and creativity are used to construct a belief between images and colours to express the internal sublimation of ideas from the subconscious to the external means of expression on materials. Therefore, Kandinsky describes this phenomenon as everything external, necessarily conceals within itself the internal description.

At this point, this type of phenomenon rarely asserts values for the creation of art, thereby shifting it to the edge of diminished notion of spiritual, and the internal values which touch our souls.

How do we reconnect with our internal self? How do we create art beyond addressing physical needs or problems? How do we respond to our lost atavistic self in sustaining lost cultures from being rejected totally in the constantly changing times? How do we create art beyond aesthetics by looking at function as key? Questions such as these, are crowned achievements in the "natural synthesis" expounded by Uche Okeke and the Zariantists, and of course, other notable art course not mentioned here. In pursuing a metaphorical link between art and the artists' subconsciously derived visual images (painting), a much more radical rejection of dependency of aesthetics and material representation (External Necessities), presents a clear implication of indigenous cultures and belief systems from facing total annihilation in this times. However, the critical responses to Kandinsky's theories are surveys regarded with utmost indifference by some critics and audiences who rely heavily on natures' expressions.

Of significance to the argument by Duchamp, which is beneficial to this discourse, is the abandonment of "Retinal Shudder!" it clearly offers the viewer a clear sense of liberation from what he (Duchamp) declared as orthodoxies of various kinds –the unquestioned tyranny of the eye over art and society and the institutions of art. Although some critics described him from the negative point of modernism, but his interaction with raised ideas of Western values over art did clearly highlights on the limits the artists' vision encounters from the forms of

unspontaneous creativity. Yet at the present, social and political tensions ran high, especially over issues of cultural suppressions across the globe; the role of artists at this time is required to play a less remote influence in rebuilding culture and the mind.

3. Conclusion

The object of this is has been to establish those generally or misunderstood unexplored paths that leads to creative inspirations for the artist. The idea of uncommon means of ideas that do not reside in the ones acceptable by orthodox thinking, has and will always be the bane of contemporary societies globally. This type of repression of knowledge accounts for the fact that the principles of subconsciously-led ideas and creative interaction with forces that are dwelling on parallel landscapes as sources of some of our inspirations, are generally unknown or misunderstood by those interested in spiritual subjects. P. Twitchell affirmed that, "However, the theory of cosmic consciousness is well established as a part of esoteric sciences –a great quantity of literature has been produced by followers of the Hindu and Vedantist religions" (personal communication, October 22, 2000).

The dependency of conventional professional artistic career with regular selling exhibition, as Duchamp blatantly refused being part of, here of course, hinges on the necessity of artistic endeavors to act on the socio-cultural and religious consequences of their works, especially the salient parts of art and culture as primary concern, may still be undergoing a delay to address those ideas behind art making which exists conceptually rather than product.

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