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**AN EXCURSION INTO PHILOSOPHY AND PSYCHOLOGY OF CREATIVITY**

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**Abstract:** Creativity is usually characterized by originality and effectiveness, novelty and appropriateness, quality and high intelligence. Knowledge and creativity are interrelated, knowledge favors creativity and creativity allows the discovery of new knowledge. However, they are also opposed in the sense that creativity sometimes can contradict the so far established or traditional knowledge. The psychology of creativity is flourishing, but research in the area of the philosophy of creativity is scarce. Here I present a philosophical analysis of philosophy of creativity and the power of knowledge, which answers the important question about the interrelationship between philosophy and creativity. Sigmund Freud in his article on creativity “Creative Writers and Daydreaming” (1908) identified the process of creativity with children’s phantasying and conceived of creative writers as persons who perform sublimation. In this line of reasoning, Strachey conceived of creative writers as “successful neurotics”. According to Hausman (1979), there are four utmost questions about creativity, namely: “*Who* is the creator? *Why* does the creator create? *What* happens when the creator creates? and *How* does the creator create?” In general there are numerous strategies how one can enhance one’s creative capacity, including by psychopharmacological neuroenhancement. Pragmatic strategies, for example, include the following ones: 1) performance of proposed steps more efficiently, 2) increase of the amount of time spent or the number of times a given step is performed., 3) the a performance of steps, but in different order and 4) the introduction of a brand new stage model (Gascón & Kaufman, 2010). Plato’s and Aristotle’s views on creativity were antagonistic: Plato argued that creativity is a mysterious act of imitation, whereas Aristotle argued that it is a scientifically explainable act. Immanuel Kant conceived of creativity of geniuses as a natural gift, which rules are not given and that creativity as a capacity cannot be taught. Arthur Schopenhauer conceived of creativity as a pure contemplation of Ideas and noted the similarities between creative geniuses and madmen. Bertrand Russell’s contribution is that he proposed a genuine test for creativity. More recently, the dark side of creativity in terms of malevolent usage of creative products or even malevolent creative acts. Finally, it is noted that a positive correlation between creativity scores and certain psychopathological illnesses, such as hypomania, mania, schizophrenia and schizotypal personality disorders has been found. This correlation seems to be related to dopaminergic function in the brain. A conclusion is reached that creativity in fact appears before a degeneration in terms of psychopathology appears.

**Keywords:** creativity, philosophy of creativity, genius, the dark side of creativity, psychopathology.

**INTRODUCTION**

In the past, interest in creativity was found not just in philosophy, but in other areas as well, such as psychiatry, psychology, pedagogy, literary criticism and art criticism (Hausman, 1979: 144). Research in psychology of creativity is flourishing, mostly in neuropsychology and cognitive neuroscience (Dimkov, 2016). Back in the past, Sigmund Freud, for example, dedicated a paper to creativity, named “Creative Writers and Daydreaming” (1908/1959). The paper identifies creativity with children’s phantasying, which, in adult individuals, refers to sublimation: “*The creative writer does the same as the child at play. He creates a world of phantasy which he takes very seriously – that is, which he invests with large amounts of emotion – while separating it sharply from reality*” (Freud, 1908/1959: 421). In this sense, the artist can be conceived as a “successful neurotic” (Strachey), because his products are of societal value in comparison with the mere phantasies of children and mentally ill individuals. In this line of reasoning, Hausman, for example, has opinionated that creativity research would benefit from the study of metaphors (Hausman, 1979: 159). However, little attention has been directed towards *the philosophy of creativity* (Hausman, 1979; Henning, 2005; Martin, 2007; Gaut, 2010; Paul & Kaufman, 2014; Moran, Cropley & Kaufman, 2014; Gaut, 2014; Gaut & Kieran, 2018; Huiyuhl, 2018). The latter studies mainly concepts related to creativity, including the concept of creativity, the similarities and the differences between creativity in the arts and in science, the ethical and moral aspects of creativity, the teleology of creativity, the relation between creativity and tradition, cetera (Gaut, 2010). Phenomenological accounts of creativity (qualitative research) are almost entirely missing and research is generally directed to quantitative research (see Dimkov, 2018).

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Creativity is usually characterized by originality and effectiveness, novelty and appropriateness, quality and high intelligence (Dimkov, 2016). Classically, four stages of creativity are distinguished: preparation, incubation,

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illumination and verification or elaboration (Wallas, 1926: 1-24). More or less, the four stages do overlap (Hausman, 1979: 145). Cropley argued that creativity can be divided into six parts, namely: *Process, Personal Motivation, Personal Properties, Personal Feeling, Product and Press* (Cropley, 2010b: 344; see Barron, 1955 & Rhodes, 1961). According to Hausman, there are four utmost questions about creativity, namely: “*Who is the creator? Why does the creator create? What happens when the creator creates? and How does the creator create?*” (Hausman, 1979: 145; emphases in the original). Most important for philosophy is the last question as it implies explanation and understanding. In this line of reasoning, Gascón & Kaufman discussed four types of problem-solving strategies: Type I – performance of proposed steps more efficiently, Type II – the amount of time spent or the number of times a given step is performed, Type III – the performance of steps, but in different order and Type IV – the introduction of a brand new stage model (Gascón & Kaufman, 2010: 242-243). The work of Hausman represents one of the first papers on the philosophy of creativity (Hausman, 1979), although other authors, mostly philosophers, such as Plato, Aristotle, Kant, Schopenhauer and Bergson have touched upon the issue of the philosophy of creativity. According to Hausman, speculative philosophy cannot avoid the question of creativity: the stance of acknowledging creativity refers to “the possibility of the transformation of meanings, values, and realities”, whereas the stance of rejecting creativity refers to “the fundamental stability of all things and the impossibility of radical change (Hausman, 1979: 143). Plato conceived of the poet as divinely inspired, who, however, produces imitations of ideals: “The poet is out of his mind in the sense that he does not know how he accomplishes the task. Thus the poet’s power must come from a source independent of his natural abilities and habits. This power is his muse, which serves as his inspiration” (Hausman, 1979: 146). This stance conceives of creativity as mysterious. The alternative is introduced by Aristotle, who acknowledged that creativity, its techniques and its conditions can be understood, thus they have an explicit explanation. He viewed poets as madmen. Immanuel Kant also proposed an original account of creativity and genius: “The genius is not imitative. Nor can it be taught. It is an incommunicable skill. There are no rules for creating, though there are new, unconceptualizable rules created. The spirit of the genius animates imagination which thereby functions in harmonious relation with understanding. Thus, creation is an expression of originality, rather than of imitation, and of inspiration from within, rather from a divine source” (Hausman, 1979: 150; see Bruno, 2010). Kant, however, viewed science and creativity in science as purely rational and refers to the scientist as a discoverer, rather than as a creator; nature gives the rules for geniality and creativity represents a gift (Hausman, 1979: 151-152). Arthur Schopenhauer also wrote about genius, the artist: “It [art] repeats or reproduces the eternal Ideas grasped through pure contemplation, the essential and abiding in all the phenomena of the world [...] The man of genius [...] dwells on the consideration of life itself, strives to comprehend the Idea of each thing, not its relations to other things [...] in it [the expression of genius] a decided predominance of knowledge over will is visible, and consequently there also shows itself in it a knowledge that is entirely devoid of relation to will, i.e., pure knowing [...] persons of genius are often subject to violent emotions and irrational passions” (Schopenhauer, 1818/1819/1909: 239, 243, 246). According to Schopenhauer, logic and science are antagonistic to the genius of art. Moreover, there is a *similarity between the genius and the madman*: “they are given to soliloquising, and in general may exhibit certain weaknesses which are actually akin to madness. It has often been remarked that there is a side at which genius and madness touch, and even pass over into each other, and indeed poetical inspiration has been called a kind of madness: *amabilis insania* [...] by a diligent search in lunatic asylums, I [Schopenhauer] have found individual cases of patients who were unquestionably endowed with great talents, and whose genius distinctly appeared through their madness, which, however, had completely gained the upper hand” (Schopenhauer, 1818/1819/1909: 246-247; emphasis in the original). Bertrand Russell composed the following *test for genius*: “Do you produce because you feel an urgent compulsion to express certain ideas or feelings, or are you actuated by the desire for applause? In the genuine artist the desire for applause, while it usually exist strongly, is secondary in the sense that the artist wishes to produce a certain kind of work, and hopes that that work may be applauded, but will not alter his style even if no applause is forthcoming” (Russel, 1930/1932: 122).

### **CREATIVITY, KNOWLEDGE AND THE DARK SIDE OF CREATIVITY**

Cropley noted that sometimes creativity is in accord with the established so far knowledge, but sometimes it contradicts it and “changes the paradigm in a field and thereafter redefines the norm [...] The essence of creativity is going against the crowd” (Cropley, 2010a: 7-8). Hilton, in the same vein, discussed “inquisitive discontent” [or] the need to create a positive change, and the inability to accept the status quo” (Hilton, 2010: 140), whereas Albert Einstein argued that “originality is forgetting one’s sources” (quoted in: Averill & Nunley, 2010: 255). With respect to psychopathology, it has been found that scientist with avant-garde creative solutions are more prone to experiencing psychopathology (Simonton, 2010: 229). Finally, the similarity of creative persons and neurotics consists in that the both do form their own ideologies or moral codes (Averill & Nunley, 2010: 263).

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Cropley et al. directed attention towards the fact that a dark side of creativity does exist (Cropley et al., 2010). Gascon & Kaufman discussed the similarities between deviance in personality and creativity (Gascon & Kaufman, 2010). Few terms represent the concept of the dark side of creativity, namely: the dark side of creativity (McLaren, 1993; Cropley, 2010b), negative creativity (James, Clark & Cropanzano, 1999; James & Taylor, 2010), malevolent innovation (Cropley, 2010a), malevolent creativity (Cropley, Kaufman & Cropley, 2008; James & Drown, 2008; Eisenman, 2008; Lee & Dow, 2011; Harris, 2013; Cropley, 2013; Harris, Reiter-Palmon & Kaufman, 2013), creativity without morality (Cropley, 2010a) and the dark side correlates of creativity (Furnham, 2015). James & Taylor conclude that “virtually no attention has been given to when, why, or how [the negative side of creativity] we might minimize it while maximizing positive forms of creativity” [...] Negative creativity [...] is associated with sabotage, theft and other forms of exploitation, undermining or abuse of individuals or social or technical [...] systems, physical harm to individuals or collectives [...] and the production of dangerous or damaging inventions or materials” (James & Taylor, 2010: 34, 51). The distinction between positive and negative creativity always implies ethical and moral judgments and is point of view-dependent. To be noted, “The dark side need not involve deliberate intent to do evil. People may have benevolent motives but be unaware of or unable or unwilling to anticipate the negative consequences of their creativity” (Cropley, 2010b: 360). Runco, for example, argues that there is no dark side of creativity (creativity process), rather there is a dark side of the products of creativity and the motivation for their use and application (Runco, 2010). According to McLaren, there are four areas, in which the dark side of creativity can be manifested, namely: advertising, entertainment, politics and science and technology (McLaren, 1993). James, Clark & Cropanzano add five more areas: business or production, social life or work, crimes, war and terrorism (James, Clark & Cropanzano, 1999). Cropley, contrary to Runco (Runco, 2010), argues that “not only Person and Product but also Process has an inherent dark side” (Cropley, 2010a: 6, 2010b). Goncalo, Vincent & Audia direct attention to the finding that, paradoxically, previous creative achievements can actually stunt the future ones and present several facts that potentially can limit one’s future creative achievements (Goncalo, Vincent & Audia, 2010). Of particular interest are the so-called cognitive framing, “when people have experienced success with a particular strategy, they become narrowly focused on implementing that particular strategy to solve new problems” and the role of negative affect as an error signal (Goncalo, Vincent & Audia, 2010: 119, 122).

### **CREATIVITY, PSYCHOLOGY AND PSYCHOPATHOLOGY: A NEUROBIOPSYCHOLOGICAL ACCOUNT**

Somehow surprisingly, recent research have indicated an intimate relation of creativity and psychopathology. Increased creativity has been found in the following mental illnesses: bipolar affective disorder (Santosa et al., 2007), hypomania (Furnham et al., 2008), schizophrenia (Acar, Chen & Cayirdag, 2017) and schizotypal personality disorders (Fink et al., 2014). In a previous research, I have concluded that the so-called “big geniuses” in human history possessed mixed personality traits from schizotypy and cyclothymia (borderline disorders) (Dimkov, 2019). Creativity levels in these disorders are related to dopaminergic function, which is found to be elevated in all of them. All these disorders in fact lie in a *single psychotic continuum or spectrum* (Haralanova & Haralanov, 2017: 14-16). This is in agreement with the so-called *unitary endogenous psychosis* (Einheitspsychose), which incorporates all psychotic disorders (Jaspers, 1959/1997: 564). The biggest increase of creativity is found in hypomania, followed by schizotypal personality disorders, mania and schizophrenia. Dopaminergic function and creativity in these disorders follows a U-inverted curve, in which moderate increase in dopamine levels result in increased creativity, but very high increase of dopamine levels in fact leads to decline in creativity scores (see Ashby & Isen, 1999; Mitchell & Phillips, 2007; De Dreu, Baas & Nijstad, 2008). This being said, the question of the relation between creativity and psychopathology is raised. Generally, creativity is viewed as an adaptive function, which evolutionarily is predestined for coping with problematic situations, usually related to survival. On the other hand, psychopathology represents a disadaptive and involuntal disorder. Thus, creativity and psychopathology seem to be antagonistically or inversely related, which is not the case though, as shown above. In this line of reasoning, Simonton presents research findings that creativity and psychopathology are related, but concludes that the creative genius is *both sane and crazy*, that it is rather *eccentric* (Simonton, 2010). Averill & Nunley argued that neurosis can be conceived as the dark side of emotional creativity in the sense that “Neurosis results when an emotionally creative response miscarries” (Averill & Nunley, 2010: 255). Evolutionarily, creativity appears in families with latent psychopathology, just before the degeneration into clinically manifested psychopathology (Kretschmer, 1922/1996; see Dimkov, 2019). This leads to the conclusion that stress, related to survival, can lead to increases in creativity, but when stress is unbearable and overwhelming, it actually leads to psychopathology. In fact, Lombroso conceived of genius as the product of a degenerative epileptoid psychosis (Lombroso, 1889/1891).

## CONCLUSION

Creativity and knowledge are intimately connected in the sense that sometimes they are in agreement and sometimes they are in contradiction. Psychology of creativity is flourishing, but the research in the field of philosophy of creativity is almost missing. Nevertheless, several philosophers did write about it. There are numerous ways of enhancing the creative capacity in man. Creativity and knowledge, however, do have their dark sides in the sense that they are sometimes used and applied as malevolent acts. The positive correlation of creativity and certain psychopathological illnesses is explained with the fact that perhaps creativity appears in persons and families, prone to psychopathology, before the clinical manifestation of the latter.

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