

THE ONTOLOGY OF ART IN PHILOSOPHY OF NICOLAI HARTMANN

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ABSTRACT

Nikolai Hartmann one of the distinguished figures in the history of philosophy of the first half of the XX century. His teachings contains a theoretical transformation of several major philosophical trends like neo-Kantianism and phenomenology. However, as in the Russian-language and in the world research papers, the N. Hartmann's aesthetics remains little-studied. "Aesthetics" can be considered as a last work of Hartmann, completing his philosophical system. Hartmann is also known as a founder of "the new ontology", the movement basing on the inevitable dependence of any epistemology on ontology. In the tradition of neo-Kantianism Hartmann initially rejects the point of view of aesthetics, which allows us to talk about art as a continuation of knowledge. In contrast to the purely phenomenological position, Hartmann suggests his own decision on the transcendental orientation of the aesthetic act. In his study of the field of aesthetic Hartmann inquires into a question of the structure and mode of existence of the aesthetic object, as well as the act of examination, contemplation and enjoyment. Just as in the creation of its own epistemological theory Hartmann is guided by the desire to justify the assertion of the transcendence of the cognitive act, and knowable objects, considering the act of aesthetic perception. He also puts the emphasis on the specificity of being of the aesthetic object.

Hartmann keeps the focus on the situation in which cognitive attitude turns out to be a meeting-coincidence of our cognitive categories and the structure of the object. What is important in the aesthetic contemplation is the moment of going beyond subjectivity, the movement to unreal, the unreal, which has a source outside of us. The originality of being of an aesthetic object is characterized by the presence of several sources of being, which Hartmann calls "levels of Reality". Another aspect of being of the work of art is the aspect of value. Art corresponds to the aesthetic value, which is based on all other types of values. However, the fundamental idea of Hartmann's aesthetic theory is the relationship of manifestation.

On the part of the object we deal with the relationship of manifestation itself. According to Hartmann there are two levels in the aesthetic object: the foreground level and the background level. So that the unreal manifests itself through the real. With a view to the subject the manifestation corresponds to the subject's ability of

contemplation, consisting of two levels, such as the contemplation of the first and of the second order. The first of them is sensual, the second is supersensual (in terms of Hartmann himself), penetrating the outer side of things. The relationship of manifestation, acting in the aesthetic field, forms the essence of the structure of the aesthetic object. The work of art reproduces the level structure of life, but in the field of the unreal.

Keywords: Nikolai Hartmann, German philosophy, ontology, levels of reality, aesthetic object

INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Nikolai Hartmann remains rather away from the main philosophical trends of the first half of the 20th century. Perhaps that is why his contribution to the history of philosophy is still not fully appreciated. The historians of philosophy consider N. Hartmann as a representative of phenomenology, as a follower of neo-Kantianism, as one of the founders of the particular philosophical current named "new ontology". In a few historical and philosophical studies devoted directly to the philosophy of Nikolai Hartmann, he appears primarily as an ontologist. Such an opinion is justified. The whole system of Hartmann's philosophy is really based on his ontological teaching. The aim of this study is to clarify the relationship between the ontological theory of Hartmann and his aesthetics.

"Aesthetics" is the work completing the system of Hartmann's philosophy. Attempting in his thought to cover the whole scope of philosophical knowledge, Hartmann includes in this area the aesthetic phenomenon. Hartmann reveals the specificity of his own position in the polemics against the subjective interpretations of the essence of art in neo-Kantianism, which approves, that the existence of an aesthetic object is completely derived from the existence of the perceiving subject.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

As the basis of our research we take two Hartmann's works: "On the Foundation of ontology" (Zur Grundlegung der Ontologie) and actually "Aesthetics". Using the methods of textual philosophical analysis of the key-texts of Hartmann, we will try to read his aesthetics in terms of finding ways to justify the ontological status of art. At the beginning we will attempt to clarify the motives of Hartmann's appeal to this problem. resorting to componential and hermeneutic methods of investigation. Here we will see that the main motive of Hartmann's theoretical transformations is the desire to keep for the object of knowledge a certain ontological status, which was lost from view in most of the conceptions criticized by Hartmann. Then we turn to the basics of ontological and epistemological theory of Hartmann in their relationship with the theory of aesthetic perception.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Ontological setting and the levels of being

At the very beginning of his "Aesthetics" Hartmann describes the fundamental difference between the positions of the philosopher, artist and contemplator. Only with the advent of philosophical reflection raises the interpretation of the experience of the beautiful. According to Hartmann, the experience of the work of art falls out of the sphere of aesthetic comprehension. The aesthetics is interested in the structure of an aesthetic object and the act of its contemplation. Philosophical research cannot claim to create a general scheme of rules for the generation of an aesthetic object, just as according to Kant only the genius himself can set these rules [1]. But he sets them like nature in a non-reflexive way. However we can make certain guidelines in the process of artistic contemplation and describe the generalized structure of the aesthetic subject. But at the stage of aesthetic reflection, another question arises: how does the aesthetic object itself exist? And here at least two ways of answering this question are possible. One way is the way of Kant, giving to the beautiful status of subjective universality without a concept. In this case, the question of how a beautiful object exists is transformed by Kant into the question of how we can talk about it, or, what is the same, how the intersubjective experience of beauty is possible (subjective universality). According to Kant, the experience of beauty encourages us to prove its universal significance. Thus, even within the framework of Kant's transcendentalism, the experience of beauty is still transcendent beyond its presence in our consciousness.

Let us now turn to the path following by Hartmann. And for this, it would be useful for us to turn to the basics of his epistemological theory, building on the so-called ontological setting. In the words of Hartmann, the ontological setting is in some sense close to natural setting. We cannot talk about anything without affecting its existence in one way or another. And so each of our thought relies on a certain ontological assumption. Hartmann characterizes his turn to ontology of cognition: "it is not enough to say that the turn is characterized by the understanding of the cognitive relationship as an existential relationship, cognitive act as a transcendent act, the subject as a "more-than-object", over-subject. Rather, we are talking about the return of the whole method of consideration to the natural setting, since "being as being" is generally perceptible only in it" [2]. In the cognitive act, only the subject changes, the subject does not form the object, the object itself is opened to the subject by the cognizable side. On this point shows Hartmann is similar to Heidegger's interpretation of Kant. According to Heidegger, existence is revealed to the man, in openness, in uncovered is the essence of Heidegger's understanding of the truth. For Hartman, a cognitive attitude is an existential attitude in which a subject and an object collide in their being. In this sense, Hartmann remains an Aristotelian, as he believes in the ordered world, to which man picks up the key throughout the history of his cognitive activity. "The analysis of the categories of being is at the same time the analysis of the basic principles that determine the successive aspects of things" [3]. For the complete coincidence of the structure of our

knowledge and the world is necessary that the categories of our knowledge have come a long way to adapt to the surrounding reality. "In Hartmann, as in Aristotle, the categories mean not only the substance but also the connotations of substance. In addition, unlike Aristotle, they are fundamental structures of the real world, principles immanent to the world"[4].

However, it is much more difficult to justify the ontological setting in relation to aesthetic objectivity, because the existence of an aesthetic object, obviously, can not be understood as a purely objective. But according to Hartman, it can not be also purely subjective. But what is the moment, provided in the structure of the act of aesthetic perception, makes Hartmann to criticize the subjectively-oriented theories, treating art as a projection of consciousness? This moment is the moment of pleasure, which characterizes the act of aesthetic perception as outward-directed consciousness: "Aesthetic pleasure is not self-directed pleasure, aesthetic pleasure is not self-gratification." [5] In other words, only the act of perception, which is directed outward, acquires aesthetic value. The aesthetic object is not a dominating formation. Any object can turn into an aesthetic phenomenon only through opening actions on the part of the subject of aesthetic perception.

Here we should again distract from purely aesthetic issues and turn to the basics of the ontological system of Hartmann. This refers to his theory of the levels of being. "The world is not two-leveled, it is at least four-leveled. Because there manifestly is, within what was summarily called nature, a clear dividing line between the living and the lifeless, the organic and the inorganic; there is here too a relation of supervenience (*Oberlagerungsrelation*), a difference in the structural levels of being (*Seinshöhe*)" [6]. So the inorganic, the organic, the psychic and spiritual levels of beings exist simultaneously, so that the lower levels of being acts as a support for the higher Ones. "From the lower level and resting on it, it elevates to a higher level where not all the categories of the first level return [...] almost as if they were made of a different material"[7].

Thus, their sequence cannot be understood by analogy with the Hegel sequence of forms of spirit development. The higher levels of beings do not remove the lower ones. We cannot assume the opposite, as if in fact there is only the lower levels of being - material, inorganic, and the rest are only the effects of its complex structure. We also shouldn't think that the multilevel structure of being is just a projection of our consciousness, a convenient cognitive model, superimposed on the disordered world. According to Hartman, the world is really ordered. Rather, here we have to talk about the relationship of dependence, or the superposition of levels over each other. "Each level of reality is constituted of a group of categories related by relations of superposition (*Überbauung*) or superformation (*Oberformung*)" [8]. So the higher ones lean on the lower ones. The lower level is the real level that serves as a support for the other levels. But is it and the other levels do not exist in "reality"? The fact is that for Hartmann being "real" is not the only mode of being, it is no more and no less significant than, for example, being "ideal". If

the first two lower levels exist in reality: the first as inanimate, the second as living, then the other two levels exist as superposed above the first two levels and do not belong to the "real" being.

3. Sources of existence of an aesthetic object

Complete independence of an aesthetic object from the subject of contemplation would mean that the object as an aesthetic object can exist according to the way of being-in-itself. And the beautiful can be considered as an inherent property of the thing. But this point of view is refuted not only by the fact that there are always conflicting opinions about the beauty of any object, but also by the fact that the beauty itself, according to Hartmann, exists only as a process of manifestation of the insensitive in the sensual.

A work of art is a special form of spiritual existence, called by Hartmann "objectified spirit", based in its existence on the level of being of the sensual. Considering the work of art as a spiritual one, Hartmann, thus, rejects the possible interpretations of the work of art as a projection of the individual author's consciousness. The spiritual level is a supra-individual formation. A work of art arises through the involvement of its author in the level of the universal spiritual. Thus, the spiritual (spirit) is attributed to the ability to self-objectification (fixation) in the sensual material through the creative activity of the artist (creating spirit). But this does not exhaust the list of elements involved in the formation of the aesthetic subject. In the end, only a living perceiving spirit, the subject of aesthetic contemplation, can lead to its the existence. "The producing spirit forms matter; he gives it a spiritual content because of it, but also closes it in it, so that the receiving spirit in his time only "opens" again, that is, must draw back from it." [9] The living spirit opens up where he's waiting for something to open. Only the subject who has taken an adequate aesthetic position can revive the objectified spirituality.

Thus, Hartmann identifies four sources of existence of works of art: the existence of a material thing; revealing the existence of the subject of aesthetic contemplation; the existence of an objective spirit; the existence of the producing spirit (author). As the creation of someone's hands (creating spirit), the work of art is the result of the objectification of the producing spirit, and therefore, in the hierarchy of the levels of being belongs to the highest level of spiritual existence. As a spiritual being, a work of art cannot exist without the levels of being that support it from below, it exists as the spiritual content of the material carrier. But as a form of objectified spirit, it fulfils another condition: "the spiritual content supported by the formed matter always needs the response of the living spirit." [10]

4. The relation of manifestation

The subject of aesthetic reflection as such is further the relation of manifestation of aesthetic value of the object and the process of its reading in aesthetic contemplation. Here comes into force the same idea of Hartmann, who worked in the creation of his epistemological theory: the coincidence of the

structure of existence and structures comprehending his consciousness. If the object itself must be beautiful, then we must also have a certain ability that opens the beautiful in the object. Conversely, to be able to open something, you need to have something to open.

The relation of manifestation can be considered from two sides: from the side of the object there is a relation of manifestation itself, from the side of the subject it corresponds to the ability of double kind of contemplation inherent in the subject. In the work of art we can distinguish two plans: as a thing among things, it really and objectively exists, but at the same time through its real existence, it gives its spiritual content to be manifested. The spiritual content in an artistic subject does not try to impersonate reality, because the status of reality nothing adds or reduced. It exists only as a manifestation, that is its way of being. The subject is moving towards the aesthetic subject opening to him. The relation of the manifestation makes sense only when there is a subject to whom something is manifesting. The relation of manifestation comes into force when there is a contemplating subject, able to see and distinguish the hierarchy of the levels of being. In the case of an aesthetic subject, the situation is supplemented by the fact that the very existence of an aesthetic object has one of its sources the existence of the subject opening it.

Hartmann's theory of perception has some specific points. First, he departs from Kant in the formulation of the question of transcendental capacities. But Hartmann didn't create a complex structure of the formation of objectivity. By Hartmann all this complicated procedure is reduced to the simple act of object perception. This simplification probably comes from the phenomenological orientation of Hartmann's view. Therefore the analysis of the integral act becomes primary, while the consideration of individual components of its moment stand aside.

Sensory perception forms the first level of aesthetic act, the second level corresponds to contemplation. By introducing this hierarchical sequence of acts, Hartmann makes it clear that a work of art is not amenable to conceptual definition. A work of art has an inextricable connection between the image and the spiritual content, and only the capacity of contemplation can see this connection. "a work of art has its essence in itself, the concept has it outside of itself." [11] Hartmann distinguishes two kinds of contemplation, or two sides of the same act of contemplation: the contemplation of the first and of the second order. Contemplation of the first order rests on sensual perception. But at the same time it is the contemplation of the second order, which detects manifestation of the non-sensual in the sensual.

How significant is the difference between the status of the process of manifestation in a natural object and in man on the one hand and in a work of art on the other? We can say that the process of manifestation itself is ontologically neutral in relation to the existential status of its constituent moments. It is impossible to say, for example, that the beautiful in nature is ontologically more reasonable than the beautiful in art. The phenomenon is in

principle unreal and does not claim to greater existential value. In this sense, the phenomenon is nothing more than a phenomenon.

In the structure of the aesthetic object Hartmann highlights the presence of the foreground and background. The foreground is the sensual basis for the manifestation of the posterior insensitive plan. The background is insensitive, spiritual, is split into a certain number of levels different for different types of art. Каждый слой (за исключением самого заднего) существует постольку, поскольку дает проявиться слою, стоящему за ним. The more distant a level is, the more abstract its content is. Each level except the posterior one exists in so far as it allows the level behind it to appear. For example, in music, the foreground is its sensually-perceived sound, and the background is a supersensitive sequence of musical sounds, the coherence of which should be provided by temporary and musical synthesis. A simple temporal synthesis should be supplemented by a musical synthesis that organizes sound sequences into a single semantic whole. The front level, the level of sensually perceived existence, participates in the relationship of manifestation only as an expressing element. The middle levels occupying the space between the front level and the sensually perceived back level of abstract ideas, have no other way of existence, except through the relationship of manifestation. Abstract ideas, which can make up the content of the back level itself, in principle, may exist in a different way than through their gradual level-by-level manifestation in an art work. They can exist directly in theoretical scientific or philosophical arguments. The level-by-level manifestation of abstract ideas in a work of art has a more convincing effect than when these ideas are expressed directly. Hartmann explains this by saying that in everyday life the meeting with abstract ideas is always mediated by a meeting with real things and events. The abstract is much closer if it appears before us in an indirect form.

Another aspect of being a work of art by Hartmann is the value aspect. Hartmann analyzes the existence of values as opposed to the position of the Marburg school of neo-Kantianism. The aesthetic value is attributed by Hartmann to the spiritual, since the aesthetic value of the object depends not on the sensually given, as in the pleasant, but on the relation of the phenomena, on all their connections or on the equivalent relation of the form to these phenomena"[12]. Art corresponds to the aesthetic value, justified by all other types of values, but not reduced to them. The existence of aesthetic phenomena can be considered as the existence of possible. The aesthetic value of the work of art exists as the possible, and does not extend its claims to the sphere of the real (truth) or the sphere of the due (ethics) [13].

CONCLUSION

The problem of the ontological status of art in Hartmann appears from three sides. On the one hand, art is considered as an aesthetic phenomenon, the specificity of which implies four sources of its existence (the existence of a material thing as a basis, a material carrier; the existence of the subject of aesthetic

contemplation; the existence of an objective spirit; the existence of author). Art as a spiritual formation cannot exist outside the support on the sensual basis, it is the result of objectification of spiritual content. But a work of art can also not be considered only as a projection of the consciousness of the subject, the same real source of its existence is the aesthetic object itself.

On the other hand, the problem of the ontological status of art is considered through the prism of the so-called relationship of manifestation. This is a continuation of the well-known idea of Hartmann about the leveled structure of existence, which in this case is applied to the description of the structure of the aesthetic object. A work of art has a special way of existence through the manifestation of the sensual in the insensitive, unreal in the real. The manifestation of the existence of an aesthetic object is provided by our ability to aesthetic contemplation. At the same time, the ontological status of a work of art cannot be reduced to being unreal, but to the dynamics of its manifestation in the real. If the beauty is determined by the relationship of the invisible manifestation in the visible, then it can be given a very special ontological status: it is the status of coincidence of objective and subjective.

The third way to the construction of ontology of art by Hartman is through the justification of aesthetic values. The aesthetic value of the work of art belongs to the sphere of the possible, in which the artist's freedom is limited only by the need to link the work of art with the vital truth.

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