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ESTETYKA WIATA ZWIERZ T W UJ CIU JERZEGO CHMURZY SKIEGO

AESTHETICS OF THE ANIMAL WORLD IN THE WORK OF JERZY CHMURZY SKI

Streszczenie

Estetyka zajmuje się rzeczami pięknymi i związanymi z tym przeżyciami. Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński, biolog i filozof, „ojciec polskiej etologii”, zadaje pytanie o obecność wartości estetycznych w świecie zwierząt. W analizie porównawczej zachowań ludzkich i zwierzęcych posługuje się pojęciem zjawisk estetycznych, na które składają się trzy terminy: przeżycia estetyczne, działania estetyczne i twórczości estetycznych. W odniesieniu do zwierząt formułuje nowy termin zjawisk quasi-estetycznych. Do najbardziej wyrafinowanych należą działania pro-estetyczne (np. rysownie przez małpy). Rodzi się pytanie czy można mówić o twórczości zwierzęcej. Analiza zagadnienia pokazuje, że bardziej adekwatnym określeniem opisującym należą do quasi-estetyki działania pro-estetyczne jest zaproponowany w niniejszej pracy termin quasi-twórczości. Ta zdolność jest zaś rodzajem ludzkiej twórczości estetycznej.

Słowa kluczowe: etologia, piękno, twórczość, quasi-estetyka

Abstract

Aesthetics is concerned with beauty and the experiences associated with it. Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński, a biologist and philosopher often referred to as the "father of Polish ethology," questions the presence of aesthetic values in the animal world. In his comparative analysis of human and animal behaviors, he employs the concept of aesthetic phenomena, which encompasses three key terms: aesthetic experiences, aesthetic actions, and creative aesthetic experiences. In relation to animals, he formulates a new term for quasi-aesthetic phenomena. Among the most refined of these are pro-aesthetic actions, such as drawing by monkeys. This raises the question of whether one can speak of animal creativity. The examination of this issue reveals that a more appropriate term to describe the pro-aesthetic actions within the realm of quasi-aesthetics is the proposed term quasi-creativity. This capacity represents the nascent form of human aesthetic creativity.

Keywords: ethology, beauty, creativity, quasi-aesthetics

Introduction

Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński (1929–2019) was a prominent Polish entomologist and ethologist who also engaged with philosophical issues¹. He can be regarded as one of the global pioneers in theoretical research concerning the biological foundations of aesthetic phenomena². In his work, he poses the question of the presence of aesthetics in the animal world, seeking the biological roots of art and the sources of human aesthetic preferences. He approaches this inquiry from the perspective of ethology, also known as the biology of behavior. The subject matter of ethology encompasses all living organisms capable of behavior, ranging from the simplest forms, such as protozoa and aquatic plants, to humans. Like other biological sciences, it addresses the preliminary question of "what?" while also posing causal questions—"why?"—as well as teleonomic inquiries regarding biological purpose, ontogenetic questions about developmental progression, and phylogenetic questions concerning evolutionary development within species. Ethology primarily investigates the behaviors of wild animals in natural conditions, as well as in laboratory settings or zoos. The main research method employed is the description of typical behaviors characteristic of specific species. In detailed studies examining the causes and functions of particular behaviors, laboratory and field experiments are utilized, incorporating controlled sources of aesthetic stimuli, such as light and sound, as well as models that trigger instinctive responses. These investigations lead to the establishment of behavioral patterns, which are subsequently classified and compared. By applying mathematical and statistical methods, rigid patterns that are common across the population and represent hereditary behavioral traits are identified. A key concept in ethology is instinct, which is studied alongside behavioral rhythms, spatial orientation, and motivation. Adopting the tenets of evolutionary theory, ethology stands in opposition to claims regarding the absolute separation of human and animal nature.

¹ Professor Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński was a long-standing member of the Nencki Institute of Experimental Biology of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, where he conducted field research analyzing the behavior of the sand wasp (*Bembix rostrata*) and laboratory studies on photic responses in insects. He was the founder and first president of the Polish Ethological Society, and, as vice-chair, was involved in the work of the Multidisciplinary Team of the University of Warsaw and the State Archaeological Museum in studies on the Species-Specificity of Humans. A distinguished academic lecturer, he co-authored a Polish textbook on behavioral sciences with Bogdan Sadowski. Ewa Jadwiga Godzińska, "Prof. dr hab. Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński (11.03.1929–1.07.2019): entomolog, etolog, filozof, człowiek renesansu," *Wszech wiat* 120, no. 10–12 (2019): 253–267.

² Ewa Jadwiga Godzińska, "Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński (1929–2019): etolog, entomolog, my licieł," *Kosmos. Problemy nauk biologicznych* 69, no. 2 (2020): 253.

Chmurzy ski employs methods characteristic of ethology to address the issue of the presence of aesthetic values in the animal world, comparing animal behaviors aimed at acquiring these values with human behavior. Aesthetics, being concerned with beauty and the associated experiences, utilizes concepts defined within an anthropocentric framework. In the world around us, it is humans who possess the capacity for reflection and the ability to employ the abstract concept of beauty. It is only within human culture that we encounter evaluations of phenomena and objects in terms of beauty, culminating in art, which is a product of human creativity. By comparing animal behaviors to human artistic endeavors, Chmurzy ski formulates a new category that he designates as quasi-aesthetics. Expanding upon the thoughts of the Warsaw ethologist, one can illustrate both the similarities and fundamental differences between human artistic creativity and analogous behaviors in animals, thereby designating them as quasi-creativity.

1. Behavioral Approach to the Study of Aesthetic Phenomena in Animals

In his search for aesthetics in the animal kingdom, Chmurzy ski adopts an operational meaning by posing the question: can animals find anything pleasing or displeasing in their environment? He first delineates how humans behaviorally relate to beauty and ugliness, subsequently examining whether similar behaviors can be observed in animals. In doing so, he introduces the term "aesthetic phenomena," which denotes sensory experiences, actions, and experiences associated with evaluations of beauty and ugliness. Aesthetic phenomena encompass three intuitively understandable concepts: aesthetic experiences, aesthetic actions, and creative aesthetic experiences³.

"Aesthetic experiences are specific, subjective sensations that arise from the perception (or imagination) of visual or auditory stimuli, accompanied by a strong, distinctive emotional response that can be measured on a scale from pleasant to unpleasant. The source of stimuli that elicits a pleasure devoid of direct biological significance is termed beautiful, while that which provokes discomfort is referred to as ugly."⁴ A key element of the above definition is the subjective experience of emotions (aesthetic pleasure and displeasure). The ethological description of aesthetic experience is grounded in objective, observational behavioral manifestations. The experience of pleasure or displeasure is associated with

³ Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, *The Peculiarity of Man 7* (2002): 494.

⁴ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 495.

changes in the functioning of the respiratory, muscular, circulatory, and secretion systems, as well as changes in behavior and vocalization. In comparing the mental lives of animals and humans, Chmurzy ski employs introspection with the caveat that this reasoning is uncertain due to analogy. Such attempts rely on the homology and similar structure of the brain regions involved in the response to specific stimuli in both animals and humans. If a stimulus activates the neuroanatomical substrate in the human brain, accompanied by physiological and behavioral reactions (e.g., jumping for joy or vocalization), indicating a specific subjective psychological component of emotion, and if similar factors activate the homologous center in another vertebrate, resulting in comparable reactions, it is likely that the animal experiences subjective psychological phenomena homologous to human experiences. This mode of reasoning rests on the assumption of the law of identity of responses, suggesting that the subjective reactions of the animal being studied are probably similar to those of humans. However, it is essential to adhere to the principle of evolutionary developmental levels, which guarantees the homology of neural structures responsible for the examined behavioral phenomena. Therefore, it is nonsensical to compare subjective experiences in humans with non-homologous invertebrates, such as insects, or even with more primitive homologous organisms, such as fish, amphibians, reptiles, or birds⁵.

In the context of behavioral correlates of emotions, the following forms of behavioral responses can be observed in higher vertebrates and humans: a complete lack of behavioral reaction, total freezing, suspension of ongoing movement or reflexive behavior (e.g., grooming), responses oriented toward external stimuli (such as turning the head in a targeting reflex, selecting one of several stimuli, or extending a limb), or withdrawal from a given stimulus. Behavioral reactions may not be directed toward or away from a particular external stimulus (e.g., vocalization, jumping, clapping).

However, Chmurzy ski notes that we do not possess any behavioral or physiological indicators that would reliably correlate the subjective component—*aesthetic pleasure*—with components of vegetative reactions or voluntary movements. In studying the behavioral reactions of animals, we lack insight into their subjective experiences. According to the perspective presented by Kazimierz Kłusak, discussions concerning animal aesthetics take on

⁵ In specific cases of instrumental and vocal displays, Chmurzy ski in his comparative reflections turns to birds. Despite the lack of homology in the neural basis for quasi-aesthetic experiences among birds, which are unrelated to mammals, one may consider a more distant kinship manifesting in biological analogies through homeotic genes.

a philosophical character, which cannot be directly addressed by the results of natural sciences⁶.

"An aesthetic action is a form of behavior exhibited by a living subject that evokes an aesthetic experience in the recipient."⁷ In relation to the animal world, Chmurzy ski gradates the understanding of this term into weak—when the action of an animal or its effect elicits an aesthetic experience solely in humans; strong—when it evokes an aesthetic experience in another animal (most often of the same species); and particularly strong—when the aesthetic action is intended to elicit aesthetic experiences in other individuals. In this context, the recipient of these actions includes not only another individual but also the acting subject. The influence may be direct, as in the case of singing, dancing, or pantomime, or indirect, when the effect of aesthetic actions manifests in the form of an artwork.

A behavioral manifestation of creative aesthetic experiences is the ability of primates to paint with markers and paints. Individuals trained in such activities engage in these behaviors because they derive pleasure from them. They exhibit various styles of handling markers or compositional abilities. In the case of animals, creative experiences may be based on biological motivation or may lack an instinctual foundation; however, they always possess a genetic basis characterized by an absence of clear determinism. Such actions are not goal-directed in an intentional manner and do not constitute creativity in the strictest sense.

2. Quasi-Aesthetic Phenomena in Animal Behavior

Chmurzy ski introduces a new concept regarding animals: quasi-aesthetic phenomena. This overarching term comprises three elements—para-aesthetic, proto-aesthetic, and pro-aesthetic phenomena—with the first two categorized as somewhat pre-aesthetic⁸.

Para-aesthetic phenomena are linked to instinctual drives. An animal exhibits a preference for stimuli that may vary in triggering parameters. For instance, when selecting a mate of the same species, the choice is influenced by external appearance, song, voice, posture, performance, or actions⁹. A peacock with more eyes on its tail, a nightingale that

⁶ Kazimierz Kłusak, *Z teorii i metodologii filozofii przyrody* (Poznań : Księgarnia w. Wojciech, 1980), 123–160.

⁷ Chmurzy ski, „Piękno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 506.

⁸ Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski. „Ethologist's considerations on biological roots of aesthetic phenomena”, in: *International Symposium Biological Evolution, Bari, Italy, 9–14.04.1985*, ed. Vittorio Pesce Delfino (Bari: Adriatica Editrice, 1987), 229.

⁹ Animal poses and displays are sometimes described as a show or exhibition. They represent an expression of inherited, instinctive behavior that impacts the emotions of the observer and serves as a trigger for appropriate behaviors. A pose is static, such as the male's display posture during courtship or the female's pre-copulatory

sings beautifully, or a crane that performs an impressive dance are all preferred. We can observe para-aesthetic phenomena even among insects. Eumenes wasps construct nests from clay that resemble swollen Mauritanian vessels. While the structure is genetically determined (not a manifestation of quasi-aesthetics), the decorative choices reflect para-aesthetic preferences. Female *Eumenes amedei* adorn their nests with different grains, showing a preference for smooth, clear, and shiny materials¹⁰. In certain spider and fly behaviors, gifting a captured insect as a nuptial offering is part of courtship¹¹. These gifts can serve practical purposes, as seen in the case of Adélie penguins (*Pygoscelis adeliae*), where females prefer stones of a red hue. The satin bowerbird (*Ptilonorhynchus violaceus*) attracts females by constructing a bower made of twigs and adorning it with colorful flowers, berries, or mushrooms, particularly favoring blue and yellow-green colors. Furthermore, the New Guinea gardener performs courtship displays with a flower in its beak in a prepared garden area before building its bower¹². Assessment of other individuals of the same species based on their para-aesthetic actions follows the principle of handicap¹³.

Proto-aesthetic phenomena relate to stimuli that do not provoke instinctual drives. Here, aesthetic experiences result from simple, natural stimuli like color or sound. Humans often marvel at phenomena such as rainbows, sunsets, the colors of the sky, colorful stones, or shiny shells. The desire that arises manifests as a yearning for contact or possession, such as collecting beautiful shells, autumn leaves, or butterflies. Simple stimuli can form figures (in the psychological sense) that represent complexes derived from various shapes, patterns, or sounds, like colorful leaves, flowers, rhythmic insect sounds, or harmonious bird songs. Animals exhibit attraction and aversion to aesthetic stimuli without clear biological significance. For example, chimpanzees attentively observe sunsets, potentially experiencing aesthetic pleasure¹⁴.

Preferences often appear static, like a hierarchy of colors manifesting in the avoidance or desire for certain hues. Magpies, for instance, have a non-instinctual interest in shiny

stance. Displays are dynamic; characteristic movements are often accompanied by specific head positions and sounds, such as the dances of cranes during courtship.

¹⁰ Jean Henri Fabre, *Dziwy instynktu u owadów i paj ków*, transl. Maria Górska, Henryk Lindelfeld (Warszawa: Spółdzielnia Wydawnicza Wiedza, 1948), 164–166.

¹¹ The nuptial gift in this case redirects the female's aggression toward the preyed insect, thereby saving the male's life.

¹² Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzyński, Magdalena Weker, „Ceremonie w świecie zwierząt”, *Nurt SVD* 45, 2 (2011): 29–42.

¹³ Signals emitted by animals, especially in the context of mate selection, are reliable when considering the relationship between the size of the signal, its costs, and the benefits derived from it. The male may convince the female of the good genes of future offspring through his appearance and behavior, where the para-aesthetic qualities serve as both a signal and a promise of function.

¹⁴ Adriaan Kortlandt, „Chimpanzees in the wild”, *Scientific American* 206 (1962): 128–140.

objects, which they readily appropriate. In contrast, the color hierarchy among monkeys can be individual and occasionally changeable. Studies on humans and animals reveal a preference for patterns based on the so-called golden ratio, possibly influenced by binocular vision and visual field range¹⁵. In sexual selection, symmetry in a partner's appearance provides reliable information about their quality. Both animals and humans favor objects that embody a sense of unified diversity, characterized by segmented and symmetrical patterns with continuity of lines.

Proto-aesthetic phenomena may also arise from auditory stimuli, where rhythmicity can affect the physiological or behavioral rhythm. In experiments with the magpie-robin (*Copsychus malabaricus*), the tested bird sang in time with a ticking metronome; when the tempo changed, the bird adjusted its melody accordingly. Birds like canaries and goldfinches "play" with instrumental music, using their beaks to create loud buzzing by pressing between two wires, and while engaged in this activity, they often cease to sing attentively¹⁶. "It can be argued that at the roots of musical activity lies a playful element, as the animal may seek to maintain acoustic sensorystasy—an individual tendency to uphold a specific level of sensory stimulation that leads to an optimal state of arousal within the brain structures for a given sensory modality."¹⁷

Research with pigeons has shown their ability to differentiate one-minute excerpts of classical music pieces. Trained birds were later able to recognize these pieces based on any fragments selected from twenty-minute segments¹⁸. In England, wintering larks were observed singing presumably "for pleasure," as the territorial context was absent during this time. Australian striated wrens (*Estildinae*) and Indian munias (*Lonchura punctulata*) hold concerts for their entire flocks. One male intones a loud fanfare, interrupting the ongoing chatter and drawing the attention of other birds, which come closer, tilting their heads to listen to the melody. These concerts last about fifteen minutes, becoming increasingly elaborate and quieter. It seems that such performances bring equal enjoyment to both the performer and the listeners. These behaviors suggest that besides the biological purposes of territory marking and courtship, singing and listening birds may derive pleasure from the experience.

¹⁵ John Zachary Young, *Programy mózgu* (Warszawa: PWN, 1984), 340.

¹⁶ Jan Sokołowski, *Tajemnice ptaków* (Warszawa: Nasza Księgarnia, 1980), 132.

¹⁷ Chmurzyński, „Piękno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 508.

¹⁸ Debra Porter, Allen Neuringer, „Music Discriminations by Pigeons”, *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Animal Behavior Processes* 2 (1984): 138–148.

Rhythm can serve as the basis for preferred musical patterns among various animal species¹⁹. Trained Syrian hamsters, taught to turn off a speaker, tolerated musical segments longest when they matched their running pace on a wheel. "Dancing" elephants have also been observed in a zoo, responding noticeably to the type of music played at a nearby concert shell. Sensitivity to vibration frequency represents a food stimulus for spiders. Ignacy Paderewski recounts an anecdote about a spider that slid down from the ceiling whenever he practiced Chopin's *Étude in G-sharp minor, Op. 25, No. 6*, and immediately returned to the ceiling when he began a different piece²⁰. Chmurzy ski suggests that "proto-aesthetic preferences may have a genetic link to para-aesthetic preferences, perhaps due to the 'radiation' of food or sexual preferences—this seems to occur in certain insects; and perhaps this is their indirect 'further cause.'"²¹

The most sophisticated quasi-aesthetic phenomena, such as instances of painting by monkeys and elephants, fall under pro-aesthetic phenomena. "Homologous beginnings of aesthetics related to visual perception can be found... in monkeys as a tendency toward composition similar to primitive human aesthetics, but manifesting only under specific circumstances of organized human experiments."²² Studies on chimpanzees reveal a preference for symmetry and balanced compositions. When presented with outlines of geometric shapes, chimpanzees completed the given shapes according to aesthetic and compositional correctness principles. However, spontaneous scribbles made by chimpanzees are not designed and lack content. A painting chimpanzee, if it remains interested in the task, typically produces a sheet that is entirely colored in. The non-content-driven creations of chimpanzees exhibit certain formal aspects, and their complexity can be compared to the drawings of a one-year-old child (while two-year-olds produce drawings at a higher level). However, there are cases of monkey creativity that may have an object-oriented nature—"once, a three-and-a-half-year-old chimp named Moja spontaneously drew a few lines with chalk on a board; when asked 'what is it?' she indicated it was a bird; on another occasion, she drew a 'strawberry' at request." Similarly, the gorilla Koko, after a conversation about

¹⁹ In this context, the so-called Mozart effect is cited, which, in relation to animals listening to the music of this composer, is supposed to produce spectacular results—cows allegedly produce more milk, and pigs have greater fat gains, supposedly due to the rhythm of the music being played. However, there are no conclusive studies that confirm these assumptions. John S. Jenkins, "The Mozart Effect," *Journal of the Royal Society of Medicine* 9 (2001): 170–172, accessed December 2, 2023, <https://doi.org/10.1177/0141076801094004044>.

²⁰ Ignacy Jan Paderewski, *Pami tniki* (Kraków: PWM, 1984), 123–125.

²¹ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 521.

²² Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski, *Etopsychniczne granice mi dzy zwierz tami a człowiekiem*, in: *Kontrowersje wokół pocz tków człowieka*, ed. Grzegorz Bugajak, Jacek Tomczyk (Katowice: Ksi garnia w Jacka, 2007), 28.

spiders, scribbled in several places with a pencil and explained it as “spiders.”²³ The drawings of monkeys appear to be a pro-aesthetic precursor to human artistic creativity and may be accompanied by aesthetic experiences; however, such aesthetic actions should be regarded as “weak,” since the effects of these actions evoke aesthetic experiences only in humans. Unlike monkeys, elephants do not create new patterns or independently design their work²⁴; their painting is a product of training, yet the precision and sensitivity of these animals are astonishing. “In light of the ‘leap’ (in the sense of emergentism) in anthropoid apes, leading to the emergence of pro-aesthetic actions—such as the tendency to draw and paint when instructed by humans—it is difficult for evolutionists to see why phenomena in the strict sense in humans would not have ‘animal’ roots.”²⁵ Chmurzy ski posits that the emergence of this ability in elephants results from convergent evolution²⁶.

One can observe the continuity of quasi-aesthetic abilities from higher primates (great apes) to humans, although they should be regarded separately in terms of plastic and musical activities. Jane van Lawick-Goodall describes a “rain dance” of chimpanzees, performed at the start of the rainy season. The males involved would respond to a signal from one of their own, who began to shift from foot to foot with an increasing crescendo of snorts and hoots. They would then race down a slope, tearing off and shaking branches in the air. One participant in the “dance,” standing near a tree, would rhythmically sway it back and forth. Male chimpanzees greet the rainy season in this manner, though usually individually²⁷. “The so-called ‘rain dances’ of chimpanzees can be considered precursors to certain cultural elements—although they are not actually dances; they are connected to seasonal meteorological phenomena. It is hypothetically possible to assume that such ethological roots might be associated with astronomically and meteorologically linked human midsummer celebrations.”²⁸ In chimpanzees living in zoos, one observes a dance performed by individuals forming a circle around a tree, accompanied by a type of proto-music in the form of hoots, grunts, claps, foot stamping, and drumming on tree trunks and hollow logs. “Dances” among animals are not associated with music, although they are sometimes accompanied by

²³ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 516.

²⁴ Vitaly Komar, Alexander Malemid, *When elephants paint* (New York: Harper, 2001).

²⁵ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 521.

²⁶ Similarly, in the case of the painting ability of capuchins, Chmurzy ski posits the acquisition of this skill through convergent evolution. Assuming the acquisition of this ability at this stage of evolution would imply that all primate species originally possessed such abilities, and that in some, these abilities gradually regressed over time.

²⁷ Jane van Lawick-Goodall, *W cieniu człowieka*, transl. Gabriela Bujalska-Grum, Leszek Grum (Warszawa: PWN, 1974), 75–77.

²⁸ Chmurzy ski, „Etopsychiczne granice mi dzy zwierz tami a człowiekiem”, 33.

vocalizations. Typically, they are related to courtship and are performed according to a fixed pattern of genetically programmed, inherited displays composed of sequences of postures, vocalizations, and movements triggered by appropriate stimuli. However, one also observes a "dance" in common cranes, which occurs outside the mating season and is associated with good spirits, potentially qualifying it as a proto-aesthetic phenomenon.

3. Quasi-Aesthetic Behaviors of Animals in the Context of Human Creativity

Human aesthetics and animal quasi-aesthetics relate to beauty, which, as a value, can be discovered, contemplated, and created. The discovery of beauty (that which is pleasing) by animals manifests itself in proto-aesthetic phenomena. Para-aesthetic behaviors are connected to stimuli that have primarily biological significance rather than aesthetic preferences. The ethological description of aesthetic experiences related to proto-aesthetic phenomena concerns subjective emotional experiences accompanying the influence of stimuli that induce pleasure, lacking any biological significance. Chmurzy ski, however, cautions that comparing the psychological life of humans and animals (while respecting the principle of adhering to evolutionary levels) is an uncertain reasoning by analogy. Ethology is interested in the behavioral context of these emotions; however, there are no indicators that definitively link aesthetic experiences with observed vegetative reactions or voluntary movements. The most evolutionarily advanced animal aesthetic experiences can be classified as pro-aesthetic phenomena. Thus, can we speak of the aesthetic creativity of animals?

Creativity in human behavior means "causing effects (works or behaviors) that are simultaneously valuable and significantly new."²⁹ In the context of beauty, human creativity is associated with art. For the ancient Greeks, the concept of creation was not linked to art, as it was seen as the skill of discovering beauty and the laws governing it to apply them in artistic work. Truly creative activity (although the term "creativity" had yet to emerge) was reserved for poets, who were not bound by the rules of the art of their time, but were free in their decisions to bring new worlds into existence. During the medieval period, the emphasis shifted to the act of creation, understood as making something from nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*), and was reserved exclusively for God. In the 19th century, the term "creator" entered

²⁹ Andrzej Grzegorzcyk, *Psychiczna osobliwość człowieka*, (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo Naukowe Scholar, 2003), 121.

the domain of art and became synonymous with an artist, who did not so much create something from nothing as create something new³⁰.

To illustrate the specificity of creativity, one can contrast it with its opposite, namely template-based action, where "there exists, as it were, an exact recipe and the acting individual applies it 'automatically'."³¹ This can be termed algorithmic action, which consists of recognizing a procedure (algorithm) leading to the attainment of a goal and applying it. Such action may be unconscious, instinctive, or consciously adopted and implemented. Behavior determined by biological causality is devoid of a decision-making moment. Proto-aesthetic phenomena in birds, such as "concerts" and "dances," devoid of biological goals (territorial significance or courtship), are executed according to genetically programmed patterns and therefore lack novelty. Moments of creativity in human life are those in which individuals do not conform to a template. Human creativity, from a metaphysical perspective, seems to transcend the biological existence of man. It results in the emergence of a being that has not existed before and is not determined by anything that currently exists. That which arises in the moment of creation previously lay beyond the imagination and will of the creator.

Pro-aesthetic phenomena, such as the examples of painting by monkeys and elephants, occur in the context of organized experiments. Instructed monkeys adhere to certain compositional rules, yet their "paintings" usually do not represent anything. However, there are instances that Chmurzy ski describes as the dawn of objectivity, where monkeys communicating with their caretakers using sign language responded to the question of what they had painted³². One might, however, question whether the names provided by the monkeys accurately correspond to the intended objects in their representations³³. Unlike humans, monkeys in nature never paint spontaneously. The drawings created by trained monkeys or elephants lack communicative function—other individuals do not view them. All animals ignore works of art created by humans, except for faithful representations of other individuals, which, however, do not have aesthetic significance but act as key stimuli that may denote, for example, prey or a predator.

The impact of aesthetic action on humans is connected not only with sensitivity to aesthetic stimuli but also with knowledge of the aesthetic criteria prevailing at a given time and within a specific community. The artist's action is intentional; in a deliberate manner, and

³⁰ Today, the term *creativity* refers to the ability to produce new and valuable things. Novelty appears not only in art but also in science and technology. Władysław Tatarkiewicz, *Dzieje sztuki* (Warsaw: PWN, 1976), 288–311.

³¹ Grzegorzki, *Psychiczna osobliwość człowieka*, 123.

³² Chmurzy ski, „Pikareska i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 516.

³³ Marta Bagnowska, „Szympan «sapiens»?”, *Problemy* 4 (1977): 38–39.

the effects of their work (when fulfilling positive aesthetic criteria) can be termed a work of art. “Thus, art is a domain of human creativity leading to the creation of beautiful works or conveying important information through aesthetic means (sometimes even employing ugliness).”³⁴

Animal behaviors reveal their drive to satisfy basic needs, which Chmurzy ski terms biological values and defines as “biological, non-rational compasses that would allow them (both animals and humans) to recognize what is good or bad in their behavior and in their surrounding world and its interaction with them.”³⁵ The Warsaw-based ethologist identifies three fundamental biological values: maintaining individual homeostasis, striving for maximum adaptability, and ensuring well-being. Humans, like other species, pursue the realization of these values in their lives, yet do so not through reflexes and drives inherited from their primate ancestors—human behavior must be the fruit of free will guided by reason and rationality³⁶. In addition to biological values, humans pursue higher spiritual and religious values.

Humans share with other species a quasi-aesthetic level of sensory-emotional and perceptual-instinctual experiences; however, they are the only ones to have achieved a symbolic-social level with archetypal symbolism and an abstract-aesthetic level, that is, a cognitive level based on cultural conventional symbolism³⁷. In this way, not only emotions but also ideas are transmitted, which contain shared patterns of reaction and understanding of the world manifested in symbolic content, myths, beliefs, and dreams. *Homo sapiens* is the only species that exhibits spontaneous creativity of a non-instinctual nature. “Only humans—using archetypal and conventional symbols—can express in art not only (as a monkey does) fleeting emotions but also their thoughts. Only humans employ thoughtful composition in their works—and only humans can harness ugliness in artistic expression, not to mention that

³⁴ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 507.

³⁵ Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski, „Dobro i zło w kategoriach wartości biologicznych” in: *Materiały z konferencji „Tradycyjne i współczesne systemy wartości. Przeciwnie stwo pierwsze: Dobro i Zło”* (Staszów, December 10–12, 1999), ed. Andrzej Wierci ski (Warsaw–Kielce: Zakład Antropologii Ogólnej Katedry Filozofii Współczesnej, Wydział Zarządzania i Administracji Akademii w tokrzyskiej w Kielcach – Department of General Anthropology, Department of Contemporary Philosophy, Faculty of Management and Administration, Kielce University of Technology, 2000), 260.

³⁶ Chmurzy ski, „Etopsychiczne granice między zwierzętami a człowiekiem”, 36.

³⁷ An archetypal stimulus pattern could be a skeleton or a heart. The presence of archetypal patterns dates back to the origins of humans on Earth, exemplified by a Paleolithic drawing from the Pindal cave of a young mammoth (Chmurzy ski classifies it as a forest elephant *Palaeoloxodon antiquus* based on its graceful morphological features), dated to the Upper Paleolithic, around 18,000 years ago, on which a heart is depicted.

only humans utilize language."³⁸ Humans have replaced the pseudo-symbolism of the animal world with conscious arbitrary symbolism.

The remarkable effects of para-aesthetic activities, such as the bird-built bowers, are indeed analogous to human behaviors (e.g., related to attire, makeup, etc.) aimed at attracting the attention of the opposite sex. However, these actions are predominantly iconic rather than symbolic, narrowly determined by function and application. Animal painting serves as a form of expression—symptomatic in nature—whereas human artistic creation is an informational transmission rooted in cultural heritage. A work of art, besides beauty (or ugliness and the fascination it entails), carries specific content; even in the case of non-verbal arts, it may be described as "interesting" or "conveying an important message."

Creativity is facilitated by the uniqueness of human behavior, which is characterized by causal indeterminacy. Humans liberate themselves from template-based actions and engage in creative endeavors, transcending given patterns by choosing alternatives or opting for entirely new actions. "From a general philosophical perspective, it can be considered that accurately capturing such a moment is not possible; we can only state, with a certain approximation, that it has occurred. The moment of creativity is, after all, a moment of freedom. It is a moment in which the metaphysical freedom of the human individual is realized. And we are unable to grasp the true limits of our freedom."³⁹ Freedom can be regarded as a metaphysical trait (beyond biological categories) that determines the species-specific singularity of humans, without which a complete description of human behavior is unattainable. In daily life, we hold the belief in our internal freedom in making life decisions, and the paradigm acknowledging human freedom underpins all our choices⁴⁰.

The indeterminacy of our behavior significantly exceeds the level of indeterminacy observed in animal behaviors. Freedom is the attribute that primarily stands out to an average observer comparing human and animal behaviors. Humans possess the ability to transcend all standards, both those originating from biological laws and those produced through collective effort and belonging to culture. This capacity allows them to evade patterns inherited through genetic means and, through innovation, enrich the realm of human culture. Human creativity is predicated upon free choice and the recognition of what is valuable. However, to make a

³⁸ Chmurzy ski, „Pi kno i brzydota z perspektywy etologicznej”, 528.

³⁹ Grzegorzycyk, *Psychiczna osobliwo człowieka*, 124.

⁴⁰ Even people with deterministic beliefs (who accept it as a certain worldview), when describing their behavior in everyday life and trying to understand it, adopt the hypothesis of the relative freedom of human actions. If we believe that our behavior is entirely determined, meaning we believe in the absence of our freedom and the impossibility of making decisions, then, as a consequence, we do not know what is happening to us, or the language of our beliefs is not capable of describing our behavior.

choice, one must see; that is, one must consciously "stand before" what is visible: the world, nature, human nature, and the self. Such "standing before" provides the creator with the opportunity to rise above their circumstances and create something new. "If we were completely immersed in the entirety of reality, incapable of self-reflection or any distance from others, we would succumb to the laws of being within the world, and at best, we could participate in its immanent and independent processes of transformation."⁴¹ This distance and non-submission to the laws of being within the world is reflected in the ability to express obedience to biological imperatives. Sensitivity to the world of values, conscious perception of them, the ability to distinguish biological values from spiritual (cultural) ones, and the capacity to create their hierarchy are determining factors in forming one's self.

Through creativity, which transcends everything we can attribute to other species in nature, humans do not merely seek a niche suitable for themselves but actively shape it through culture. A work of art enables the artist to convey their experienced values to the recipient of the work. This implies that the recipient must also be somewhat creative, possessing sensitivity and imagination that allow them to experience similar values to those of the work's creator. The reception of a work of art relies more on imagination than perception. Animals, even the most advanced, exhibit a lack of sensitivity to artistic works.

The pursuit of beauty and the associated artistic creativity distinctly separates the human world from the surrounding nature. True art exists exclusively at the evolutionary stage of humanity. The creative aesthetic experiences of animals and the related pro-aesthetic phenomena predominantly exhibit homologous characteristics to those of humans; however, they do not fully demonstrate the attributes ascribed to the creative act of humans—artists. According to the approach presented by Chmurzyński, who differentiates between quasi-aesthetic and strictly aesthetic phenomena, the actions of animals related to pro-aesthetic phenomena can analogously be described as quasi-aesthetic creativity (as if, in a manner), distinguishing it from creativity in the strict sense of the term, which is manifested in the free actions of humans.

Conclusion

Humans are creators of culture, which places us at a higher, distinct evolutionary level compared to other species. However, this does not mean we have ceased to be subject to the

⁴¹ Władysław Stró ewski, *Dialektyka twórczo ci* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Znak, 2007), 210.

laws of nature. The human world shares many common traits and analogies with the animal kingdom. Some animal abilities form a kind of shared area on the map of evolutionary development—a “border zone of human and animal traits.”⁴² Most characteristics that define our humanity have their roots in the animal world. Chmurzy ski refers to this as the “dawn of human abilities” in animals.⁴³ Among the traits that distinguish us from other species, we can identify: abstract thinking and conceptual speech, ethics and culture, as well as sensitivity and aesthetic creativity. The seeds of these traits among animals include the capacity for “imitation of abstract thinking” and “imaginary-concrete” thinking; the astonishing ability of primates subjected to experiments to learn human language; and the precursors of ethics that may manifest in “morality-like” behaviors. Similarly, in the context of aesthetics, the quasi-creativity of animals can be regarded as a precursor to human artistic creativity.

The concept of creativity is better understood when we attempt to capture it in the context of its opposite—schematic action. The freedom revealed in the moment of creative decision allows for liberation from the templates that are, among other things, elements of our genetic conditioning. Aesthetic creativity occurs within the realm of values and is related to the effort of realizing those values and the ability to recognize their hierarchy within the context of the culture in which the creator lives. In a free, creative act, the artist brings new worlds into existence. Animals are “blind and deaf” to the content embedded in human artistic creation because they lack strictly creative abilities.

Chmurzy ski, in line with the evolutionary paradigm, accepts the continuity of the development of human abilities, including aesthetic creativity. The emergence of the fine arts and culture results from developmental leaps characterized by increased levels of organization through emergence. In this view, the quasi-aesthetic creativity of animals serves as a precursor to human artistic endeavors, revealing both the continuity of the evolutionary development of this ability and the essential differences compared to creativity at the human level. The subjectivist issues surrounding creative aesthetic actions manifested in pro-aesthetic phenomena in animals necessitate the use of what is known as “transferred introspection,” employed by comparative psychologists and zoopsychologists. This leads us to rely on uncertain reasoning by analogy in this matter. We will never fully know what creative experiences accompany chimpanzees performing “rain dances” or what thoughts a monkey

⁴² Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski, *Co etolog mo e powiedzie o czlowieku?* Voice in the discussion at the VI Science Festival – Ecce Homo, September 24, 2000 (manuscript).

⁴³ Jerzy Andrzej Chmurzy ski, „Obraz czlowieka – „by sob ” z perspektywy zwierz cia i czlowieka”, in: *Filozoficzne i naukowo-przyrodnicze elementy obrazu wiata*, vol. 2, ed. Anna Latawiec, Kazimierz Kloskowski, Grzegorz Bugajak (Warszawa: Wydawnictwo UKSW, 2000), 67.

has when it is able to respond to the question of what it has painted. *Ignoramus et ignorabimus*.

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