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Image of Everyday Creativity. An Individual Case of a Person with Passion

Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc and **Beata Kunat**

University of Bialystok, Bialystok, Poland

ABSTRACT

The goal of the present study is to showcase the relation of creativity and passion, captured from the perspective of an analysis of experiences, subjective encounters, and feelings of an everyday creator, as well as analysis of their products. Basing on qualitative analysis of an individual case of a person with passion, the paper presents an image of their everyday creativity. In our research, we referred to the principles of everyday creativity (Richards, 1999, 2007, 2010). Analysis of the results of *The Dualistic Model of Passion* (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand, 2008, 2010, 2015) became the theoretical frame of reference in our pursuits of the role passion plays in the examined person's creativity. We conducted an analysis of the process and effects of everyday creativity of this individual in the context of two dimensions of harmonious and obsessive passion (Vallerand, 2015). Additionally, we analyzed and interpreted qualitative material in the context of the concept of *Flow* (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996) and *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Duckworth, 2016). We analyzed traits of the examined everyday creator in the context of the Big-Five concept of personality (McCrae, 1987; McCrae & Costa, 1999). The research shows that using the theory of passion to analyze an individual's everyday creativity can reveal two extremely different images of a person's creative works, their personality, as well as the creative process itself. These images are differentiated by harmonious passion and obsessive passion, considered here as disparate sources of creativity.

KEYWORDS:

everyday creativity, harmonious and obsessive passion, little-c creativity, flow, grit, Big Five of personality

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Corresponding author at:

Janina Uszyńska-Jarmoc
E-MAIL: j.uszynska@uwb.edu.pl
Beata Kunat
E-MAIL: b.kunat@uwb.edu.pl

INTRODUCTION

As intrinsically complex and ambiguous and hence difficult to grasp terms, creativity and passion are still cognitively interesting, especially when we relate them to a particular creator and their works. Both passion and creativity may be considered resources that are individually differential, determined by time, achieved via practice, and, consequently, developed over the course of a lifetime, which can make them trigger and become consciously applied as late as in retirement (as we demonstrate in the present paper). Additionally, we assumed potential feedback between a person's passion and creativity. On the one hand, passion may be a source of one's creativity and on the other, creativity can also be an area of exploration and a driving force for the development of passion.

Erstwhile research shows that it is not possible to unequivocally determine the empirical relation between passion and creativity (see e.g., Grohman et al., 2017; Lafrenière et al., 2012; Liu, Chen, & Yao, 2011; Luh & Lu, 2012; Shi, 2012; St-Louis & Vallerand, 2015). Influence of passion on the creative process changes depending on the assumed way of defining passion as well as its type. Correlations of passion and creativity also change depending on the way creativity and its levels are understood (Kunat, 2018). Despite all research undertaken to determine the relation between passion and creativity, there are still many unclear areas in this relation. It is worth to go into detail when attempting to determine how various components of passion function – which ones stimulate or hinder a person's creativity, however defined, when referring to egalitarian or elitist understanding of creativity (Kunat, 2018).

The goal of research presented in this paper is to recognize the relation between passion and creativity on the basis of qualitative analysis of the results of research into creativity of an individual case. We analyzed various dimensions of creativity and passion of an everyday creator, their involvements, subjective experiences, as well as reflections over the process and results of their own creativity. In our study, we decided to use the term "creativity" to describe an attitude, ability, or style(s) of creative thinking that lead one to perform the anticipated intellectual or physical activity that may take the form of intellectual and/or collective activity (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Lebuda, Zielińska, & Karwowski, 2021). Results of creativity should always be analyzed in the context of particular time and space; they are defined by political, economic, social, and cultural factors, and result from the interaction between these factors (Glăveanu, 2015, 2020; Glăveanu & Beghetto, 2021). Creative activity is a result of effecting one's creative potential and leads to appearance of tangible or intangible products, which are new, original, useful, and valuable, at least for their creator (Kampylis & Valtanen, 2010; Runco & Jaeger, 2012). The way of understanding creativity adopted in this paper emphasizes first of all the individual traits of the creator, which in interaction with specific socio-cultural conditions lead to the intended activity aimed at generating certain tangible or intangible products that are original and valuable, at least for their author (creator). Hence, in this paper we adopted the assumptions of the theory of everyday creativity (Richards, 1999; 2007; Ilha Villanova & Pina e Cunha, 2020). We were interested in a person with passion – an everyday creator,

their creative products, creative process, and select personality traits (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009; Glăveanu, 2015, 2020). We applied those individual traits to the concepts of the *Five-Factor Theory of Personality* (McCrae & Costa, 1999), which is characterized by: 1) extraversion (a preference for companionship and variety, novelty and change); 2) agreeableness (willingness to defer to others during interpersonal conflict); 3) conscientiousness (strong sense of purpose and high aspiration levels); 4) neuroticism (a tendency to experience dysphoric effect-sadness, hopelessness, guilt); as well as 5) openness to experience (a need for variety, novelty and change; see McCrae & Costa, 1999, p. 143).

When trying to understand the role passion plays in everyday creativity of the examined person, we referred to *The Dualistic Model of Passion* (Vallerand et al., 2003; Vallerand 2008, 2010, 2015). In this model, passion "can be seen as strong inclination toward a specific object, activity, concept, or person that one loves (or at least strongly likes), highly values, invests time and energy in on regular basis, and that is part of one's identity" (Vallerand, 2015, p. 33). *Self-Determination Theory – SDT* (Ryan, & Deci, 2000) forms a theoretical foundation of Vallerand's passion model; it emphasizes the importance of fulfilling three psychological needs that are indispensable for human development: 1) the need for autonomy, 2) the need to be competent, 3) the need to be in relation with others. In line with the dualistic model of passion, an individual realizes it in order to satisfy the need for autonomy, competence, and integration with others (Vallerand et al., 2003). Autonomy refers to experiencing one's own integration and the feeling of freedom in action. It finds its expression in the willingness to initiate new activities without participation of external factors (such as promises or rewards, see e.g., Ryan & Brown, 2003). The feeling of autonomy makes an individual engaged in internally motivated activities, which means that they seek novelty and challenges independently. The need for competence also refers to the feeling of effectiveness and meaningfulness of action, whereas the need for relation with others refers to the desire to be and remain connected with others and the feeling of belonging to a group, which is supported by the environment through acceptance and showing understanding (Ryan & Brown, 2003). Vallerand claims that Passionate activity is always a determinant of human identity (Vallerand et al., 2008). The dualistic model of passion identifies its two types: harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP) (Vallerand et al., 2003, Vallerand, 2015). Basing on this assumption, we conducted an analysis of the process and effects of everyday creativity in the context of these two dimensions of passion. Additionally, we adopted the concept of *Flow* (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996) as further interpretive lens of our analysis of the qualitative material. We have incorporated the notion of flow here in order to suggest creative flow as a sense of optimal engagement in a task. In a state of flow, a learner's emotions are positive, energized, and fully aligned to the task at hand. Studies show that harmonious passions are related to higher cognitive states of flow (Vallerand, 2010). "Flow" is understood here as a peak experience or optimal state where a person becomes very engaged in an activity and experiences concentration effort and complete control. It is a state that positions itself somewhere between satisfaction and euphoria and is evoked by complete dedication to a given activity. In moments like these we experience exaltation and seep satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). According to Csikszentmiha-

lyi, passion is one of eight components of satisfaction (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth & Quinn, 2009; Duckworth, 2016) is yet another concept that informed the basis of our research endeavors. Grit is defined as a train reflecting high levels of perseverance and passion for long-term goals (Duckworth et al., 2007).

Everyday creativity. Little – c creativity

Richards (1999, 2007) distinguishes two levels of creativity: everyday creativity as well as eminent-level creativity. The researcher claims that everyday creativity is one of the most powerful human abilities, because it helps one not just to survive, but is also key for health, achievements, and development – hence – human well-being. Thanks to this type of creativity, a person overcomes numerous everyday obstacles, which enables them to realize themselves and is conducive to their physical and mental health (Richards, 2007; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). Research shows that everyday creativity is related to well-being and positive emotions (satisfaction, passion, energy, enthusiasm, see Corner & Silvia 2015; Conner, DeYoung, & Silvia, 2018; Elisondo & Melgar, 2020; Elisondo & Vargas, 2019).

This is why we made everyday creativity of a person with passion a subject of our analyses and applied the assumptions of the concept of everyday creativity (Richards, 1999; 2007; 2010; Modrzejewska-Świgulska, 2014). We refer our analyses to the creative individual's modus operandi; the person's creative products that have positive value for the individual (yet, they have not been recognized in the wider community). The above conceptualization of creativity corresponds with the concept of little-c creativity (Craft, 2000, 2001). Little-c creativity renders it possible to perceive, name, and solve everyday problems, make choices that bring one closer to one's individual life goals; namely, to follow the planned life path in one's own direction while shaping one's own unique identity (Craft, 2001). Little-c creativity is considered in relation to one's entire life, especially to activities related to everyday life as well as to the tactics of dealing with everyday problems (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009).

Harmonious passion and obsessive passion

In line with the dualistic model, passion may have two dimensions: harmonious passion (HP) and obsessive passion (OP) (Vallerand et al., 2003, Vallerand, 2015). This is why passion may exhibit positive or negative significance for a person's life and their creativity (Parastatidou et al., 2012). Harmonious passion is associated with autonomous internalization of activity an object of passion a given individual identifies with. Internalization takes place when a person has naturally accepted their activity as significant and integrated with their life. This individual exhibits an autotelic motivation to act. A person characterized by harmonious passion does not experience uncontrolled willingness to engage in the activity they are passionate about, but, rather, chooses it and engages in it, while passion does not "overwhelm" them. Harmonious passion is conducive to positive experiences. Harmonious passion aligns with other aspects of a person's life, thanks to which it is associated with positive experiences (Hodgins & Knee, 2002). It is conducive to experiencing positive emotions (Mageau & Vallerand, 2007; Mageau et al., 2005; Philippe et al., 2010, Philippe et al., 2009; Vallerand

et al., 2003; Vallerand et al., 2006; Vallerand et al., 2008; Vallerand et al., 2010). Research shows that harmonious passion is conducive to experiencing *flow* (Lafrenière et al., 2011). Individuals with harmonious passion are able to fully focus on the task, they are concentrated, they feel satisfied with the activity itself and, what's most important, they do not experience conflict between passion and other domains of their lives. They are able to control their actions and make autonomous decisions as to when they will engage in activities they are passionate about (Vallerand, 2008). Obsessive passion is associated with pressure that results from the need to confirm one's personal regard or social acceptance (Lafrenière et al., 2011). Individuals characterized by obsessive passion may experience an uncontrolled need to act without considering consequences of their engagement (passion controls their lives). Obsessive passion bears negative emotions, conflicts, frustrations, suffering, anger, the feeling of shame and guilt. Obsessive passion may lead to exhaustion and health issues (Philippe et al., 2009; Philippe et al., 2010; Rousseau & Vallerand, 2008; Vallerand et al., 2006; Vallerand et al., 2007; Vallerand et al., 2010). A person with obsessive passion experiences irrepressible need to engage in action, which may lead to conflicts with other life's domains (e.g., family or professional life). This may lead to addiction or burnout, as well as bad relations with others (Vallerand, 2015).

The relationship between creativity and passion

Analysis of empirical research results shows that the relation between creativity and passion is differentiated by the way the two categories are defined (Kunat, 2018). In the case of studies theoretically based on Vallerand's Dualistic Model of Passion, whose goal was to determine the relations between passion and creativity (see e.g., Lafrenière et al., 2012; Liu, Chen & Yao, 2011; Luh, & Lu, 2012; Shi, 2012; St-Louis & Vallerand, 2015), positive correlations between harmonious passion and creativity were shown. However, positive correlation between obsessive passion and creativity was not discerned. Studies show that harmonious passion is conducive to creativity understood as a person's ability, process, as well as product. It is a factor that triggers innovation, helps come up with new ideas, and hence exerts positive influence on the results of the creative process. Analyzed studies of passion and creativity referred to both egalitarian and elitist conceptualizations of creativity. Referring to *The Four C Model of Creativity* (Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009), one may make a claim that harmonious passion evokes various levels of creativity: potential creativity (*mini C*), everyday creativity (*little C*), professional creativity (*pro C*), as well as eminent creativity (*big C*). Studies show that harmonious passion triggers positive emotions that enable the creative process (St-Louis & Vallerand, 2015; Vallerand 2015). Analysis of studies (Grohman et al., 2017) that were theoretically based on the concept of *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* (Duckworth et al., 2007; Duckworth, 2016) shows that passion defined as an element of grit does not correlate with creative achievement or everyday creative behavior. These studies show that passion is not a predictor of creativity on the little-c level. Referring to the concept of *Flow* (Csíkszentmihályi, 1996), it was shown that passion does drive flow, while flow does not drive passion (Levigne, Forest, & Crevier-Braud, 2012; Vallerand et al., 2003).

METHOD

Research goal

The goal of the present study is to reveal a relation between creativity (a creator's process, product, and personality) and a creator's harmonious and obsessive passion. We analyzed the relation between these categories from the standpoint of experiences, subjective encounters, and feelings of an everyday creator, as well as an analysis of their works. An additional goal is to also show that an analysis of a person's everyday creativity without taking into account their passion could lead to not only distorting the image of creativity itself, but, more importantly, cognizance and understanding the creator's personality.

Case study

For our research, we decided to take up a qualitative case study method. This method aims at cognizance, understanding, and interpreting phenomena and processes from the perspective of an individual, but in a holistic, contextual, and dynamic way. According to the assumptions of the method, we focused in our studies on a clearly defined case (Galewska-Kustra, 2009) construed, among others, as a combination of relations between various factors reflected in a person's experience (everyday creator) that refer to various situations and events (Lichtman, 2006). In our studies, we referred to the assumptions of a descriptive case, where the researcher focuses on a very precise description of the study participant (Yin, 2012). Per case study method, the study process involves obtaining extensive data from a wide range of sources (Miller & Salkind, 2002). This is why, we decided to apply source triangulation. Qualitative data were obtained thanks to a narrative interview we conducted with the participant, participatory observation, analysis of their creative products, as well as by analyzing audio and visual data.

We collected the analytical material thanks to two face-to-face interviews conducted with the creator. They lasted the total of approximately eight hours (including presentation of artwork by the creator at home and in the garden). The material collected during the interview was digitally recorded and then transcribed). During fieldwork, we took approximately 60 photographs of the creator's works. We also used the video clip material from the creator's Facebook site to analyze the content of the creator's narrations, their form, and the context for creating the so-called melodic narratives. We used clips of several dozen of the creator's melodic narratives posted by their author over the course of eight months (from October 2021 to June 2022) during our analyses of the recordings.

Procedures and Analysis

The data analysis process focused on a multi-aspect work on obtained data as well as its organization and synthesis. It was made up of a number of stages. During initial data organization, we conducted an analysis of such metadata (Gibbs, 2007) as field notes and detailed data about the study participant in order to prepare their initial biogram. The next stage was vertical and horizon-

tal analysis of the artist's narration content obtained by means of a narrative interview as well as melodic narrations located on the artist's Facebook page. Additionally, we analyzed scores of photographs presenting the effects of the participant's everyday creativity, which we obtained during field studies. Audial (content of the qualitative interview as well as video clips with the participant's narrations, downloaded from their Fb page) and visual data (photos of creative products taken by the researchers during the study as well as photos downloaded from the participant's Fb page) underwent open and selective coding (Charmaz, 2006). Then, based on obtained codes, we built broader semantic categories of everyday creativity: (1) decorative arts (interior design, décor, and interior furnishings), (2) creation of "nature within nature, (3) writing existential narratives (daily social communiques in form of the so-called melodic narrations on the Facebook social medium).

Ethical considerations

On all stages of the study, we adhered to ethical standards for qualitative research, such as obtaining informed consent of the participant to become the subject of this study, warranting anonymity and security, as well as ensuring confidentiality and security, astute and fair analysis and interpretation of the research material (Flick, 2007). Prior to joining the study, its participant signed a consent form and was informed about the goals of the study as well as ways obtained qualitative data would be used.

Fieldwork and study participant

The study was conducted between the middle of July and September 2022. The participant's place of inhabitance was where fieldwork was conducted: A house in a small village in Podlachia Voivodeship.

Toni is 65 years old, has vocational agricultural education, has worked in various business types domestically and abroad for over 40 years, doing only physical work. The participant worked in Belgium for 5 years and it is there (as he claims in the interview) that he quickly and with much ease learned French. He has been married for over 40 years, but he and his wife separated about a year ago. He has three adult children, who he also does not keep in contact with. As he personally stated – he has been defying a "system" (starting with the schooling system) since childhood, which is why he never completed secondary or higher education. Then, he mentally "detached" himself from other elements of the system (such as the church, politics, healthcare, education, the judicial system, and, finally also his own family, as he himself lists). In the interview, he gave us on August 1, 2022, Toni claimed that "When I was a small boy, aged 10 or maybe more, I wanted to sing, play, I wanted to be an artist… but the reality was not conducive to it, because I had to work on my parents' farm" (he had six sisters, each of which wanted to be educated).

As a young man, the participant started a family quite early (his wife never worked) and became a father of three children. As he claimed, responsibility of the family (children's education, financial security) forced him to submit to the system. This is why, he was unable to fulfill his dreams and could not feel free, although right from his childhood years, he valued freedom and did not

want, and could not, adapt to the social rules in force. It was only one year before he retired that he decided "to take a break from the system in [his] older age". This is why, he purchased a farm building dating back to the 1970s built on 0.10 ha-sized plot of land, located in a small town in Podlachia. He dreamt of starting there, alone, a completely new and independent life, totally aligned to his own vision, rules, and methods. The locality he chose as his new dwelling place is depopulated, with predominantly older people of extreme right, conservative viewpoints on the world and life. Toni is active in this new, but alien social environment, in three creative domains:

1) decorative arts (interior design, décor, and interior furnishings). He constructed several original devices and pieces of furniture he had personally designed for the house he turned the farm building into. He also built two winter gardens, a greenhouse, a building for meetings and recreation, and designed an original grill and an elevator leading up the roof of the house;
2) creation of "nature within nature" (hothouse, two floral gardens on the house's roof, a flower carousel; he also designed an original "forest"),
3) writing existential narratives (daily social communiques in form of the so-called melodic narrations on the Facebook social medium).

In this paper, we show that Toni is a versatile everyday creator, and within the frame of the first and second everyday creativity domains the artist appears to be characterized by harmonious passion, while in the third domain his obsessive passion clearly takes hold. Analysis of his passion provides two extremely different images of everyday creativity and shows two radically opposing images of the creator's personality.

RESULTS

1. Making "new life" from scratch – analysis of decorative art

Dreaming about constructing his own place in an area that was totally new to him, completely in line with his own vision, had been germinating for a long time, but he made the decision to actually implement the vision only just over a year ago. Toni announced moving forward with the decision on Facebook, *via* an improvised song (original lyrics, melody, and rhythm, with guitar accompaniment). The author titled his tune "My last dream":

> Maybe it's just a dream and maybe a vision… I don't know how it was, I don't really know – how it is, was it a dream or just a vision, vision of something great. I had a dream or just a vision. Somewhere far, a small cute house, somewhere far, a fairy-tale house…. I had a dream or just a vision that it was something great, that it was something beautiful, something unwonted. I had a dream or just a vision, may it be true, can it some true…. It's hard to say if it was a dream or a vision of my own future, to live in a beautiful house, in my beautiful nook, which is different, totally different from any other ones, totally different – as if from a dream, totally different, like from fabulous dreams… It is the beginning

> of it, but dreams need to be helped, to help rather than sleep…. The dream will come true, all you need is want it and have a good vision (Toni, FB, 07.09.2021).

In September 2021, Toni moved alone into a farm building, built from white brick, sized 16m long by 6 meters wide. No basic living standards were met. The building was not heated, it lacked separate rooms, partition walls, electricity, flooring, utilities, or kitchen. It took only several months to turn the farm building into living quarters.



Phot. 1. Gable wall of the house with added greenhouse – Nov. 28, 2021

Within 6 months of moving in, Toni constructed original front elevation (Phot. 2) by himself. He encased the brick walls with irregularly shaped wooden boards, painted them in various colors, constructed quite a steep roof made up of recycled metal sheets of different colors ("each metal sheet has different shades and different shine, and is painted using different techniques"). He turned a flat roof into two gable roofs of various heights and various pitches. Between them, across the building, he constructed a six-meter-long, wooden path that leads to rooftop flower beds. At the top of the building, the creator designed an elevator leading up to the rooftop to make it possible to water the perennials and herbs growing in rooftop flowerbeds, located on two different heights. He also added a hanging hothouse (sized 4x4m) to the front wall of the house, as well as a small greenhouse to the gable wall. He built another, larger greenhouse in his garden. He also built wooden stairs at the back wall of the house, leading up to the rooftop path and eventually to the flower beds. He also added an outdoor washroom with a shower and toilet to the same back wall of the house. He also constructed a carousel for his flowers in the garden.

Photo 2 below presents the exterior of the house as it looked in June 2022. Using color paints, the author of this work added his life motto along a long wooden board placed under the roof: "Truth void of duplicity; honor, love of nature, freedom".



Phot. 2. A front view of the house with a hothouse added on the right-hand side. As of June 2022

A path made of wooden boards painted in various colors and patterns provides an entryway to the property. Instead of a classic entry gate, the creator installed an old room door with glued-on fragments of mirrors (Phot 3. 3a). Upon opening the gate, a person entering the property will read a sentence painted along the path with colorful paints: "Look in the mirror; what can you see? Look at yourself before you start judging". He explained the intention of this slogan during the interview he gave on August 1, 2022:

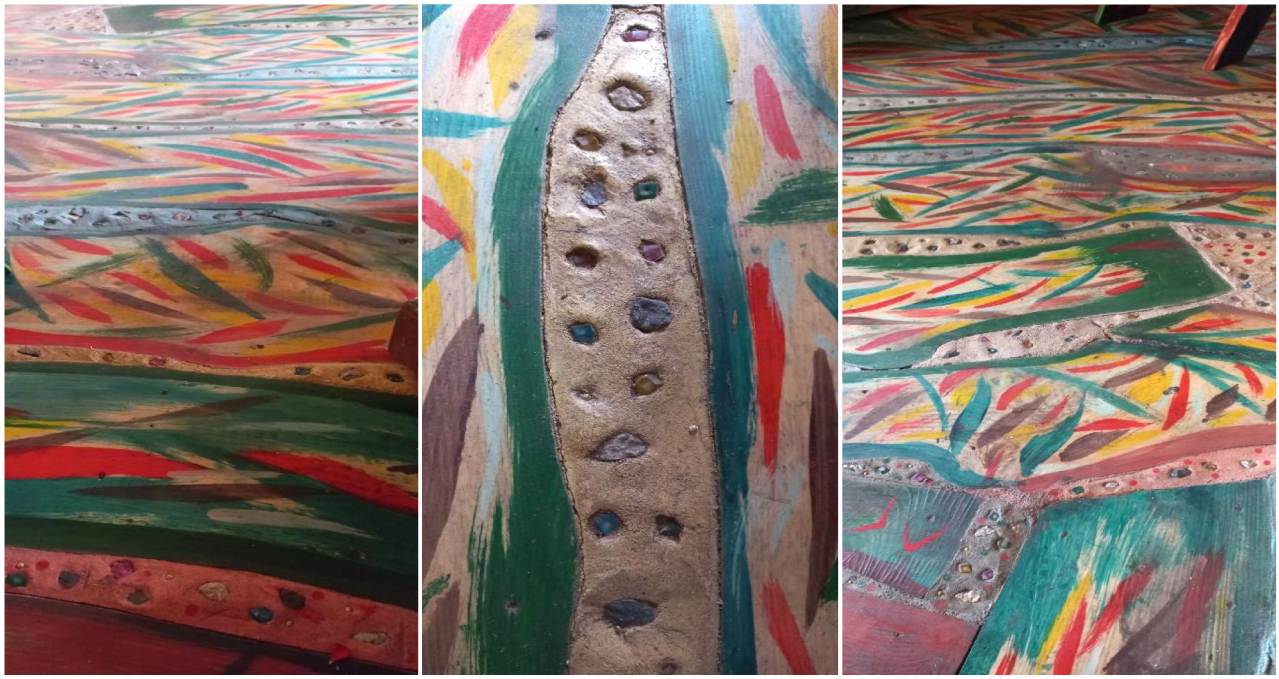
> "Look in the mirror, take a look at yourself. First, peer into your thoughts before you start judging a crazy guy who had created all this. Before you judge why he is doing this, look into your own thoughts, understand yourself". When asked about the origin of the idea for the mirror and slogan, he responded: "It just comes by itself upon me, spontaneously, I just look at something and after a moment everything comes to me by itself".

Toni calls his creativity "fun, joke, silliness, game". When talking about his activity, the author does not use the word "creativity," although he frequently emphasizes that what he does is indeed a figment of imagination, is original, unique, and different, but other people likely do not understand and it call it, as he claims – "dumb". He frequently refers to himself as a simpleton or claims that:

> … these dummies of mine that live inside me have come up with all this. It is just a vision of life. All things natural should come upon us in the old age at the latest. To rest, to rest from the system. To play, to dream. To do what I want. I am now a Cesar for myself, I am a king and my own master. I am



Phot 3: 3a) The path leading to the house, 3b) fragment of the rear wall of the house, 3c) fragment of the roof



Phot. 4a, 4b, and 4c. Fragments of the floor in the living room

> a free man and I can fantasize, I can dream (excerpt from an interview with Toni, dated on August 1, 2022).

The everyday creator's house interior is also colorful, original, and surprising. He made the unusual floor of wooden boards in very different dimensions and natural shapes. The floor boards are painted in various, colorful patterns (Phot. 4a, 4b, 4c). He aligned the wooden boards, which he never shortened or trimmed, at various angles. Such an activity required him to fill the cracks that

appeared between the wooden boards with modeling material he had himself devised and made in 12 colors, which he then adorned with colorful stones and pieces of glass. The cracks are of irregular width.

Upon completing his work on the flooring, he sang the following words from his song, titled My game:

> …all shapes of the floorboards are natural – my colors purposefully selected, you can laugh at it as much as you want. I don't care at all, it's unique… (Toni, FB, January 17, 2022).

The everyday creator made a number of pieces of furniture for his kitchen and dining room. They included 5 unique, colorful chairs, which he calls dolls. Each is different and made of wooden planks that "dropped into [his] hands." He painted them in his own style (Phot. 5a, 5b). Self-propelled desk and a table on wheels with an original drawer are made with artistic coherence with the remaining pieces of furniture (Phot. 5c).



Phot. 5a, 5b, and 5c. Wooden furniture – chairs and table

The creator made walls in individual rooms of multi-colored painted wooden boards and arranged them in form of a specific composition (Phot. 6a, 6b, and 6c).

The participating creator constructed kitchen cabinets and a wardrobe (that opens in two different ways) as well as all other furniture in consistent style. The way window frames are hidden outside (Phot. 7a) and inside the house (Phot. 7c) attracts particular attention, as does an original "window shades" solution, namely patterns on glass painted with indelible dye (Phot. 7b).



Phot. 6a, 6b, and 6c. Fragment of the kitchen, living room, bedroom, as well as bedroom wardrobe



Phot. 7a, 7b, and 7c. Window decorations

Toni's everyday creativity also finds its expression in the constructions of various devices needed in his kitchen and garden. Among other things, Toni constructed three heaters for his individual rooms out of metal barrels. In his kitchen and dining room, the heater does not only heat the space, but also has inbuilt stove, grill, and cooking top. The creator used the same barrels and wood to construct a 4-meter-long wheeled outdoor grill (Phot. 8).

> This is my household, it does not matter that I do not have electricity (in critical situations, Toni uses the so-called aggregator to generate electricity), that I have no natural gas. I can make everything. I bake cakes, but never using a recipe. I just think how it should look and taste, and I know right away. I experiment and always cook things that are edible (excerpt from an interview with Toni, dated on August 1, 2022).

The examined creator devised a solution for ironing his tablecloths and bed linen. In an interview, he stated that: "I've had engineering in my head since childhood. And these ideas, the inspiration, came naturally, I don't know where from. I don't know how things get created within me. I am one of those few originals on this planet, but I learned how to make everything, by myself" (excerpt from an interview with Toni, dated on August 1, 2022).



Phot. 8. Outdoor grill

As he stated in the interview, there is still a lot to do to fully equip his house.

> …there is still a lot of makeshift stuff here, but I don't make corrections to my work; instead, I constantly create new things. I have a lot of wooden boards; the hothouse will have original flooring the world has not seen before, as well as a hanging table. A countertop does not have to be flat, because when I stand on a curve, then why a glass cannot, especially when it is full. And when it's empty, let it fall (laughs). Maybe the tabletop will be shaped like a leaf and the table itself will hang (excerpt from an interview with Toni, dated on August 1, 2022).

The products of everyday creativity that may be qualified as "little c" creativity, are very colorful and show unrealized childhood dreams about a fabulous world; an expression of longing to draw joy from life. Everything the everyday artist creates he calls fun, a game, and sometimes a silly joke: "because what I do is just some nonsense, it's just fun, a silly joke… I want to create stupidity within stupidity…". When we asked why he somewhat depreciates his creativity with these words, he replied:

> …because I like to make fun of myself. Before someone else makes fun of me, I prefer to do it myself… does anyone understand my thoughts? Not just the people from around here, but everyone in this

> world? Everyone is set on rectangles, circles, squares, but here I have a harmony of life, here I have full freedom, full freedom… this is the harmony of my imagination (excerpt from an interview with Toni, dated on August 1, 2022).

In his narrations or during the interview, Toni frequently emphasized how important the social reception of his works is for him, but, as he himself stated, the "mob" or ordinary inhabitants of the village he lives in – does not understand what he does, what his views are, and what values he adheres to.

2. Creating nature within nature

In the spring of 2022, Toni arranged and developed his property in an unprecedented way, where he also apportioned a grassland area and a "forest" ("we have cheerful trees here as well as forest trees. And beside every tree there has to also be a flower. That's just a philosophy of a dumb person"). The leading part on the entire property is played by blooming plants (when cutting grass, Toni avoids any flowering wild plant, even flowering weeds). Toni calls flowers his nurslings. A flower carousel is an interesting structure in the center of his garden (Phot. 9); it is built in a hexagonal star plan. Aside from that, in his garden Toni built an original fence made up of potted flowers placed on high tree trunks and, as we indicated above, he also established two flower gardens on the roof of his house (two different levels/heights, see Phot. 10). Each garden is of the equal length of the roof and each flower bed is approximately 0.5m wide.



Phot. 9. A flower carousel built on a star plan

> The love of nature, the love of flowers does not always have to associate with the love of people. It's a different subject matter, a different dilemma. Nature and people… it's all something different. I love nature and some people can be respected. Flowers. Not a single piece of any flower has ever betrayed me. No flower ever told me empty words …. This is why the nature shines, the nature sings. I love nature and feel it, because it gives back to me. You have to be able to understand it (Toni, FB, June 30th, 2022).

The examined creator's love of nature and his respect for it finds its expression in his attitude towards two stray cats. One of them decided to settle in his wardrobe – which Toni was not aware of – and bore kittens several days later. After discovering the fact, Toni waited for the mother cat to move out of the wardrobe by herself. He calls the cats his leopards and plans to devise a few original toys for them.



Phot. 10. Flowerbeds on the roof of the house – view from above

> Understanding nature requires concentration, willpower, and an open mind. To understand harmony, what life is all about. I water each flower differently …, I know how much water I need, I lift the flower and I know right away. I know the story of each flower, they are my nurslings. I missed watering one a few times, but it was dying and I needed to rescue it. It's my best nursling.

Toni plans to construct a coffee corner on the roof of the house and to separate some space for listening to music. Moreover, he already has "in his mind" a design of a unique swing and a flower train. The artist's imagination is telling him that

> flowers will travel in the yard and come for watering "by themselves," I will come up with a mechanism. … Fun is fun, I've never had anything like that in life. Now I can have fun, have fun with life. Have fun all the time, as long as I can.

Toni's everyday creativity is his lifestyle, meaning of his existence, but the everyday artist also emphasizes that social criticism of his works is important to him.

> Thank you very much for looking at my images (Facebook photos) – there are no other ones like these. They reflect my dreams of beautiful life on this planet. Of life in truth and with awareness of seeking the sense of being. Because it is only in truth that we can find the core of our existence in this

world. A desire for cognition makes it possible to find the true path. I don't want to just be here, to unwittingly pretend that I live. But I want to get to the meaning of existence, so that I can easily go away (Toni, Facebook, April 26th, 2020).



Phot. 11. A flowerbed on the roof of the house – view from above

Along the lines of the concept of creativity levels, Toni's creative activity in the two domains described above can be associated with crystallized creativity, (Nęcka, 2001), everyday creativity (Kaufman, Beghetto, 2009, 2013b; Richards, 1999, 2007; Szmidt, 2017a), or amateur creativity (Szmidt, 2017a). In this sense, his creative activity may be considered and defined primarily through the lens of human originality (Jauk et al, 2014), which in the case of Toni, manifests itself both in his physical work on building and decorating the house and garden in his free time, as well as in everyday activities (ironing, cooking, baking cakes according to recipes devised by him). The domains (areas) of everyday creativity described above may be associated with harmonious passion. It is evident that Toni's creativity in the two domains described above clearly reveals the author's need for autonomy, competence, and integration with others (Vallerand et al., 2003).

3. An original way of communicating oneself to the world – melodic narrations

Verbal creativity of the examined artist provides the richest material for analyzing traits of his creative personality, creative process, as well as the type of his passion. The author devised an original and new also to himself form of communicating with the social world. We called it melodic narration. What is it about? Toni, who does not know how to play the guitar, takes this instrument in his hands and depending on whether he wants to share a pessimistic or optimistic message he plays the lower or upper three strings. In this way, he builds peculiar background music to spontaneously created and sung lyrics. As he claims, this form of melodic narration helps him better express

his thoughts and feelings. The need of creation is so strong in the examined artist that the author begins to sing his narration even when he does not know what he wants to communicate to the "world."

> A funny joke, a funny joke, I don't even know where to start, I don't know where to start, I don't know what to say, what is important and what is not. Many things, many things have piled up and somehow I just can't do it without the guitar. When I don't have the rhythm for it, I can't do it. Lately, I can't collect my thoughts. A guitar's rhythm is enough. Many things, many things. It may be some fantasy for you. (July 28, 2022, FB, Toni)

Creativity of the examined artist appears not just via the melody, guitar rhythm, but most of all *via* improvised lyrics. It is important to note that the author has a distance to his work, and especially to the form of expressing it. To exemplify it, here is an excerpt from his melodic narration:

> I'm not a poet, so I can't sing like one, I'm not a singer, so I can't sing beautiful melodies, I only sing as I'm able, I only sing as I can. Words are not just mine, I repeat what nature gives me and it circles it to me so I can sing it. So, I can sing what aches the nature, so I can sing what people don't want to get, so I can sing about what's more important than bread (…) (Toni, July 08, 2021, FB).

> Is it worth to write when no one reads, is it worth to speak when no one listens. Is it even worth to think when no one wants to understand. Is it worth to do anything when nothing comes out. And is it worth to worry about it – what do I care! I write as I am able. I say what I think and see. I do whatever I want. Because it is me – ANTONI – - not somebody else…

> Singing just comes to me. I will look at something and after a moment everything comes naturally. When I look at you, your eyes, or lips – I can sing about you all day long. When we asked a question: And what if you stopped singing? He answered: I would perish from within (Toni, interview, August 1, 2022).

The author of these narrations also cares about what other people think about his output. In one of his Facebook posts (July 28, 2022) he sings about a person he does not know who recognized and appreciated his creativity:

> … that he's interested in what I create, in my silly work. That he is interested, I suppose not just for fun, because I saw a spark in his eyes. I could see a spark in his eyes. That he really doesn't mock me, that he's interested excites me, it excites me for battle… What I create every day. But it's only fun, it's just a joke. If one such person thanks me for creating something, it is enough for me…. It is fun, it's just a game, and just one thing that inspired me…

In another post, Toni's obsessive passion shows:

> A day has passed, a day has passed, an empty day has passed, like wind does pass. I have to keep up with what I plan, I have to keep up with what I plan, what will find order within me… It's just a few more days, maybe longer, and no trace will be left of me, everyone'll forget that one Antoni lived, yes, they'll forget, but I just don't care… (Toni, FB, July 28, 2022).

In his sung narrations posted almost every day on social media (Facebook, You Tube), he frequently and openly expresses his contempt for the world he experiences:

> …I feel it, I know it, we live in hypocritical theater, full of mendacity… It's a huge theater, a huge cinema. Millions of people die watching it and no one really cares too much (…), "they hide everything away from us, no one tells us why we live on this planet, no one tells us where the sense lies, where we are to go, they teach us only to lie" (…) I feel it, I know it, but I still want to find out why it's all arranged like this, why it all revolves like this (…), Nature tells us it's not the right way, only truth can set us free, the fight for nothingness has been going on for ages (…) (August 7, 2021, Facebook).

The content of these sung narrations is very diverse. Every day or almost every day the examined artist creates spontaneous stories about everyday life, but also reflects on life in general, meaning of existence, professed values. He is particularly critical of the so-called system (culture, religions, schooling, education, politics) as one that deprives people of freedom. He also uses numerous vulgarisms and threats in these narrations, and he also shows hate towards those who do not subscribe to his views, do not understand his creative output, who submit to the system, do not want to be free people, and do not understand nature. Those for whom material values (to have) are most important. Analysis of these narrations shows that Toni is an unhappy man, embattled with the social world, family, neighbors. Obsessive passion is the source of his narrative creativity. Contrary to creative works we analyzed above, where through color he expresses a colorful, child-like, fairy-tale-like or fabulous world, the author's narrations present a different background. He frequently sings in a darker, twilight-like setting or even darkness. We read this as a symbol of his mood and pessimistic atmosphere – an expression of suffering, anxiety, anger, and frustration. He expresses his negative emotions not just with words, but also the scenery (singing in a room in twilight or even darkness).

Themes of his narrations sung and published in social media since 2021 (Facebook) are as follows:

> A day has passed; Some guy; Jests of life; Astray in the world; Old age, rather; Why fear; Ha, ha, ha,; Illness; Is it worth…; Is it possible; The image of a fool; A bit of a joke; Maybe I'll make it; Madness in illusion; To be or to live…; A bit of illusion; Only nature; Maybe ill; Sick dreams; Exhaustion; Mockery; Dreams almost done; Shut up; Free man's life; Can one do it this way; Mirror world; Fun; Just me, ha, ha; Nature…; An almost beautiful day; A word…; A dream or a phantom, maybe…; It's just a revelation; My variations; Is it worth…; A tiny joke; Psychosis, he, he; The party goes on; The next challenge; It's just fun; A question; Obsessed.

It is worth to analyze personality characteristics the creator reveals in his narrations. It is possible to state that he has a strong need for the feeling of autonomy, directing his own life, and making significant and independent decisions regarding his lifestyle.

> … Where is the sense, where is logic, where is realistic thinking? I am my own master of myself, I am the ruler, the king for my own self. I don't have to kneel in front of anybody, because I am my own master, my own master (Toni, FB, July 28, 2022).

Freedom is a kind of need that makes Toni be guided by his internal motivation to act on four key dimensions: when it comes to tasks (what he does); time (when he completes his task); way of working (individually or in a group) – in this case, the creator definitely works in solitude; and when

it comes to methods (how the task will be accomplished) – in his own coherent, sometimes joyful style (the type of creativity we described in points 1 and 2 above), and sometimes in dark colors (the type of creativity we described in point 3 above).

> What can an ill man create when he does not fear the system. Live free. What can one create, it's enough to live the freedom. Not worry about cash, not worry about bread. Freedom, freedom, freedom, freedom. Freedom in every word. Freedom. Nature's singing. Not everyone needs to like this, the way I play. I'm not playing, I just give myself rhythm, because playing is just copying … (Toni, FB, July 28, 2022).

The everyday creator has a strong sense of competence – he is certain that he is able to perform every task and in various disciplines (tailoring, gardening, carpentry, masonry, electrical work, blacksmithing).

DISCUSSION

The everyday creator appears completely differently in three domains/areas of creativity. Analysis of his decorative art and the art created in nature, where nature is both the material and the environment of creation, the author of these works appears as someone who views the world as colorful, has a distance to himself, is a joyful and optimistic person who loves harmony, independence, and also cares for his creative output to be viewed by others as original, surprising, but also useful for him.

Referring the results of our analysis of Toni's creativity to the list of a creator's traits elaborated by Stein (1962) and cited by Strzałecki (1969), it is possible to state that Toni is a creator who is full of initiative, is active, and self-sufficient. He is less impeded than others, less formal and conventional, does not suppress his urges, is strongly motivated, exhibits love and enthusiasm for work, has high internal discipline, tenacity, and high energy. Failures did not discourage him, he worked hard, and completed the work he had begun. This persistence and grit as well as courage and enthusiasm all find their confirmation in Duckworth et al's (2007) studies.

Analysis of the creative process and works that were created in the two domains above may show that Toni is a rebellious creator, has a strong sense of autonomy, values freedom, is original, but consistent at the same time, systematically implements his planned visions, pragmatic, falling into state of *flow* (e.g., overnight, using only the light the moon provided, Toni built a complicated roofed structure for social gatherings). During our interview, he stated that he was motivated by the need to surprise his neighbor who walked past his house in the evening and saw a vacant lot. He was going to walk the other way in the morning. Toni got so engaged in the task that he lost the sense of time entirely. A strong need to surprise someone made him forget about all the inconveniences of the lack of light ("the moon gave me light") and others, and as he sang during the interview, he saw it as: "It was just for fun, it was just a game".

When referring his traits to the list of characteristics of creative individuals elaborated by Barron and Harrington (1981), we may state that Toni stands out in his independent assessments, nonconformism, intuition, self-confidence, tolerance of ambiguity, as well as strong conviction about his originality and that he is imaginative (vide: "creative"). Finally, if we were to compare the image of Toni's personality to the Five Factor Model of Personality (Costa & McCrae, 1999), we could say that extraversion, conscientiousness, and openness are his strongly developed traits.

Extraversion accentuates the amount and intensity of interpersonal relations, indicating the extent to which the given individual is social, talkative, or oriented towards other people. Toni is very eager to establish relations; it is easy for him, and he is very honest when discussing his life and artwork. Openness to experience is a personality trait that describes seeking activity and new experiences. This factor describes the degree of tolerance as well as willingness to learn what is new and unknown to them. Toni's entire creative output confirms that he does have this very trait. Conscientiousness indicates the degree of his self-discipline, strength of his motivation, and persistence in persistence in striving for a goal. Agreeableness is a factor that describes the quality of interpersonal relations on the sympathy – hostility continuum. Individuals who score high on agreeableness are kind and likeable in relations with other people, nonabrasive, helpful, as well as sensitive to other people's problems (McCrae, 1987). Our study cannot confirm this trait for Tony.

However, in melodic narrations (sung lyrics) we can find many examples of him as an emphatic, dominant, leader-like creator who exhibits autocratic traits. His narrations are abundant in examples proving his verbal aggression and disdain expressed towards the world (system) and people (mob that submits to the system). The author of these narrations frequently uses uncensored expressions as well as threats – even aimed at members of his closest family. These narrations are also characterized by sadness, anger, resignation, and sometimes the sense of helplessness, as well as expressions of readiness to resign from further activities. In reference to Big-Five (McCrae, 1987) traits, we can state that neuroticism (the lack of emotional stability) and the lack of agreeableness (he is badly adjusted when it comes to psychological definitions) are Tony's well-developed traits. On the other hand, analysis of the process of creating melodic narrations reveals extraversion, openness, and conscientiousness.

The three domains of the artist's creativity also indicate diverse types of passion that reveal themselves in the creative process. We observe harmonious passion during the creative process and in the results of creating his "own world" – his own place in the world (the house and the garden). His external world (the house and the garden) is a result of effecting harmonious passion. Toni's creative output that is a result of harmonious passion may be summarized with a quote from Kaufman (2011, p. 49) that "everyday creativity describes a creative person, process, result in form of a particular product or activity that manifests itself on an everyday basis in professional, free-time, and household chore situations".

Toni's creativity is associated with the need to develop and transform his immediate environment, determination to survive in conditions that are difficult for making his dreams cone fully true. It is embedded in the process of self-actualization. What is new and unknown urges the creator to

learn, to know, and to experience. In the two domains of creative activity we described above, we can find clear confirmation that the author needs autonomy, competence, and integration with others (Vallerand et al, 2003), while in the third domain of creative activity (verbal creativity), we can clearly see that denial of the need to relate with others is a source of his creative output (content of melodic narrations). The examined creator clearly cuts himself off from the local community he functions in. He calls people "mob." He considers himself to be above others. Is it possible that an individual characterized by obsessive passion does not feel the need for social relations? It seems important to undertake further studies in order to confirm or abolish such a hypothesis. It is beyond doubt that the image of the social world portrayed in melodic narrations reflects the author's obsessive passion. Analysis of his statements shows that creating narrations transforms into obsession; he has an intrinsic internal compulsion to create. The passion to create actually controls his life, leads to physical and mental exhaustion (the lack of sleep, malnutrition, smoking – "I roll my own cigarettes, so it's cheaper, because I prefer to spend money on flowers"). In his narratives, Toni reveals restlessness due to mounting life adversities. Compulsion to create spoken narrations as well as their content also negatively impact his relations with others and lead to conflicts (a sense of the lack of understanding by the local community; see Vallerand et al., 2006; Vallerand et al., 2007; Vallerand et al., 2010). It is therefore possible to confirm, after Parastatidou et al. (2012), that in the case of Toni, passion can have both positive and negative significance for a person's life and creativity.

In summary, the image of a creator in the two domains of creativity (the house and the garden) shows an individual who enjoys life, is living his dream, and is full of optimism, while Toni's melodic narrations show him as an individual who is overwhelmed by the adversities of life, discouraged, bitter, full of aversion to people and the world (system). Concurrently, it is an individual who seeks the sense of life, who confronts and experiences everyday life phenomenologically. It is possible that via his melodic narrations, the examined artist does not find completion of his work (a sung lyric) to be most important, but experiencing himself as the subject of creation, self-expression, communicating himself to others.

Limitations

We were not able to conduct wider-ranging research about the social reception of the examined artist's creative output by the local community, which is a limitation of this study. Interviews with the community members and Tony's neighbors would certainly provide much valuable information that would make it possible to better understand not just Toni's attitudes and sources of his radical and negative opinions about the world around him, but also about the context of his creative work. We plan to conduct such studies in the future.

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20 Swierkowa St., 15-328 Bialystok, Poland
tel. +48 857457283
e-mail: creativity@uwb.edu.pl
http://www.creativity.uwb.edu.pl