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Originality and Creativity

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The gift of creativity as an enduring personal trait is dependent on at least two different factors. First, there must be an urge, drive, or motivation to create something new; and second, there must be talent to carry out and materialize this creative urge.

These two factors, although expected to complement one another, are in fact independent. The evidence lies in the many individuals who are endowed with only one of the factors, and therefore never succeed in being really creative. We know many artists and scientists who are endowed with an outstanding talent and who possess many of the cognitive features claimed by psychological studies to characterize creativity, but who, owing to a lack of motivation to create something new and original, devote themselves only to performing, teaching, studying, or criticizing art or science created by others. We also know the opposite cases—those artists or scientists who are always driven by a strong motivation to create something new and original in their fields of activity, but owing to a lack of sufficient talent, never succeed in creating anything significant.

In several of my former studies (Noy, 1966, 1968, 1972, 1978) I dealt with the second factor responsible for creativity—the talents, cognitive processes, and personality features that enable their possessor to succeed in his creative endeavors. In the present study I intend to deal with the first factor, and to examine the urge, drive, or motivation that brings an individual to invest his efforts in an attempt to create something new and original. We know that such a motivation may express itself in only one isolated area—as in the case of the artist or scientist who is very original in his specific field of creation but does not display any originality in other fields—or it may express itself in several or all fields of activity. However, in both cases, originality—whether combined with the sufficient talent to

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create something significant or not—usually appears to be habitual for a given individual, i.e., there is a tendency for originality that characterizes his responses and creative endeavors throughout his entire life.

In the present study we will examine the following four questions:

- (1) What are the specific cognitive features characteristic of the tendency for originality?
- (2) How do contemporary psychological theories explain the development and cultivation of the tendency for originality?
- (3) What is characteristic of creative originality, i.e., of those original products that contribute creatively to the progress of art and science?
- (4) What can contemporary psychoanalytic theory and clinical experience contribute to a better understanding of the dynamic background and the developmental course of the tendency for originality?

Modern psychology has invested a good deal of effort investigating the “creative process”—the mental processes involved in the creative act. Most students of creativity agree that the basis of any creative act, whether in science or in art, always involves the reorganization of available information in some new form. Koestler (1964) writes: “This act of wrenching away an object or concept from its habitual context and seeing it in a new context is ... an essential part of the creative process” (p. 529). Parker (1963) describes creativity as “the act of seeking out, trying out and combining knowledge in new ways.” Mednick (1962) defines the creative process as “the forming of associative elements into new combinations which either meet specified requirements or are in some way useful” (p. 227). Guilford (1967), who suggested the “transfer theory” to explain creativity, writes: “Novel thinking means that retrieved information is to be used in a new form or in new connections ... A theory learned in certain connections is torn out of the context in which it was learned, for use in some new context” (p. 100); and De Bono (1969), using the term “lateral thinking,” describes creativity as follows: “Lateral thinking has to do with rearranging available information so that it is snapped out of the established pattern and forms a new and better pattern” (p. 237).

Nobody, of course, would minimize the necessity of revealing new facts and enriching our stock of actual knowledge in any human scientific and cultural progress; but what seems to characterize most of the highest and most original creative acts is mainly the ability to approach the well-known facts from a novel and original point of view. By such a new look connections are detected between facts hitherto regarded as unrelated; novel problems for research are revealed in areas hitherto regarded as satisfactorily solved, and new means are created to express meanings hitherto regarded as inexpressible. Koestler (1968) claimed that Copernicus created a revolution in

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our cosmological view, even though “insofar as actual knowledge is concerned, Copernicus was no better off, and in some respects worse off, than the Greek astronomer of Alexandria who lived in the time of Jesus Christ...” (p. 73). “The essence of science,” he states, “lies not in discovering facts, but in discovering new ways of thinking about them” (p. 235). Polanyi (1958) claims that Einstein, too, while

announcing his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905, was “unaided by any observation that had not been available for at least fifty years before” (p. 11). **Eissler (1971)** is of the opinion that what distinguishes the genius from the merely talented is his ability to create new paradigms, new models of thought patterns to organize the known facts: “The discovery of these paradigms is, in science, the function of genius. Talents will perform permutations or combinations ... or ... clarify the consequences ... In the literary field, the function of the genius is to create a new world that might even compete successfully with existing reality in the minds of many” (p. 249).

If we were to reduce these various statements into one definition, utilizing the computer model as applied in psychology today, we could say that what characterizes the genuine creative act is not the addition of novel information, but the use of new programs for processing the already available information. Thus the problem of originality could be reduced to the question: What makes a person process a particular piece of information with the aid of a novel program, instead of using the habitual ones?

Frank Barron (1955), one of the first to study originality as an isolated component of creativity, shows that originality is seldom manifested as a single nonexpected act; “some persons are regularly original, whereas others are regularly unoriginal.” Therefore he suggests approaching originality as a relatively enduring trait of the personality, urging psychologists to study it not as an isolated mental act, but as a “personality disposition.” Although Barron tries to relate this disposition to several other personality traits, it seems to me that we do not yet have enough solid evidence to speak about a “personality pattern.” I would therefore prefer to approach the tendency for originality merely as a “cognitive style,” thus leaving open the possibility that this tendency may manifest itself in quite different and diverse forms of personality structures. Let us see now what the characteristics of this cognitive style are.

Any of the functions of human thought—classifying and categorizing input data, discerning regularities and finding out similarities and repetitions, organizing experience, evaluating it against memory imprints, revealing discrepancies and solving the problems created, foreseeing future events and planning the proper behavioral acts to meet them—is dependent on some habitual ways of processing the information involved, i.e., on pre-established

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programs. There are qualitative differences in the kind of programs people develop for any of the mental tasks and quantitative differences in the number of alternative programs they have at their disposal to perform any of these tasks. For example, when a child begins to learn arithmetic at school he has to develop the appropriate program to perform any of the calculations required of him. But when we inquire of the children how they perform a given calculation, we may find that although each of them reaches the same correct result, each child uses a different program, i.e., each represents the numbers in his imagination in a different form and employs a different strategy for performing the calculation.

We can reveal another important difference as well: while one child, after developing an appropriate program for performing a given operation and being satisfied with the results, tends to stick to it for the rest of his or her life, another, when confronted repeatedly with similar problems, will try to find some new ways of solving them. The result will be that the first, even if he does well at mathematics, will possess only a limited repertoire of calculating programs, whereas the second, who continues all his life to experiment with new and alternative techniques of solving the same problem, will finally accumulate a rich repertoire of programs and therefore be much more efficient in meeting new problems.

Hunter (1966) studied a mathematician named Professor Aitken, famous for his special ability for rapid mental calculation. For example, when asked to express as a decimal the fraction $4/27$, after 24 seconds he gave the answer—0.08510638297872340425531914. Hunter claims that Aitken's extraordinary achievements are made possible by his “repertoire of ingenious calculation plans ... When Aitken tackles a problem, his first priority is to decide a calculative plan ... Aitken has a large variety of calculative plans at his disposal, and he can solve the same problem in several different ways ... He searches for that plan which will carry him to the solution in the shortest time and with least difficulty” (p. 343). Aitken told Hunter that at around the age of thirteen he became so fascinated with calculation that he spent all his free time exploring complex problems and finding a new technique to solve them each time. Finally, he succeeded in accumulating such a huge stock of calculative programs that he had no difficulty in solving the most complicated problem in the shortest time.

The same process, that of an indefatigable accumulation of organizing programs, is what characterizes any person infatuated by a specific art, science, or other “hobby.” The chess player who spends hours and hours in solving chess riddles, the musician who analyzes musical pieces of other historical periods or cultures, the inventor who tests all kinds of machines—all are spending their time and efforts in experimenting with new

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and alternative techniques to solve the problems in which they are interested, thus enriching their repertoire of programs in order to improve steadily their ability to solve any new problem they may confront in the future. Theoretically, any process of cognitive development, education, or training can be described as such a cumulative process of continuously adding new programs to organize experience and knowledge. In this process there are wide individual variations, both quantitatively, in the number of programs each individual accumulates, and qualitatively, in the specific areas of mental activity in which most of the efforts are concentrated. If we were to arrange the various individual variations along a continuum, we could delineate the two poles as two opposite cognitive styles, which I would call the *restrictive* and the *prolific*. Individuals in the first group are characterized by a rather limited repertoire of programs by which to organize their experience, solve their problems, and plan their responses; they have a tendency to restrict themselves lifelong to the same redundant strategies of thought, patterns of behavior, techniques for interpersonal manipulation, and systems of values and beliefs. The others, at the opposite pole, are characterized by a rich repertoire of diverse programs in one, several, or all areas of mental activity,

and are always eager to try out new and alternative ways of organizing experience, new strategies of solving problems, and new techniques of manipulating and adjusting to significant others.

I am aware of the fact that this dichotomy may overlap several other dichotomies suggested by other psychologists, such as “routine vs. adventurous thinking” (Bartlett, 1958), “convergent vs. divergent thinking” (Guilford, 1959), “the leveling vs. sharpening control principle” (Gardner, Holzman, Klein, Linton, and Spencer, 1959), “field dependency vs. field independency” (Witkin, Lewis, Hertzman, Machover, Meissner, and Wapner, 1954), but because it is based on quite a different principle of differentiation, it should not be confused with any of the others.

My thesis is that originality as an enduring feature characterizing a given person can flourish only in the ground of the “prolific style.” To clarify: although not every person with such a style is expected to exhibit originality, every person exhibiting originality habitually is assumed to belong to the prolific style. Originality, therefore, must be regarded not as an isolated mental act based on the occasional ability to see several phenomena from an angle different from the usual, but as a habitual response based on the permanent ability to use a much greater repertoire of organizing programs than does the nonoriginal other. Thus, if the original person succeeds in revealing connections between phenomena hitherto regarded as unrelated (the great discoveries in science), in opening new questions in problematic

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areas already regarded as solved (the openings of new areas for research), or in showing how meanings regarded as unexpressible can be expressed (the great advances in art), it is because when he approaches a new mental task, he comes equipped from the beginning with a greater armament of techniques and strategies than does his fellow who always succeeds in seeing only the conventional. Being equipped with many alternative programs to “attack” any of the tasks involved, he may, then, when flexible enough, shift from one point of view to another, discerning the phenomena in which he is interested from a different angle every time.

This *richness* in diverse and alternative organizing programs, and the *flexibility* to dissolve quickly the schemata created with the aid of one group of programs and to reorganize them anew with the aid of alternative programs, when extreme, makes for the special ability of the creative mind for original solutions. But to some extent, a considerable degree of richness and flexibility is required to attain any *change* in the patterns of behavior, systems of beliefs, or structure of personality. This issue is especially relevant for psychoanalysis, as we know that any lasting change to be attained as the result of therapy is dependent on the patient's capability to reorganize his experience, memory, and attitudes, utilizing other programs from those previously utilized. The patient in therapy naturally presents his habitual ways of understanding significant events, handling his impulses, experiencing his past, and responding to the behavior of others. The essence of any interpretation is the analyst's attempt to open the patient's mind to the possibility that the same events may eventually be understood differently, the impulse may be handled otherwise, the memory may have another meaning, or the other's behavior may be responded to in a different way.

Schafer (1982), speaking about the reconstruction of the past with the aid of interpretations, states: “each analytically revised account of the past is necessarily a reconstruction of that which has already been constructed differently” (p. 77). But it is clear that any such attempt to incite a patient to utilize organizing programs other than his habitual ones is first of all dependent on whether he at all possesses the sufficient number of alternative programs necessary for the reorganization of his experience, memory constructs, and beliefs, and for the employment of different strategies of thought and patterns of defense. If a patient belonging to the restrictive style is equipped only with a very limited number of organizing programs, it will be very difficult for him, if not impossible, to assimilate any interpretation. Schafer (1979), speaking about what he calls “principles of constructing experience” (which I would regard as identical to “organizing programs”), claims that any ability on the part of the patient to utilize interpretation effectively is dependent on his being equipped with a heterogenous

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system of such organizing principles: “It is this heterogenous composition that provides the fulcrum with the help of which it is possible to move the subjective world ... The analysts of whom this is true can hear an interpretation as such, at least some of the time, however else they hear it (e.g., as criticism). Those who can't, are unanalyzable—at least during that attempt at analysis. Any theory of effective interpretation or therapeutic effect must allow for an interpretation's being heard in more than one way” (p. 882).

Any experienced analyst is well acquainted with both—the prolific and restrictive styles—and knows how they are expected to behave in the therapeutic situation. Those with the *prolific style* are generally among our most gratifying patients. Typically, such a patient, sometime in his last phase of analysis, after most of his resistances, regressive tendencies, and restraining defenses have been worked through, enters into what can be called a “creative phase.” He then eagerly catches every interpretation, including those he rejected defensively in former phases of his analysis, is ready to examine them for all their possible vantage points, to produce plentiful associations connected to any of their multifaceted meanings, and even succeeds in surprising us by illuminating new meanings we had not considered at all. This work proceeds mostly in an atmosphere of laxity and playfulness, while the patient seems to enjoy his ability to wander flexibly through the diverse domains of meanings, getting new perspectives to relate to his past experiences and trying out new approaches in his behavior with others.

The patient with the *restrictive style* is the exact inverse, and therefore is included among our most frustrating patients. Typically, such a person can hardly respond to any interpretation, especially to those based on an attempt to re-examine a given phenomenon from a different angle from the reported one. Even when the analyst tries, while reflecting something back, to reformulate it only slightly differently from the original version, the patient rejects it, or simply responds with an “I don't understand what you mean.” It always seems

as though the patient, being bound to one context and strategy of thought, has no possibility of shifting his view and seeing things from a different angle or level, a shift essential for the assimilation of any interpretation. I think that these are the kind of patients **Freud (1937)** had in mind when he spoke about “depletion of the plasticity” in his paper “Analysis Terminable and Interminable,” while detailing the various factors responsible for insoluble interminability. **Likewise Rangell (1981)**, when he describes “an otherwise intelligent woman [who] ritualistically returns with ‘I don't understand’ to the most primitive explanations in a way that recalls Mahler's description of pseudo-imbecility in children” (p. 132); and **Klein (1980)** when he describes “Austistic phenomena in

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neurotic patients” as a “tendency to bring up some topic which the patient seizes upon with obsessional rigidity but which is never worked through because of the inability to take in interpretations and to deal with the problem” (p. 395). What pervades these descriptions, and many others scattered through the literature that are similar, is the sense of helplessness the analyst bears when treating an otherwise intelligent patient with a basic pathology mostly not exceeding the regular neuroses, who for some unknown reason shows no improvement—the years pass and nothing changes. To my mind, in most of these cases, it is the lack of a minimal stock of alternative organizing programs that make any reorganization of experiences, knowledge, and beliefs, and therefore any change, impossible to attain.

Psychologists interested in the cultivation of creativity and originality and psychoanalysts interested in improving techniques used in treating patients regarded as “unanalyzable” will certainly ask: “Can a cognitive style be modified?” In the present case the question would take the form: “If one takes into consideration all the transient factors that may cause a person to act as if restrictively, such as specific defenses, anxieties, or interpersonal conditions, would it be possible to modify cognitive organization so that a restrictive style will become closer to the prolific one?” No attempt will be made here to answer this question, but it is clear that it can be answered at all only if we have sufficient understanding of the following: What is the process by which these styles develop *in vivo*? How does each of them serve the adaptive aims of its possessor? What conditions are responsible for their stabilization? So, let us go on and focus on these issues, dealing with the processes that assumedly contribute to the development of originality, and leaving aside at present the problem of the eventual inducement of changes.

Psychological Development Theories

Most developmental studies deal not with originality as an isolated component, but with creativity in general. The general approach pervading most experimental studies is the interpersonal one, attributing the development of creativeness to a specific childhood family constellation. **Lytton (1971)**, summarizing the pertinent literature, presents a family profile of creative children:

They would seem to be middle-class with father having considerable autonomy in his profession or business. The father thus provides a model of autonomy, as well as of general effectiveness and the parents, in turn, grant similar autonomy to their children. The mother will also often have

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had a career in her own right before marriage. The parents exhibit enthusiasm for creative activities, encourage their children's curiosity and explorative urge and stimulate them to independent achievement. However, this is done without pressure for high standards or particular accomplishments, since autonomy here means that the parents do not intrude, but allow their children to develop at their own pace and in their own desired direction, even to the point of being tolerant of some backsliding to more infantile behavior. The children's autonomy may also be bought at the expense of some closeness and warmth in family relations. Nor is the family necessarily an entirely harmonious one: open expression of feelings and sometimes of disagreement will be a normal part of family life [p. 72].¹

Only a limited number of psychologists, such as **Barron (1963)** and **Weisberg and Springer (1962)**, who seem to be influenced by the psychoanalytic approach, try to explain the development of creativity (Barron also is concerned with the development of originality) using the adaptive point of view. According to this point of view the development of all cognitive techniques and strategies is regarded as reflecting the growing child's attempts to cope in the most efficient way with his inner needs and with the demands of his social environment. If we were to apply this approach to the explanation of the development of the above-suggested two cognitive styles—the restrictive and the prolific—the following developmental process could be described:

The maturing brain of the developing child enables him to meet every one of his phase-appropriate problems and conflicts by constructing new cognitive techniques and strategies, each adjusted to its specific task. This natural tendency of the maturing child—to “attack” new problems with the aid of novel techniques and strategies—requires constant reinforcement of the child by his caretakers. Children not provided with sufficient reinforcement may soon learn that after succeeding once to solve a problem or to cope with a situation in a given way, the best thing to do is to stick to this solution and not try and experiment with other solutions. Other children, in contrast, being sufficiently reinforced in their natural efforts to try out new solutions, will learn that finding a new way to solve a problem or cope with a situation can always be worthwhile. The first group tends to develop into the restrictive style, confining their cognitive activities throughout their lives to the same and repetitive techniques and strategies, whereas the others tend to develop into the prolific style, continuing always to widen and enrich their repertoire of techniques and strategies. By “re-inforcement” we may include (1) all environmental conditions that *do* foster

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the attempts of the child to experiment with new and alternative ways of problem solving and coping, and (2) all those conditions that *do not* enable the child to stick to his repetitive techniques and strategies, but force him to search for new ways to cope and adapt. To foster his attempts, the child needs parents who are able to respect his emerging autonomy without imposing their beliefs and expectations on him, and who are ready to meet his experiments and actions favorably, regardless of how clumsy and inefficient they may be at the beginning.

In regard to the second group of conditions, those that force the child to search for new ways of coping, it would be interesting to mention **MacKinnon (1961)** who, in their study of creative architects, found that in their childhood their parents tended to move from one place to another much more frequently than did the families of less creative children. Thus we may assume that when a child *has* to adapt each time to a new physical and social environment, he cannot allow himself to stick to his habitual ways of coping, but is each time forced to revise his techniques and strategies in order to adapt to the new setting. We may assume that several other environmental conditions may have an influence similar to that of the frequent alterations of residence, which also force the child to develop a diversity of problem-solving and coping techniques. Such conditions may include frequent changes of his group of caretakers, impulsive and unpredictable parents, great discrepancies between the demands and behavioral patterns of the two parents, or between the parents and some of his sisters and brothers, etc. Each of these conditions contributes to the enrichment of the child's repertoire of organizing programs, and therefore to his eventual emergence as an original and creative individual.

One of the cognitive features that most intrigues the psychoanalytically oriented researchers of creativity is the openness of these gifted individuals to accept the irrational and to trust their unconscious as a reservoir of organizing processes to be utilized in their creative endeavors. **Barron (1963)** writes: "The creative individual ... turns much more than do most people to the dimly realized life of the unconscious, and is likely to grant more than a usual amount of respect to the as yet unconscious forces of the irrational in himself and in others ... the creative individual not only respects the irrational in himself, but also courts it as the most promising source of novelty in his own thinking" (p. 158). This "turning to the life of the unconscious" makes for what I would regard as the most interesting ability of the creative individual—the ability to enrich his secondary-process cognition with techniques and strategies derived from the primary process (an enrichment I described in detail in a former paper [**Noy, 1978**]).

Most of the psychologists who have written about this phenomenon tend

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to explain it along the same lines as they explain creativeness in general—as the outgrowth of a specific family atmosphere favorable to the child's free enactment of the primary processes in his thoughts and communications. Some of them, influenced by **Kris's (1952)** notion of the "regression in the service of the ego," stress the tolerance of such families to regression. **Weisberg and Springer (1962)**, for example, write: "The development of such a mind, it is hypothesized, proceeds from an adaptive, reconstructive technique learned in early childhood, in which the child regresses comfortably, and does not use repression or withdrawal as a primary means of dealing with a chronically anxiety-producing environment" (p. 564). Others, less sure that primary-process enrichment is necessarily connected to regression, tend to stress the tolerance of the creative child's parents in accepting his imaginative and irrational communication as a possible explanation for the development of his ability to utilize his primary processes in constructing his products. This contrasts with the "rational" parents who always scold their child for speaking "nonsense" when he reveals the products of his imagination, letting him understand by this that free primary-process-thought activity is something he has to be ashamed of, and that he must do his best to suppress any manifestation of it in his overt communication.

When surveying the pertinent psychological literature, the psychoanalytically oriented reader cannot but get the impression that there is something naïve in the tendency to explain the development of creativity and originality only as an outgrowth of the nurturing family atmosphere in childhood, and the adaptive struggles of the maturing child. To clarify, this approach is not erroneous, but it certainly represents only one side of the many factors contributing to the development of creativeness in the individual. This one-sidedness stems, I believe, from two factors, one methodological and one ideological: (1) Most of the findings serving as a basis for the conclusions are derived from biographical material, superficial interviews, questionnaires, and in the best case, psychological tests; so that most of the significant dynamic information—the specific childhood conflicts, traumata, anxieties, and frustrations, the emotional attitudes of the parents, the exact patterns of the child's object relations—is missing. (2) The whole approach to the study of the development of creativity becomes more and more subordinated to the belief that creativity is, and has to be, the incarnation of man's striving for self-actualization. **Maslow (1963)**, for example, opens his lecture on "The Creative Attitude" with the declaration: "My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of the healthy, self-actualizing, fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, and may perhaps turn out to be the same thing" (p. 1).

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This belief pervades most of the developmental studies which, although describing the childhood of the creative individual as not always being the happiest, evidently believe it to be the healthiest. If one were to take the two opposing developmental lines, that directed toward the emergence of creativity and originality, and that leading to the development of the uncreative, conventional, habit-bound type of personality, the first is always regarded as the outcome of healthy, normal, and undisturbed development, whereas the opposite is seen as

the result of some distorting and restraining influences which disturbed development in some of its earlier phases. This attitude is best expressed by **Rogers (1954)** in a paper which has already become a classic in the literature about creativity: "The mainspring of creativity appears to be the same tendency which we discover so deeply as the curative force in psychotherapy—man's tendency to actualize himself, to become his potentialities ... it exists in every individual and awaits only the proper conditions to be released and expressed." Therefore "it is clear that they [the conditions for creativity] cannot be forced, but must be permitted to emerge" (p. 256). The conclusion one can derive from this approach is that when you are confronted with a creative, original, or prolific style of cognition, you need not bother to search for specific causes to explain its development, and certainly not in the domain of psychopathology; but if it is the opposite style that emerges, then it is evident that something has been going astray in the process of childhood development. Although, I am sure, that we all find this approach very attractive, I doubt if as psychoanalysts we can accept it without criticism. But let us pause here and deal first with another important issue—what do we mean by "creative originality"?

Creative Originality

Originality is manifested in the tendency to produce something new—ideas, things, or means of expression and communication of experience that previously have not existed, or have not been used in the same context. But originality, in order to be regarded as creative, requires an additional factor: somebody else who is ready to "buy" the new product. **Stein (1963)** defines creativity as "that process which results in a novel work that is accepted as tenable or useful or satisfying, by a group at some point in time" (p. 218). Why "at some point in time"? In order to include creators whose novelties were rejected by their contemporaries, but "discovered" and accepted by some future generation. There are certainly many individuals who, though definitely original, cannot be regarded as creative. We all know many scientists and artists who are always doing their best to emit

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something new and original, but who in fact produce nothing "creative" because nobody is ready to accept their ideas or products as tenable, useful, or satisfying. Others, in contrast, often not even trying very hard to be original, succeed in having their products accepted by some "significant group" as relevant, and sometimes are even lucky enough to be remembered in history as pioneers who opened a new era in science or a new style in art. Bach, for example, in whose compositions all subsequent music is already implied, never attempted to be original, and on the contrary was often blamed by his contemporaries for being conventional and "altmodist." The same is true of Cézanne, who is now regarded as the "father" of modern painting. Some people would certainly claim that the social acceptability of an original product is mainly a matter of chance. They would explain that in every area of science and art there are hundreds of creators, each contributing his original novelties; they believe that if a creator whose novelties were rejected by his contemporaries is privileged to be "discovered" by a future generation, his later acceptance was largely a matter of chance. The particular art or science, developing according to its inner rules, had reached a point where the novelties of Mr. X had become the accepted style. Other people, not giving the credit to pure chance, believe that if a creator is accepted many years later, it is because by his ingenuity he was able to foresee future developments. Books on the history of science and art are full of stories of geniuses who "were ahead of their time" and therefore "created for future generations." In my opinion, although I am not so sure that the genius in science or art is endowed with a prophetic power to foresee the future, his ability to be historically right can hardly be regarded as a matter of chance.

To develop the discussion, let me introduce here the concept of "social needs," stating that any innovation, in order to be accepted and integrated into the stream of an advancing science or art, has to be attuned to the needs of some social group. Scientific creativity is the attempt to pose new questions and to provide new ideas about how to understand, master, and modify nature, whereas artistic creativity is the attempt to find and construct new means for the expression of human experience, and to provide new formulas for organization and ordering it (see also **Noy, 1979a**). Any new idea can be accepted in science only if it provides the answer to a question that is relevant for someone, and any new means of expression or formula for organization can be adopted only if it serves to express, organize, or order something for which an artist is striving, but hitherto had no means of accomplishing.

Such a view is in line with recent developments in philosophy and in two new disciplines—the sociology of science and the sociology of art. The

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common understanding that governed philosophy for centuries was that any science or art is a closed system that develops according to its own inner rules and needs, driven forward by the creative genius who provides the new solutions and imposes his new rules on the scientific or artistic community. This concept was influenced by **Kant (1790)** who stated: "Genius is the talent (or natural gift) which gives the rule to art ... Genius is the innate mental disposition [*ingenium*] through which Nature gives the rule to Art" (p. 188). Today, however, more and more philosophers are ready to pay attention to the interrelationship between science and art and the needs of the society in which the particular science or art flourishes. **Habermas (1968)**, for example, is of the opinion that the very questions any science asks are dependent on the social interests of its particular culture and time.

To my mind, what characterizes creative originality is its possessor's ability to perceive the social needs directed toward his science or art and to respond to them creatively. As opposed to many scientists and artists who create novelty only for the sake of exhibiting their originality, the creative scientist or artist, while rebelling against the conventional to present his original scientific or artistic products, always remains attuned to the needs of a target group. Though it often seems as though he possesses the ability to foresee the future development of his science or art, this is not because he is endowed with any prophetic power. The new needs, in any of the transitional phases of science and art, emerge mostly outside of the awareness of the scientific or artistic community and are manifested at

first as a growing dissatisfaction with the conventional, and as some dim yearning for the appearance of something new. Sometimes it may take several decades before these latent needs become evident enough to call for a scientific revolution or a new style in art. The creative genius, in his extreme sensitivity to the needs of his society, succeeds in identifying them immediately at their emergence, long before his contemporaries become aware that something is going to change. Being loyal only to his own perception (what we usually call “intuition”), he immediately stops what he has been doing when he feels that the needs have changed and directs his creative endeavors to meet the new demands. Thus it is not the future, but only the present that he is able to sense, but owing to his sensitive “antennae” he perceives that present to which we ordinary people are already blind and deaf.

The possession of such “antennae” to sense the emerging needs of his target group long before they become evident is also what characterizes the real *leader*; in contrast, the mere politician can see only the evident. He may appear to be “ahead of his time” when he persuades his people to invest

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their efforts in meeting the needs of tomorrow, instead of wasting them by coping with what he knows already belongs to yesterday.

All of them, the creative scientist, artist, or leader, equipped with “antennae” to sense their fellows' needs long before they themselves do, may often be partly or totally unaware of what it is that they are responding to. What betrays their sensitivity is, first, their deep sense of conviction that, even when they depart from any consensus to pursue their novel and original path, alone and deserted by all their colleagues, they are inevitably right; and, second, the proof of history that they have indeed been right.

Several years ago, as part of my attempts to interview creative people, I had the opportunity to speak with one of the most creative and original minds in our field. When I asked him about the way he develops his original ideas, he told me: “It usually begins with some general feeling that something cries out for revision and alteration. And then, when I begin to work on developing my own ideas, I become more and more anxious. I know that the more I depart from the common opinion, the more I will be attacked, excommunicated, and rejected by many of my best friends. It is like leaving a friendly and safe harbor to go out in a small boat into the stormy big sea. But what gives me the courage to proceed on my way is that, although I have no idea where I am going to land, I know deep in my heart that not far away is the other coast, and I am certain that I can reach it.”

From all that has been said here one can get the impression that in the endless discussion of “does history create the genius, or is it the genius who creates history?” I am unequivocally in favor of the first alternative. But that is not exactly the case. I believe that there is an ongoing interrelationship between the work of the creative genius and the historical development of science and art. Although I do not believe that the genius can really instigate historical change, I think that by his ability to perceive changes and formulate them while they are still in their initial phase of emergence, he facilitates their emergence and accelerates the process itself. From this point of view, the genius in science or art can be compared with the analyst, and his creative work can be compared with the interpretations given to the patient. By understanding the meanings of what is still latent, and by knowing how to articulate the meanings and reflect them back in an intelligible form, both can assist their patients/audiences/communities to confront what they are still unable to see, to assimilate it, and to utilize it as a lever for the inducement of changes. Like the artist or the scientist, the analyst must be regarded not as the cause of the change but only as the catalyst that accelerates the process. However, as any chemist knows well, although it is never the catalyst that creates the process, without its interference the process may not proceed at all, and no change will occur.

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Returning to the issue of interest to us in the present study—the cognitive or personality features characteristic of the individual endowed with the ability for creative originality—we recognize that we are confronted here with something like a paradox. On the one hand, we recognize a person rebelling against every conformity, pursuing his original way without letting social conventions impede him in his progress; but on the other hand, we see a person with the most sensitive antennae attentive to the tiniest social changes and able to respond to them long before anybody else. Therefore, the question that can be asked is: Why should a person be motivated to rebel against the generally accepted and agreed-upon conceptions of science or the conventional forms of art in order to renew them for the benefit of those who don't ask for change and many times even scornfully declare their resistance to any such change? To answer such a question, as with similar questions dealing with the motivations for creativity, we have to turn to psychoanalytic theories. Why? Because the answers to all other issues concerning creativity, such as the cognitive processes involved, the structure of the creative personality, or the developmental background of such personality, can also be provided, at least in part, by the other disciplines of psychology and sociology; a reasonable answer to questions concerning motivation, on the other hand, can be provided only by psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalytic Theories of Development

Everything said up to this point can assist us in understanding only the conditions for originality, i.e., the cognitive organization, personality patterns, and developmental background that make an individual capable of responding originally in places and situations where others are not able to do so. But what characterizes the original creator in science and art is that he not only *can* create original products where others cannot, but that he *must* do so. The scientist will spend days and nights on overcoming the obstacles to his original work, and the artist will never be satisfied with what has already been accomplished, and immediately upon finishing one original work will begin to plan the next. And, what is so curious about it is that he may even not enjoy doing this at all, but feels himself under the tyranny of some inner urge which compels him to create. Simenon, who is known as a highly prolific writer, said (as quoted by **Storr, 1972**): “Writing is not a profession, but a vocation of unhappiness” (p. 1). To understand this “must,” to follow the origin of the compelling impulse to create something new and original, we have to look into the *motivations* of the creative individual, and at the needs satisfied by

the creative activity.

Psychoanalysis, as has already been mentioned, deals not with originality

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as an isolated component, but with creativity in general. As far as the motivations for creativity are concerned, the main problem occupying most psychologists interested in this issue is whether the motivations for creativity belong to the “normal” and healthy aspect of personality or stem from the psychopathological. For psychoanalysis such a question is practically irrelevant, because creative activity is no longer regarded as representing a drive, wish, or conflict, but is seen as a *solution* to some inner struggle. The basic struggle underlying creativity may be similar to those that may bring people to develop a neurosis, borderline, or even psychotic disturbance, but the creative activity as the solution to any of those disturbances is always regarded as a healthy one. This approach has its origin in the writings of Freud, who in the 23rd lecture of his “Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis” (1916-1917) described the artist as “in rudiments an introvert, not far removed from neurosis” who succeeds, in contrast to the neurotic, to find “a path that leads back from phantasy to reality” (p. 376); and in 1920, in a letter to Stefan Zweig, wrote: “Hysteria ... is an expression of the same organic power which produces the genius of the artist.” The adjectives used to describe the creative activity, as we find them repeatedly in modern psychoanalytic literature, are “restorative,” “recuperative,” “reparative,” “compensatory,” and so on—all adjectives reflecting the belief that the scientist or artist succeeds in his creative endeavors to find the path that may lead him from neurosis or psychosis back to healthy integration and adaptation.

But, although there is today a general willingness to understand creative activity as an attempt to overcome some basic inner conflict or developmental struggle, there is no agreement yet concerning the exact nature of this underlying conflict or struggle. Classical psychoanalysis, in line with the general approach of the beginning of the century, believed this conflict to be the oedipal one. In recent years, again with the general theoretical trend, the supposed underlying conflict has been gradually moving “downward” toward the various preoedipal conflicts and developmental struggles. The first member of that movement to see conflict in this way was Melanie Klein who, according to **Hanna Segal (1981)**, “concludes that the anxieties of the depressive position and the reparative urge which they give rise to, lie at the root of creativity” (p. 81). Today the trend naturally goes in the direction of the self and narcissism. For **Kohut (1966)** “the creative activity itself deserves to be considered among the transformation of narcissism” (p. 259); and in ***The Analysis of the Self* (1971)**, after presenting some examples, he states: “There is no need, however, to rely exclusively on such gross examples to serve as a proof for the narcissistic nature of the creative act” (p. 315). **Gedo (1972)**, describing the analysis of a patient he considered

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to be a genius, writes: “In order to maintain his narcissistic balance he needed continuous proofs of his worth as a creator. It was the unending threat of a deficit in his self-esteem that made the creative act into an emotional necessity for him. Insofar as the creativity of genius provided him with matchless narcissistic replenishment, the opportunity to heal himself through work produced in him a daemonic impetus for the creative act. This relentless force, in turn, distinguished his creativity from that of lesser men. Like the Phoenix, he rose from his own ashes” (p. 202).

Niederland (1967, 1976) assumes that the specific narcissistic injury motivating an individual to compensate for it by creative activity is a severe disturbance in the image of the body-self:

In my own work, I have focused attention on the presence of permanent and often severe injuries to infantile narcissism and its effect on the creative potentialities. In the cases observed, the narcissistic injury could be traced to feelings of incompleteness derived from early physical frailty or disability, protracted illness in childhood, congenital or early acquired malformations, and fantasied or factual anomalies ... In a series of eight analytically studied artist-patients—all creatively active individuals—fantasies of being incomplete, misshapen ugly, or deficient could be observed. During creative work these feelings were replaced by sensations of completeness, of being strong, whole, and free from deficiency or inadequacy, punctuated by feelings of insufficiency when difficulties in their work arose [1976, pp. 195-196].

I fully agree with those writers who consider the psychoanalytic model of the self as the best model available today for the understanding of the phenomenon of creative activity, but I have some problems with the manner in which most of them tend to conceptualize the self. Let us, therefore, take a short detour to examine critically the prevailing psychoanalytic conception of the self.

It is common agreement, based on ample clinical evidence, that the more severe psychopathological situations, those usually grouped as “beyond the neuroses,” represent a basic disturbance in the organization of the self. The problem is that from this notion the opposite conclusion, an erroneous one to my mind, is generally automatically derived: that every disturbance revealed in the organization of the self necessarily represents a narcissistic, borderline, or psychotic psychopathology. It is certainly correct that in the more severe psychopathologies a defect in organization of the self is always involved, but the inverse is *not* true—not every disturbance in the self will necessarily give rise to a severe psychopathology. Since in clinical practice we can see self disturbances that are represented by all kinds of psychopathologies, from transient neuroses to the most severe cases of psychosis,

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to say that somebody has a disturbance in some sector of his self, or to describe a given symptom as representing an attempt to cope with a defect in the organization of the self, certainly does not require diagnosing him as narcissistic or borderline.

This view, identifying self pathology with narcissism, borderline, or psychotic conditions, has its origin, at least in part, in the writings of Kohut. The impression one can derive from his writings is that two kinds of psychopathology exist: "self-pathology" and "structural pathology" (see **Kohut, 1977**, p. 225). The first, the more severe one, derives from preoedipal disturbances (narcissistic, borderline, and psychotic), and the second, from oedipal ones (neurotic). Each kind of psychopathology is assumedly connected to a different developmental task. **Gedo (1976)**, in his lecture on "The Metapsychology of the Self," shows that according to Kohut's theory the first developmental task is to attain "self-cohesion": "Kohut... has established the degree of cohesiveness in the organization of the self as the basic criterion for the differential diagnosis among major groups of psychopathology: classical transference neuroses, the borderline and psychotic characters, and narcissistic personality disturbances. These criteria, based on degrees of self-cohesion, can be extrapolated into an epigenetic developmental psychology" (p. 168). The first developmental task is "self-unification, in which the primary identity is established, the main issues of psychic life can be seen as these of self-definition. Only after self-cohesion is accomplished does behavior begin to be regulated by the pleasure-principle" (pp. 168-169). Implicit in this theoretical approach is the belief that the struggle to organize a cohesive self is a task expected in normal development to be accomplished once and forever and to be finished before the beginning of the oedipal period. This belief is exactly what I have to disagree with, because I am convinced that the struggle to maintain a cohesive and well-integrated self, a self that provides us with a firm sense of unity and continuity and that serves as *the* center for internalization, identification, and object relation, is a never-ending struggle, occupying the healthy mind as well as the pathological one for its entire life.

In a series of papers dealing with the various aspects of the psychoanalytic theory of the primary process (**Noy, 1969, 1973, 1978, 1979b, 1982**), I advanced the idea that this task, to maintain the unity and continuity of the self, is the main function of the primary process. According to the theory the primary processes are defined as "self-centered," and they include all the mental processes whose function is to serve the self in its needs for assimilation, accommodation, and integration. The secondary processes are defined as "reality-oriented," and they include all the mental processes whose function is to enable the organism to deal with reality, such as perception

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and inner representation of reality, control of reality-directed behavior, and communication with others. Both mental activities, the self-centered and the reality-oriented, must continuously support and complement one another; therefore both must be developed and improved throughout the individual's life, so that in no phase of life can the self-centered activity be regarded as accomplished. The self as an island of stability placed in an organism that has to act and adapt itself continuously to an ever-changing reality requires ongoing organizing activity to *assimilate* new experience, to *accommodate* itself to the changing demands of reality which get more complicated with each consecutive developmental phase, and to safeguard its *integration* against the various forces threatening its cohesion. This organizing activity, accomplished through the operation of the primary processes, proceeds on various levels of mental functioning, such as the constant stream of pre- and unconscious organizing activity accompanying daily reality-oriented rational reasoning (**Kubie, 1966**), daydreaming or contemplation, dreaming, and all kinds of artistic activity. All of these activities are aimed at achieving the same goal—to serve the self in its needs for assimilation, accommodation, and integration—but each becomes specialized in order, more or less, to fulfill different aspects of these functions. Artistic activity—the focus of the present study—holds a unique place among all other self-centered activities, by fulfilling mainly the functions of the self's interrelationship with other human objects. This includes the expression and articulation of emotions and feelings, the exchange of emotional experience with others, the gaining of access into the emotional life of others, and the reconciliation among the ambivalent emotions aroused in interpersonal situations (see **Storr, 1972; Noy, 1979a**).

Before going on with the presentation of my views about creativity and originality, let me offer a few words of reservation: my theory is based mainly on what I have learned from studying *artistic* activity from the psychoanalytic point of view. Although there is no doubt that most of the motivations toward the two kinds of creativity—the artistic and the scientific—have the same origin, it may be that in the case of scientific creativity other motivations are also involved about whose origin I as yet have no idea. Therefore, when using the term "creativity" I mean mainly artistic creativity, though I do include those aspects of scientific creativity in which the similarity to artistic creativity can be proved.

My general thesis is that the motive for creativity is always a self-centered one. In fact, because creativity is a compound activity driven by various motives, such as the strive for perfection, the quest for originality, the search for aesthetic form, and the need for articulation, we have to speak about "motives" in the plural. Each of these motives presumably has its

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origin in one of the major developmental of the self, or, in other words, each of the various component activities of creativity is related to one of the major needs of the developing self. The specific need to which originality is related is the need of the self for individuation,² the need to develop a sense of self experienced as something unique, separated, and different from all the other objects. This struggle for individuation is one of the major developmental tasks of early childhood and continues to occupy every person for his entire life, but in normal development we expect that enough sense of individuation has been created before maturity is reached, so that that task no longer demands too much mental investment. However, in cases where the creation of a sense of individuation was hindered for reasons we will discuss later, the struggle for individuation may continue throughout life as one of the central pursuits of the personality, and may have a major influence on all the individual's thoughts and deeds.

Practicing for years in a university community, I had the opportunity to work with many teachers and therefore learned a lot about their motivations to succeed in their lectures and writings. Everyone wants, of course, to succeed and earn a good reputation; but it is interesting to see how diverse are the motives that drive each of them to be "good." The major aim of some lecturers is to convince their students of

the importance of the discipline they are teaching; and their success is measured accordingly by the number of followers they have managed to recruit. Others strive to exhibit their encyclopedic knowledge in the writings of the “great fathers” of their science, and to prove their loyalty to them, and so on. Among these various aims you will always find those lecturers for whom the most important aim seems to be to appear original at any price. One professor of history once told me: “I am satisfied after a lecture only if I have succeeded in enabling my students to see that that historical event they know well can also be understood from a quite different angle from what they previously believed.” One always gets the impression that what is important for these teachers is not to exhibit knowledge, to prepare their students to pass their examinations well, to earn their admiration for being able to explain complicated material, and so on, but mainly to be remembered by their listeners as somebody *different* from the “crowd” of other teachers and *unique* in approach.

Sometimes this need to be original at any price may even impede a teacher's academic advancement. One patient, for example, who for years was unable to invest enough energy to complete any serious research wasted practically all his talent in his attempts to impress his colleagues and students

² Jung was the first to speak about “individuation” in relation to art, but for him this concept had a different meaning from the one accepted today in self psychology.

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again and again with his bright and original ideas. He came to recognize his status (and to ask for psychotherapeutic aid) only after he opened a letter of recommendation sent to the committee that had to decide about his promotion and found that he was described by a distinguished colleague as “the jester of our profession.” Similar examples of a wish to be perceived and remembered as “different” and “unique” are common among creative writers, poets, composers, etc., especially those known by their inclination to experiment with new forms and styles.

The question of interest to us is the following: what is the developmental origin of such a need to always appear different and unique? We may assume that if this need has already determined the development of the entire cognitive style, as in the case of genuinely creative individuals, its origin has to be very early in the process of cognitive development, i.e., in some early disturbances in the mother-child relationship or in other interpersonal relationships that have impeded the normal process of individuation. The problem is that in dealing with disturbances in early mother-child relationships we usually expect to find some *deficit*, some inability of the mother or another significant caretaker to respond appropriately to one of the basic needs of the child, such as the need for mirroring, empathic understanding, “refueling,” etc. But in the cases where the disturbance is more or less localized in the process of individuation alone, we are confronted mostly with an *excess*, with a too-close emotional relationship, or with a mother too eager to satisfy all her child's needs. The main problem the child has to cope with throughout his formative years is therefore not abandonment or emotional neglect, but excessive intrusion, preventing the child from delineating his self as separate from the object representations of his mother and other significant others. We know, of course, that underlying the disturbances of “excess” may be psychopathological dynamics similar to those in the cases of “deficit,” and that the reason for a mother to give her child too much may be only the other side of the same narcissistic pathology that may bring another mother to give less than needed. But I want to stress the fact that that is not always the reason for excess. Just as I am not ready to consider any disturbance in the organization of the self as identical with “narcissism” or “borderline,” so I also do not think that any cause of “excess” necessarily reflects a severe psychopathology of the mother, or a serious disturbance in the mother-child relationship.

It is important to stress this point in order to understand why most developmental studies of creative individuals, such as those mentioned in the second section of this paper, provide an image of a normal childhood with “good-enough” parents, and do not point to any significant disturbances. The reason is that most psychological studies, as already mentioned,

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are based on background information derived from questionnaires or a few interviews, whereas most disturbances of “excess” are not detectable by such superficial methods but can be revealed only after a considerable period of psychoanalysis or psychotherapy.

Therefore, to follow the developmental origin of the quest for originality and to learn in which of the early conflicts and developmental struggles they are really rooted, we will have to resort to analyzed clinical cases. But here we are confronted with another problem: the number of published cases is extremely low, because the more a person is really creative, the better known he is in his community, the more his therapist is, for ethical reasons, prevented from presenting his case. As I am also restricted for the same reason, I will describe parts of the story of a patient I heard about in a seminar in which I participated on one of my visits abroad.

A young musician, in his early twenties, was referred to therapy because of various neurotic symptoms, including serious disturbances in his relationships with the other sex. His superior musical talent became manifested quite early in his life, and his mother, herself an enthusiastic music lover, did everything in her power to foster his talent and was also his first dedicated teacher. Not only did she fulfill her own ambition through his success in music, but she also shared her love of music with her son, and used music as one of the dominant channels for emotional communication with him. All his childhood remained in his memory as one long and happy festival of music, in which he and his mother used to listen together, discuss the music, and sing and play together on the piano. Naturally, he went on to study music, became a good pianist, and at adolescence began his first steps in composition. After several years in which he continued to share with his mother every new musical idea he conceived, they gradually began to part ways. He went more and more in the direction of modern and electronic music and began to compose in a style totally alien to his mother and to his own former taste. She was at first bewildered; she was unable to understand what had happened to him, and even went for psychological consultation to ask if something

could be done with a *Wunderkind* who began to lose his talent as he grew up. And then came the final ceremony at the Academy of Music where he won the first prize for the piece of music every graduate student had to compose for this event. His mother, invited as one of the distinguished guests, became the hero of the evening as all the teachers stood in line to congratulate her as the mother of “one of the most promising and original composers.”

On that occasion she was finally forced to realize that her son had continued to be a real talent, even though with all her understanding in music, she could not enjoy anything he had created. The young musician, in later

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discussing this event with his therapist, stated: “When I saw my mother standing bedazzled in the hall, smiling shyly back at all the people congratulating her, I suddenly knew that from then on my music was mine alone. I realized how much she really hated every tone of what I composed, but I also knew how full of pride she was in being my mother. From now on she *has* to respect me for something to which she will never again have access.” This event came to be the turning point in his relationship with his mother and with women. Whereas from adolescence on he became more and more involved in endless discussions and quarrels with her, he now gradually resumed his traditionally good emotional relations with her, and in time many of his problems in intersexual relationships also began to dissolve. It became clear that, after succeeding in fortifying an island of individuality for himself in one of the central sectors of his self, he could now give up the struggle in all the other sectors.

In connection with this case it would be interesting to quote one of the many findings from the study of **Cambor, Lisowitz, and Miller (1962)** who presented thirty of the world's foremost creative jazz artists:

Nearly all of the musicians described themselves as leaving home and embarking on their career ... between the ages of 16 and 21. This decision usually occurred during a period of tension, dissatisfaction, and uncertainty at home which was described as centering around the following two main conflictual areas: 1) An increasing uncomfortable relationship with the mother, who seemed unable to recognize the musician as an individual and who attempted to keep him a dependent, symbiotic child. At the same time the mother was encouraging her son and making excessive demands for unique accomplishments. 2) A competitive ambivalent relationship with the father, siblings, or peers [pp. 7-8].

The authors summarize their findings;

Actually jazz became a substitutive continuation of their symbiotic childhood, offering dependency gratification through group identity and a sense of belongingness ... an unconscious or partly conscious motivation ... is a striving for a negative identity ... This seems to be related to a rebellious desire to assume a goal or way of life exactly opposite from that expected of them or presented to them as most desirable by the family, other significant people, or society in general ... All seemed to want to seek and defend a niche all their own, rather than to accept the excessive and conflicting ideals of overly ambitious parents [pp. 13-14]³.

I assume that in the background of every creative individual displaying

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a lifelong intense desire for originality one can reveal an early massive emotional intrusion interfering with the natural process of self-individuation. The individual differences mainly lie in the extent of this intrusion and in the ability of the growing child to resist and overcome it. In cases where the intrusion is not too massive, or remains confined to one or several isolated sectors of the self, the child, if gifted enough, can use one of the talents he is endowed with to overcome it by developing an appropriate substitutive activity that will grant him the sufficient sense of individual identity. In cases where the intrusion is more intense, the child may succeed in evading it by splitting his self into a “false self” and a “true self.” The first self develops in compliance with the expectations of mother, father, and the family, and the second, in accordance with the natural inclinations and talents of the individual himself. **Winnicott (1965)** states: “Only the True Self can be creative, and only the True Self can feel real” (p. 148). That means that only if the individual succeeds in maintaining a “free sphere” of true selfness besides the sphere dominated by the False Self can he use his natural talent and choose the solution of creativity and originality to attain some sense of self-individuation.

To demonstrate such a solution, let me present a short clinical vignette: A young man in his late twenties came to analysis with the aim of solving his dependency needs to his parents. Several years before he had begun a brilliant career in economics and politics, but in addition to these activities he used to paint in secret. It became clear that his main occupation represented his False Self, through which he succeeded in fulfilling all his family's expectations for a brilliant academic and political career, and his second occupation, that of painting, his True Self, through which he succeeded in expressing his hidden rich emotional life. Most of his analysis remained focused around his attempts to overcome his dependency needs and the necessity to get his parents' approval for all he did. But toward the end of the analysis he began to consider seriously the possibility of leaving his present successful occupation and of dedicating himself full-time to a career in painting, even though he realized that his family would regard that as a real disaster. It was also interesting to see how, by gradually dissolving the strict boundaries between the False and the True Selves, he succeeded in partly integrating the two occupations—utilizing his sensitivity for others in his political activities and using his ability for public relations to advance his artistic career (after he dared for the first time to come out with a public exhibition).

Alice Miller's (1979) description in “The Drama of the Gifted Child” is perceptive: these children are “sensitive, alert, and have many ‘antennae,’ [and] will quickly learn to adapt to the narcissistic needs of their

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parents ... The result will be that, in spite of excellent performance, the child's own true self cannot develop” (p. 57). These are children who, in order to secure the permanent supply of their parents' love and respect, have renounced any attempt for self-individuation and development of their True Self, and continue for life to gratify their parents' needs and to fulfill their expectations. Even after reaching maturity and independence from the parents, they continue to comply with the expectations of society and remain forever dependent on the affirmation of the significant others. Miller found “an amazing ability on the child's part intuitively, that is unconsciously, to perceive and respond to this need of the mother or of both parents, i.e., to take on the role which had unconsciously been assigned to him ... This ability is then extended and perfected. Later these children ... eventually develop a special sensitivity to unconscious signals of the needs of others” (p. 49).

The question I would ask here is this: Is this grim developmental scenario, as Miller describes it, really the only one possible, or does another possibility also exist—a way for the child to continue to secure the supply of love and respect of others, but *without* sacrificing his individuality? I am sure that such a way does exist—that of creative originality. The gifted individual can use his sensitive “antennae,” his special ability to sense even the unconscious needs of others, not for complying with the needs and expectations directed toward him today, but for gratifying the needs that others might have tomorrow. The gap created between the needs of today and those of tomorrow may then provide him with the sufficient “life span” for developing his own individuality, for utilizing his specific talents to fortify at least one sector of his self as unique and different from all the others.

From the psychosocial point of view, such a solution is indeed the best one we can imagine. The gifted individual, facing the dilemma of “how to attain self-individuality without endangering the love and respect of the significant others,” chooses to rebel against the generally accepted and agreed-upon conceptions of science, or the conventional forms of art, not only for the purpose of destroying them, but in order to renew them for the benefit of all of us. And then, if he has really succeeded in widening the scope of one of the sciences, or in enhancing our ability to enjoy one of the arts, we are ready to grant him all the love and respect. But now, not only for the reason that he needs it, but also because we believe that he really deserves it.

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