Chapter 3
Creative Discourse as a Means of Exploring and Developing Human Creativity

Tasos Michailidis
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, Greece

Gina Paschalidou
Ministry of Education, Research, and Religious Affairs, Greece

ABSTRACT

The chapter explores and elucidates the ways in which the cultivation of creative discourse is associated with the formation of the necessary conditions that promote human creativity. The study focuses on revealing the mechanisms behind their attempts of personal expression which incite a multifaceted processing of reality and a redefinition of the relationship between pre-existing and newly acquired knowledge. These mechanisms are studied in order to identify the ways in which creative discourse, under specific conditions, can transform from an innate human capacity into a creative ability.

INTRODUCTION

Creativity has been considered a fundamental feature of human spirit since ancient times, while in more recent times the cultural significance it has acquired for the progress of societies is evident by the contemporary tendency to almost sanctify it. The concept of creativity is so broad that it encompasses all aspects of life from academic achievement and Art to entrepreneurship and everyday-life communication,
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and is today studied from diverse perspectives through various disciplines. Our interpretation sees creative discourse as a problem-solving activity whose solution is given through the interaction among the language code, individual and social experiences, and information integrated into new shapes projected to language.

To this end, the first part of the chapter begins with an overview of evolution of the concept of creativity from antiquity to the Age of Enlightenment and the Romantic period until today. Concurrently, the chapter elaborates on the standard definition of creativity with the two characteristics of originality and effectiveness, regarded by research as prerequisites to anything that can be defined as creative, which we attest to, as well. The first part of the chapter also explores recurrent themes in creativity study, such as the binaries of high quality versus everyday quality creation and the product versus process perspective in creativity.

In the main part of the chapter, we focus on the study of creative discourse. Language, this unique human feature, has always been a means of interpreting the inner-self and the external world, and providing solutions and answers to major as well as minor life problems and questions, and in this sense, language entails creativity. Then, we clarify creativity of language in terms of deviation from the conventional use of language, which can be applied to both literary discourse and any other creative discourse. Linguistic creativity is further explicated through its components of generative creativity and lexical creativity, the latter usually expressed in figurative language, both of which interact with the subject’s creativity and the social context, which transfuse the necessary value to the process.

Next, we elucidate the cognitive processes of convergent and divergent thinking both associated with creativity, by analyzing their features and the ways of measuring them. Finally, recommendations for further study on the point of convergence between literary and creative discourse and its implications in education are offered. Through all of the above we reach our aim of discussing creative discourse after placing it within the overall historical and theoretical background of creativity studies.

BACKGROUND

The concept of creation in many ancient civilizations – for instance, the role of the Muse in Homeric epics – has been associated with the Divine and has retained this mystic reception for centuries, since the creative product was not perceived so much as the product of human intelligence, but mostly as a transcendent intervention that guided the human spirit. Up to the 18th century, the concept of creativity was considered by both pagan and Jewish-Christian tradition to be a work of synthesis of the human and the divine element, as the creative subject could perform the process