

CREATIVITY

Concept and Findings

SHAMSHAD HUSSAIN

Foreword by
S.M. MOHSIN

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Branches

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CREATIVITY

To
The Loving Memory of My Niece



SEEMA TABASSUM
*A Fine Creation of
the Almighty Creator*

FOREWORD

Few problems concerning human abilities have been more enigmatic than that of creativity. In spite of engaging very serious attention of psychologists for about a little more than two decades now, not even a modicum of insight regarding its nature and source has so far been gained that could stand the rigor of a critical and empirical evaluation. Nevertheless, a plethora of research data generated by the attack on the problem from different angles, and even by different disciplines, lies in store for the researcher to grapple with it, and its documentation is the outstanding feature of Dr. Shamshad Hussain's book on *Creativity: Concept and Findings*. In this respect it serves as the most comprehensive book of reference relating to the subject. This is testified by the very exhaustive bibliography including about three hundred titles of books and journal articles published and even unpublished, in the eastern and western countries. It is by itself an important contribution, since the very highly elusive nature of the subject, should prevent the reader to expect a final say on it from any writer.

Among the five chapters of the book, the fourth one, dealing with the cross-cultural studies of creativity, also reports an investigation conducted by the author himself concerning a comparison between the results of Mehdi's test of creativity administered on a sample of tribal and that of non-tribal students of Ranchi which has produced very revealing significant findings. I am confident that Dr. Hussain's volume on creativity will provide very valuable source materials for future researches on the subject which is most likely to be captivating the interest of psychologists and critics of art and literature for some time to come.

Ex-Prof. & Head,
Deptt. of Psychology,
Patna University, Patna.
Darulman/Patna, 16.1.87

S. M. MOHSIN

PREFACE

The present age is characterized by confusion, tension and violence. The creative ability seldom gets proper channels for its utmost expression. The creative imagination of a child is lost amidst highly mechanical and routined life. This has posed a serious problem before the psychologists and the educationists. The creative potentials, present within a man, if not properly expressed through constructive channels, would generate suffocation and divert his creative ability towards destructive tendencies. If the constructive and imaginative endeavour is not properly catered it will generate more and more frustration within the individuals. Any blockage to creative expression on the part of human beings will lead to their psychological death. The human being who is the supreme creation of God may not justify the purpose of his existence which is meant for creating something novel on this earth and ultimately to add beauty to his Creator's gift.

The present educational system and unrealistic syllabi, are so taxing to the growing children that their creative imagination is suppressed and blocked most of the time. While speaking at an International Conference at Delhi in January, 1986, Dr. R. Ramanna, Chairman Atomic Energy Commission, has cast doubt over the contribution of formal education to creative development of children. He has posed a question: Are children being exposed to too much knowledge in the rapid advancing world today at the cost of stunting their creativity? The education must not only aim at intellectual development but also at creative expression.

Such discussions and arguments are indicative of the fact that creativity is an important subject for scientific investigation and empirical study. Various problems related to the proper expression of creative potentials need thorough discussion and exploration as well as understanding of the nature of creativity in its diversified forms. Only when the concept of creativity is fully

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understood in different contexts one can provide ways for its proper channelization.

The problem of defining creativity and distinguishing it from intelligence has been considered to be of such significance that for the last three to four decades investigators have been deeply interested in its study from conceptual and empirical angles. Psychologists have turned their deep interest to analysing the nature of creativity and to answering various questions related to its multi-dimensional character. Some of the important questions which have been raised are: What is, in fact, the true nature of creativity? Is it parallel to intelligence? Can it be explained in terms of process, product, person or press? Is every individual basically endowed with creative potentials? Do the creatives constitute a distinct and separate category of people? Does the formal education facilitate the expression of creative potentials or block it? Is creative work original and unique? What effect does a family or socio-cultural set-up make on the growth of creative ability? Do the creative individuals possess some distinguished personality traits or disposition? What type of educational activities are needed for proper expression of hidden creative potentials?

Many other such questions have been raised by the investigators and diverse arguments have been put forward in support of one's reply to these questions. Various issues related to the study of creativity have, thus, generated interest in the educators and the investigator for its critical study. The complex nature of creativity and the diversified views on it attracted the present author to take up this issue again in the light of available documents.

The present book represents the author's effort at analysing the concept of creativity and also the various research findings available in this context. The book consists of five main chapters. Chapter I deals extensively with conceptual understanding of the term 'creativity' in the light of various approaches.

Chapter II is exclusively devoted to the study of creativity in the light of the controversies over its dependence on intelligence. An effort has been made to examine various approaches regarding the nature of relationship between creativity and intelli-

gence. The main issue was to determine whether high intelligence leads to higher creativity. In spite of deep analysis of the subject the author still feels that further efforts are to be made in this direction.

Chapter III deals with the study of creativity in familial perspective. In the light of various empirical findings the contribution of familial undercurrents to the growth of individual's creativity has been examined. Factors like parental socio-economic status, their involvement in creative art, provision for proper incentives, family structure, liberal and conservative outlook, parental presence/absence, etc. have been taken into consideration as they affect creativity of children.

The subject for discussion in Chapter IV is the effect of cultural variables on the development of creative ability of the individuals. Various cross-cultural studies have been presented along with their interpretations in order to examine whether cultural heritage contribute to development of creativity in its members.

Chapter V exclusively deals with the issue whether creative individuals possess some distinguishable personality characteristic, as their work is characterized by the production of idea off the beaten track, 'outside the mold'. Various views regarding the nature of such traits have been quoted. An idea of these important differentiating traits may enable us to find the conditions in early life which give rise to them and the predisposition toward creative thinking. I hope fully that further research will discover some of the characteristics of family life which are important and fundamental in producing people with the personality characteristics of creative thinkers.

The references are up-to-date and cover even the latest literature on the subject. These references will help the researchers in obtaining detailed accounts of the findings, if they so desire.

On the whole, I have tried to present different views on creativity and analyse them in the light of empirical researches. I have incorporated a number of studies conducted in our country, as well as abroad, for the purpose of clarifying the concept of creativity and its various constituents.

I have not only collected the research materials available in

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this field but also have tried to assimilate and interpret them. At many places the readers will find my personal remarks and suggestions with regard to the research techniques and tools employed in the study of creativity.

I hope that the present book will be of some help to those who are interested in knowing something about the nature of creativity and the various problems associated with its interpretations. The book will, I trust, prove immensely useful especially to the researchers who are working in this area of creativity. It will enable the psychologists and the educationists to appreciate and understand various issues related to the proper growth of hidden creative potentials within children. The parents and teachers may be benefited by its study. Specially the chapter devoted to familial and social factors of creativity can contribute much to the understanding of the parents of their children's creative thirst. The findings given in the book would provide extensive knowledge regarding the contribution of intelligence, family, culture and personality variables towards an individual's creative endeavour. The research data may be utilized by the educated parents, teachers and researchers in their effort to develop a correct perspective of children's creativity. However, I feel that further efforts are to be made for arriving at some concrete conclusions regarding the nature of creativity which still remains highly controversial and therefore unresolved.

SHAMSHAD HUSSAIN

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What I miss at the time of writing this acknowledgement is the presence of my niece 'Seema Tabassum' whom I considered to be my ideal and source of inspiration. Recently she left us alone in this world and created a vacuum in our life. Now her loving kids, Iema, Shadab and Soma are source of inspiration to me. I do remember the loving presence of Zaidi, Faizi, Faisal and Tabish Babu who stand before me whenever I write such things and smile with pleasure. The presence of these kids in my home is enough for taking any intellectual pursuit.

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S.H.

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CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS OF CREATIVITY

Creation of man is the culmination of God's creative pursuit. The hidden and expressive endowment of this creativity in man reflects the creative endeavour of the Almighty creator. However, the true nature of creativity has not been fully understood as yet. Its nature is so complex that it still remains shrouded in mystery and efforts are to be made for unfolding its multi-dimensional character. The ways are to be paved for healthy expression of creative potentials with which human beings are endowed. If we fail to do so the potentially creative individual may start suffocating and divert his creative endeavour into destructive channels. That is why, the analysis of creativity from conceptual and empirical angles constitutes a subject of valuable investigation. Fortunately, people have realized the necessity for exploring the true nature of man's creativity, which is reflected in rich literature available on creativity. The review of such literature indicates that creativity has been examined in a conceptual as well as empirical context.

The findings associated with various problems of creativity are controversial in nature. Some have examined the concept of creativity from one angle whereas others from another. Different articles and research findings are coming up on this issue. On the whole, it has been noted that creativity as a concept is not easy to be defined. Various popular as well as highly technical definitions have been put forward in support of the nature of creativity. Creativity is to be analysed from a multi-dimensional approach as it is highly complex cognitive ability. The controversies regarding the agreed definition of creativity clearly suggest the multiplexity underlying the explanation of creative behaviour. If one starts collecting the various definitions of creativity, he will get confused. What is needed at present is to touch the fundamentals of creativity. The conceptual framework is to be provided in the light of various approaches to the

analysis of creative behaviour. Findings in the area of creativity either by applying psycho-metric tools or by observing and analysing the actual creatives in the light of the creative talents, suggest that still extensive and intensive researches are needed for the purpose of exploring something concrete and convincing regarding the nature and manifestations of creativity.

In the light of above note, it seems proper to study creativity as a concept and also its manifestations in terms of creative performance. It is not to be studied in isolation as a cognitive mental process but in the context of various cognitive and non-cognitive factors which have their direct or indirect influence on the growth and development of creative potentials present in a man.

Creativity has not been scientifically defined as most of the definitions are ambiguous and have examined creativity in a loose term. Laymen have added more ambiguity while defining creativity. Various popular meanings of creativity have been put forward. The most popular way of looking at creativity has been to emphasize on the making of something 'new' and 'different'. Fromm (1959) has pointed out two broad meanings of creativity. First, it refers to the production of something novel and further it may even refer to the attitude which may persist even when nothing new is created.

Brunelle (1970) has regarded creativity in terms of a process by which some novel idea or an object is produced in a new fashion or arrangement. In the absence of this process there cannot be any product and ultimately no creativity.

Kunt (1982) has also considered creativity as consisting of various processes like framing, probing, exploring, affirming and realizing. Through these processes the pursuer's relation to the phenomenon undergoes change and new insight is attained. All such definitions lay greater emphasis on the act of producing as central to the concept of creativity rather than on the end result of that. Psychologists like Mackinnon (1960), Dewey (1910), Wallas (1926) have also viewed creativity as a process leading to some new idea or object. The originality has been thus, widely emphasized while defining creativity. What is created is considered to be quite novel and differentiating from what already

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exists. Therefore, 'uniqueness' constitutes the fundamental characteristics of a creative product. Parker (1963) considers creativity as the art of seeking out, trying out and combining knowledge in a novel way which results in something new.

Goldner (1962) has stressed that creativity is an organized, comprehensive and imaginative activity of brain toward an original outcome. It is, therefore, an innovative and not a reproductive activity.

Mendick (1964) views creative thinking in the light of framing new combinations of associative elements which either meet specified requirement or is found to be useful in some way. The more mutual remote elements of the new combination, the more creative is the process.

However, criticisms are there against this common notion. Barron (1961) is of the opinion that creativity does not simply mean exploration, invention or discovery of some new things or relations rather it refers to making new combinations out of existing objects and elements.

Celye (1962) while recognizing one more dimension of creativity states that it leads to generalization of the new interpretations. These interpretations of creativity, in short, emphasize that creativity involves the combination of old ideas or products into new forms, but the old extends the base for the new ideas. As far as 'uniqueness' in creativity is concerned Hurlock (1978) has explained that 'uniqueness' is a personal achievement, not necessarily an universal one. For example, an individual may be creative when he produces something which he could not produce earlier, however, it may have been produced in almost the same, or even in identical form by some other individual.

In spite of some criticisms regarding the originality, novelty and uniqueness in creativity it is observed that there is still stress on creativity as an unique mental process which is needed for production of something novel and original.

Here one can also quote Guilford (1968) in support of originality, deviation and uniqueness in creativity. He has considered creativity as a specific kind of thinking; labelled as divergent thinking which makes deviation from the common and

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obvious thought and action. This type of thinking helps an individual in examining various possible solutions to a problem and not centring around a single correct solution which involves 'convergent' thinking. In convergent thinking the person follows the prevailing mode of thought, information and action to arrive at one right answer which could be attained by other individuals also. Divergent thinking enables the individual to be more flexible and fluent involving richer flow of ideas and resulting in some novel and creative solution.

Morgan (1953) also examined 25 definitions of creativity and he found that in spite of differences in opinion there is consensus that creativity involves the development of something unique, although the uniqueness in itself has not been defined in one way.

That is why it has been suggested that if one is interested in measuring the excellence in divergent thinking he has to consider all possible varied responses which can be produced by an individual and also the number of statistically unique responses. Guilford (1957-9) has clearly remarked that creativity can be measured through divergent thinking test.

Divergent thinking abilities represent an individual's intellectual operation where he is free to choose a new direction or perspective on a given subject. In this thought process the stored information is scanned, possible solutions are searched and thought flows in diversified direction, which help the individual in penetrating into a new and untested direction. In creative thinking also the matter is generated from the memory storage but there are possibilities to solve a problem by linking new connections or by adopting revised forms which ultimately leads to the production of something new and unique which is considered to be an important condition for creative work. 新奇性

Divergent thinking includes fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration and also evaluative abilities. An examination of various tests of divergent thinking has revealed that the responses are generally interpreted in terms of these components of creativity. Fluency refers to the ability of an individual to benefit in a developing situation. This ability helps in using each step completed as a new point where the individual can