

Nova Law Review

Volume 14, Issue 2

1990

Article 19

The Role of Creativity in Social and Political Processes

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Abstract

Creativity, art and the artist, rather than simply embellishing society and constituting “culture,” can have a real pragmatic and effective role in the entire social process.

Philosophy of Law and Art

The Role of Creativity in Social and Political Processes

Gustave Harrow*

Creativity, art and the artist, rather than simply embellishing society and constituting "culture," can have a real pragmatic and effective role in the entire social process. This role arises in answer to society's tendency, generally, to stabilize itself in favor of the existing power structure through lies which anesthetize. Because of this anesthetization, creativity, as a truth-seeker plays a highly significant role in society.

The dominant organs of society are attempting to tranquilize society through various media in a way that will not permit dislodging of the existing power structure or rapid changes in that structure. This action discloses a disregard for life itself and especially spiritual life. The significance of creativity through art and the artist is that it opposes the maintenance of the status quo of the power structure by searching for truth. Thus, in our contemporary world, creativity becomes a necessity in saving our spiritual lives. Through its search for truth, creativity opposes the manner in which the modern world secures the power structure—which is determined to instill a certain numbness of feelings—by anesthetizing and lying through various media.

The power elite can stabilize itself only through inuring society to the vast cruelties, both domestic and abroad, which emotionally deaden the human spirit and inner core. This again dis-

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closes a disregard for the essences of life. The failure of humanness in the modern world results in loss of compassion, empathy and sympathy. The truth-seeking role of art and creative processes saves us from being receptive to lies and cruelties, which foster this deadening of the human mind and spirit. Humanity seeks meaning, which cannot be obtained without this pursuit of truth. This has been true since the dawn of humanity, when cavemen drew their understanding of nature—the sun, the rain and their natural habitat—in caves.

The vast population is deceived into believing that they have a certain spiritual and emotional life when in fact that life is rapidly being eroded. The power elite administers this narcotic effect by portraying the ideologies of our society in a way which is deceptive; this anesthetizing effect is administered not simply through physical or chemical narcotics, but also through psychological and sociological means. These seductive methods are effected by various inducements represented through advertising in the portrayal of what is true, beautiful and heroic. Thus, lies are perpetuated as to the meaning of the dominant ideology of the day, or as to the facts of the ideology itself.

Art can and has functioned as a very real tool in exposing the lies that are perpetuated and reinforced by almost every mass media. In this way art can be said to have the capacity to save our spiritual lives. In other words, the lives that are below the surface need exposure to the truth to survive. Art and the artist, and creativity, therefore, can be seen as the exact opposing parallels to the vehicles employed in the numbing of the human spirit. Art, in its search for truth, enables the piercing of the narcotic effect; which of course is the antithesis of the lying effects of narcotics whether they are actual, physical narcotics, or whether they are a social vehicle for controlling the mind. Art and creativity have the capacity to pierce the veil which sets in when narcotics are taken to excess.

Creativity involves a precise attack on the pervasive lies that are perpetuated by society's power structure. Art has been part of humanity since cavemen began portraying an understanding of their perception of nature on cave walls. Art and creativity enable human beings to relate to other human beings in a form of

love, which is the bond of humanity and the essence of life. To be indifferent to cruelties and suffering is in itself a cruelty and hardens the inner self, making it difficult to relate to other human beings. Art saves us from being numbed to the suffering around us.