

Review of: "Why the Standard Definition of Creativity Fails to Capture the Creative Act"

Olga Chernavskaya¹

¹ P.N. Lebedev Physical Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.

The article concerns the problem of defining the concept of “creativity”. In modern cognitive science, there really are many concepts that, being basic ones, do not have generally accepted established definitions – e.g., “consciousness”, “information”, “understanding”; the concept of “creativity” is in the same row.

Actually, this means that cognitive science (in particular, neurocognitology) belongs to the new, developing fields of study of human activity. In this regard, the author's work deserves attention. As for the new definition that the author proposes --- «a creative idea is one that is both novel and satisfying»---it almost directly refers to Kant, who defines insight (i.e., the highest point of the creative act) as follows:

“Insight is the direct perception of truth, with the only criterion of its validity being the inner satisfaction”.

And in this regard, it is very strange that there is no reference to Kant in the article. I am quoting from memory, since it does not relate to the points that immediately pop up in a Google search for “Kant, creativity”; for the exact quote one needs to look in his book “Critique of Pure Reason”.

The definitions of creativity given in dictionaries are indeed not perfect, nor is the definition offered by the author. The concept of “satisfaction” is applicable to the creator and his “internal coordinate system” (in the author's terms), while the emotions of the observer\recipient are of a completely different nature (also worthy of analysis) --- perhaps delight, admiration, awe, etc. Obviously, to understand the phenomenon of “creativity” it is necessary to understand the mechanism of the emergence of a masterpiece (Chef-D'oeuvre) inside the creator, but it is also important to explore the mechanism of the reaction that the masterpiece evokes in the recipient.

Offhand I can offer several definitions, for example:

“A creative item\idea is something that is original and GIVES GOOSEBUMPS to both, its creator and the consumer (recipient)”. This definition will even be objective in the sense that the recipient's reaction (skin reaction) can be measured experimentally. Essentially, it's close to what the author suggests, but takes up less than half a page. However, it is not perfect also, since it appeals only to the visible result (goosebumps) but leaves the mechanism of their occurrence unclear for both, the creator and the recipient.

Despite numerous references to neurophysiology and neurocognitology, the work is rather philosophical in nature and is based only on some verbal reasoning. The theoretical frameworks of the creative process that the author refers to are

very old. This does not imply that they are bad (poor), just that there are others more modern ones (links can be found in the recent book “Creativity” from Elkhonon Goldberg).

The share of self-citations (approximately 23%) seems unreasonably high for such a broad and deep problem as the analysis of the creative process.

In general, I think that the author raises an interesting problem, but the paper itself does not represent a “goosebump-inducing masterpiece.”