

Theories of Creativity and Creative Writing Pedagogy

There are different theories of creativity. These are:

Psychoanalytical Theory - Freud, Jung, Kris, Rank, Adler, and Hammer, argue that people become creative in reaction to difficult circumstances or repressed emotions. For example, repressed memories of traumatic events and the emotions related to these events are believed to be released through creative outlets. However, this theory lacks credibility because it fails to take into account that people are both biological and social beings.

Mental Illness Theory - Briggs, Eisenman, Goodwin, Jamison, Richards, and Martindale, theorize that some type of mental illness is necessary in order for people to be creative, even if it is only a mild form of mental illness. Studies have shown that people who suffer from bipolar and manic-depressive syndromes that cause severe mood swings contribute to enhanced creative expression. Other theorists actually argue that mental illness actually interferes and prevents creativity. Granted that some creative people do suffer from mental disorders but many highly creative people do not show any signs of mental disorder at all. Examples of Creative People Linked to this Theory: Robert Schumann (Composer), David Wallace (writer), Sylvia Plath (poet), Ernest Hemmingway (writer), Michelangelo (artist), Beethoven (composer), Isaac Newton (physicist), Judy Garland (actress)

Psychoticism Theory - Hans Eysenck argued that highly creative individuals possessed a quality he termed 'psychoticism' – a disposition for psychotic tendencies. These psychotic tendencies are apparently the foundation of creative personalities. Eysenck's theory was based on a word association test that measured a person's psychoticism', other theorists argued that Eysenck's theory relied too heavily upon the results of the test he designed.

The Addiction Theory - The main supporters of this theory are Lapp, Collins, Izzo, Norlander, Gustafson, and Wallas. This theory viewed addiction, such as drugs and/or alcohol, facilitates or even causes creativity. Examples of Creative People Linked to this Theory: Johnny Cash (singer, amphetamines), Jimmy Hendrix (singer, alcohol and barbiturates), Eminem (singer), Dr Dre (singer)

Developmental Theories - Developmental theories of creativity are among the most practical. Not only do they help us to understand the roots of creativity, as suggested by the background of unambiguously creative persons, but they also often suggest how to design environments so that the creative potentials of children will be fulfilled.

Psychometric Theories - Psychometric theories are not constructed to describe the developmental background of creative individuals, nor their thinking patterns or traits or motives. Rather, they are unique in focusing on measurement, and as such they inform all other theories of creativity.

Economic Theories - One of the more recent categories of creativity theory draws heavily from economics. This is arguably a fresh and useful perspective, partly because it takes into account very general macro-level processes and influences. Economic theories also offer testable hypotheses about creative efforts. They predict, for instance, that larger groups will inhibit brainstorming because the costs of being different, and therefore original, are higher when the audience is large.

Stage and Componential Process Theories - As noted, a number of models of the creative process have been proposed that attempt to understand the structure and nature of the creative process in terms of stages, which can be sequential or recursive, or underlying componential cognitive processes. Obviously, such models emphasize process over the other P's; in terms of creative magnitude, they range from mini-c to Big-C Creativity.

Cognitive Theories - It is difficult to think about creative achievements or performances without assuming that they have some basis in cognition. It is also difficult to think about creative people without assuming that they have some special cognitive abilities. Neither of these assumptions need be true, but there is some indication that differences in cognition can play a major role in creativity. Cognitive theories emphasize the creative process and person: process, in emphasizing the role of cognitive mechanisms as a basis for creative thought; and person, in considering individual differences in such mechanisms.

Theories Based on Problem Solving and Expertise - A related major category of creativity theories, again drawn primarily from cognitive psychology, emphasizes problem-

solving processes and expert knowledge. This perspective is largely a theory of the creative person and the creative process: person, in emphasizing domain specific expertise as a necessary condition for significant creative achievements; and process, in emphasizing how traditional cognitive psychological concepts like problem representations and heuristic search through problem spaces explain how people generate creative solutions to problems.

Problem-Finding Theories - “Problem finding,” another influential view of creativity, can be seen as a reaction against the application of traditional problemsolving ideas to creativity (Runco, 1994). The problem-finding view holds that the traditional problem-solving view is inadequate to explain how creators come to realize that a problem exists in the first place, and how they are motivated to proactively bring their subjective experience to understand the problem.

Evolutionary Theories - Researchers have proposed a number of theories of creativity drawing on ideas from evolutionary biology, which can be Darwinian (e.g., Albert, in press; Lumsden, 1999; Lumsden & Findlay, 1988; Simonton, 1997, 1999) or Lamarckian (Johnson-Laird, 1993) in nature. Of these, a strong candidate for the most comprehensive theory of creativity – generally speaking – is the Darwinian (formerly “chance-configuration”) model of Dean Keith Simonton (1984, 1988, 1997, 1999, 2003, 2004). To varying extents, Simonton’s model covers all of the P’s of creativity: person and potential, in identifying dispositional and developmental idiosyncrasies associated with the realization of initial creative potential into actual creative achievements; process, in laying out a twostep model of ideation and elaboration, in which chance combinations of ideas play a paramount role and whose complexities are hard to control; product, in noting sometimes unreliable initial assessments versus longer-term stable judgments of creative artifacts; place, in identifying social factors leading to outstanding creativity; and persuasion, in emphasizing how social dynamics establish verdicts of creative outcomes.

Typological Theories - One approach to understanding individual variation in creators’ personalities, working methods, career trajectories, and so on, has been to posit typologies of creators, who differ in systematic ways. Here we focus on a recent typology by Galenson

(2001, 2006), whose theory can be conceptualized as bridging the problem-solving/expertise and Darwinian views.

Systems Theories - some of the broadest and most ambitious theories of creativity take the view that creativity is best conceptualized not as a single entity, but as emerging from a complex system with interacting subcomponents – all of which must be taken into account for a rich, meaningful, and valid understanding of creativity. Thus, in contrast to most of the theories described earlier, “systems” theories take a very broad and often quite qualitative contextual view of creativity.