

SILVANO ARIETI

Creativity

The Magic Synthesis



CREATIVITY

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Interizophrenia (1955)
Second Edition, Completely Revised and Expanded (1974)

*The Intrapsychic Self: Feeling, Cognition and
Creativity in Health and Mental Illness* (1967)

The Will To Be Human (1972)

American Handbook of Psychiatry (1959 and 1966)
EDITOR-IN-CHIEF
Second Edition, Revised and Expanded (1974 and 1975)

The World Biennial of Psychiatry and Psychotherapy (1970 and 1973)
EDITOR

New Dimensions in Psychiatry: A World View (1975)
CO-EDITOR WITH GERARD CHRZANOWSKI

Love Can Be Found (1977)
WITH JAMES ARIETI

*On Schizophrenia, Phobias, Depression, Psychotherapy,
and the Farther Shores of Psychiatry:
Selected Papers of Silvano Arieti, M.D.* (1978)

Severe and Mild Depression (1978)
WITH JULES BEMPORAD

Understanding and Helping the Schizophrenic (1979)

The Parnas (1979)



The Peacock King, Tokyo National Museum; Kodansha, Ltd.

To the memory of my friend Ludwig Von Bertalanffy, who conceived broad systems of ideas, and of my grammar school teacher Luisa Orvieto, from whom I learned simple, pristine, and clear views of the world.

The two nourishments of the mind that these teachers represent find their place, one in the intellect, the other close to the heart, and at times mingle, fuse, and bring forth innovation.

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Preface

WHETHER it is considered from the viewpoint of its effects on society, or as one of the expressions of the human spirit, creativity stands out as an activity to be studied, cherished, cultivated.

Creativity can be studied in many ways, all rewarding in various degrees. New dimensions are always found and added to the ones already known. Those who are interested only in a behavioristic or experimental approach will not find what they want in this book. My own interest in creativity follows different avenues of inquiry and understanding, and it has had a long history. It goes back to the preparation of an article on wit and the comic, published in 1950, in which I advanced my first ideas on the subject. My interest and my studies have grown in many directions in these intervening years. As a matter of fact, I consider this book the natural outcome of all my previous works.

My work started at a clinical level, with my observations on and therapeutic dealings with the seriously mentally ill as well as with creative people. My research also extended to cognition in general, in both intrapsychic and interpersonal perspectives. When I later studied creative products in various fields, such as wit, poetry, art, and science, I was able to recognize specific cognitive mechanisms of the creative process that I had already encountered in my clinical approach and cognitive research.

Finally, I have tried to integrate my findings in social, psychostructural, and general systems contexts, and I have advanced suggestions about the promotion of creativity at individual and social levels. I am fully conscious that some of these suggestions are preliminary

Preface

and tentative. Much remains to be done in this area, both in the educational system and in respect to the later life of the individual.

This book grew out of my work presented earlier in the final section of *The Intrapsychic Self*, but that material has been greatly expanded in this volume and integrated with other approaches.

I wish to thank my friends Mr. Mortimer Cass, who prepared the section on music for Chapter 9, and Mr. Marcel Meth, who did the statistical work for Chapter 14.

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PART ONE

An Introductory Approach to Creativity

Chapter 1

The Creative Process

Introductory Remarks

O somma luce, che tanto ti levi
dai concetti mortali, alla mia mente
ripresta un poco di quel che parevi
e fa la lingua mia tanto possente
ch'una favilla sol della tua gloria
possa lasciare alla futura gente

* * * *

O light supreme, who so far dost uplift
thee over mortal thoughts, lend again to
my mind a little of what thou didst seem
and give my tongue such power that it may
leave a single sparkle of thy glory to
future men

THIS INVOCATION is made by Dante in the last canto of *The Divine Comedy* when he is about to attempt the most arduous of his efforts, the description of the presence of God. He asks God to help him; he wants to borrow from Him sufficient power to leave a spark of the divine glory to men to come. That power which transformed a vision into one of the highest human achievements and enabled Dante