

ZERO CREATIVITY

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Creativity seems to have become a real trend for our generation, educational centres for children and young people, research centres, entrepreneurs, employers seeking creative personalities to change reality and mindset. To shape creative professionals is also a scope framed in the mission of higher education, at all the stages of implementation of the Mission Declaration. And everything is nice until we realize that creativity is lacking or creativity is capitalized in the wrong directions. The purpose of the paper is to find motivations for exploring and exploiting creative skills even in cases of „zero creativity”, as well as to find solutions for preventing the phenomenon of malevolent creativity. As a conclusion, the examined subject has generated more questions than answers, being a matter of courage, of conscience or whatever, if we dare to be vocal in demonstrating positive creative skills in times or contexts of crossroads.

Keywords: *creativity, creative skills, positive creativity, malevolent creativity, silence, voice.*

ZERO CREATIVITATE

Creativitatea pare să fi devenit o adevărată tendință pentru generația noastră, centrele educaționale pentru copii și tineri, centrele de cercetare, antreprenorii, angajatorii căutând personalități creative pentru a schimba realitatea și mentalitatea. Formarea profesioniștilor creativi este și un domeniu încadrat în misiunea învățământului superior, la toate etapele de implementare a Declarației de misiune. Și, totul este bine, până când ne dăm seama că este lipsă de creativitate sau creativitatea este valorificată în direcții greșite. Scopul lucrării este de a găsi motivații pentru explorarea și exploatarea abilităților creative, chiar și în cazuri de „zero creativitate”, precum și de a găsi soluții pentru prevenirea fenomenului de creativitate negativă (răuvoitoare). În concluzie, subiectul examinat a generat mai multe întrebări decât răspunsuri, fiind o chestiune de curaj, de conștiință sau de orice altceva, dacă îndrăznim să fim vocali în demonstrarea unor abilități creative pozitive în vremuri și contexte de răscruce.

Cuvinte-cheie: *creativitate, competențe creative, creativitate pozitivă, creativitate negativă, tăcere, voce.*

Introduction. Creativity as a trend?

Creativity seems to have become a real trend for our generation, educational centres for children and young people, research centres, entrepreneurs, employers seeking creative personalities to change reality and mindset. The doctrine has „attributed [...] the ignition of the creativity research explosion [...] [to] the 1950s and 1960s” [1], so that, at present, one of the basic skills emphasized, directly or indirectly, through the concept of lifelong learning is creativity [2]. In the context of Bloom’s taxonomy regarding the different levels of competences, *to create* would be included at the third level, next to such skills as *to argue*, *to appreciate*, *to evaluate*, *to design*, *to predict* etc.

To shape creative professionals is also a scope framed in the mission of higher education, at all the stages of implementation of the Mission Declaration. In the teaching activity, creativity is demanded both from the teacher (especially through identification of the most appropriate teaching methods) and the learner (during the process of skill learning). In the research activity, research itself means creativity: the researcher begins with analysing a complex information, continues with new investigations and ends with certain conclusions, recommendations, future steps to implement, questions to clarify, further investigation to make. In the context of the third mission of outreach or societal impact, the graduate must show creativity and courage to be able to join the labour market and prove that he/she is better than his/her competitors.

Purpose and objectives of the paper: what to do in case of zero creativity?

Probably, many will say that creativity is in close connection with inspiration and art. Simultaneously, „the creative process occurs in a specific context (environment)” [3]. What do we do if inspiration is lacking? How do we get involved in building a better world in such situations? A poet without inspiration does not write poems; a painter does not paint; the artist is suffering.

From another viewpoint, certain authors argue that „the age-old belief that the arts have a special claim to creativity is unfounded [...] [and] creativity should be taken out of the art room and put into homeroom” [4, p. 3, 4]. Creativity and `creative thinking skills` are sought in the fashion area [5], culinary area [6], marketing [7] etc.

Scientific research is also interconnected with inspiration. Different in manifestation and form, art and research are very close to each other [8]. A researcher is also suffering when he/she cannot create.

And how does creativity manifest itself in the case of legal professionals? Or in the case of subjects directly involved in achieving governance – in the hope of achieving good governance?

Maybe someone will say, like prof. Carrie Menkel-Meadow remarks, that „legal creativity” is just „an oxymoron” [9]. On the other hand: problem-solving is a process of creation; interpretation of the law is a process of creation; argumentation of legal acts is a process of creation; changing the judicial practice is a process of creation etc. All these are part of the everyday activity of the legal professional. For a lawyer, the ability to be creative may be a key to another level of professional success. In this context, prof. Raymond Brescia advances the perspective of „creative lawyers” (instead of „traditional lawyers”), who „are trying to change the status quo and alter the legal infrastructure that governs behavior within that status quo”, through „creativity in funding solutions” [10].

Moreover, creativity must be part of the everyday life. And when we are in a crisis of creativity, we must still be creative. That is why in the last years we talk so much about mindfulness (which is so close to creativity [11], lifelong learning, open mindedness. And, just as important as acquiring knowledge and developing skills, seems to be the capacity to naturally manage affectivity and emotions. It is not enough to have knowledge. Today’s man must learn to allow change to come into his life, being equally significant such skills as „creativity („come up with new ideas and solutions”) and critical thinking (the „willingness to question ideas”)” [12, p. 49]. Creativity can be achieved only through consistent effort and perseverance [13, p. 161].

When does the development of creativity begin?

Creativity development must begin in early childhood. Children are a concentrate of energy and creativity. Adults only have to observe and support them; and love; and let them fly. „The field of early childhood education has potential to become the epicenter of *creativity justice*” [14, p. 3]. As we talk preponderantly about the need of creativity in the legal field, it does not mean that creativity development in childhood should be based on learning the legal aspects of life. Not all the children are future lawyers. But it’d be nice if all of them become able to distinguish discipline from violence, restrictions from prohibitions, discrimination from differentiated approach based on objective criteria, encouraging care and love from obsessive care and love. For this, they need positive models; they need examples, explanations, socialization. And they need space: space for understanding the world, for the perceptions formation, for weighing; space for creativity. Children should sometimes be allowed or even encouraged to step out of the outline when colouring, and choose their own colours for shaping their lives. We should be aware of what James L. Adams calls „block in mind”, a kind of constraints and limitations that do not allow us to be creative. The example with the puzzle with nine dots, which must be joined with 4 lines, but may be joined as well with 3 lines or even with one line is really miraculous [15].

Negative creativity versus positive creativity

Usually, when creativity is at the forefront, the accents are largely positive. At least, in our subjective appreciation, it could be revealed from the „12 distinctive clusters” of trends detected as a result of „exploring [by Mejia C., D’Ippolito B., Kajikawa Y.] 98 years of creativity research [1922-2020] covering more than 38,000 academic articles on the topic” [16].

There are also scales of measuring creativity and innovation, which reveal curiosities about our country in these aspects. According to the *Global Creativity Index*, which „is a broad-based measure for advanced economic growth and sustainable prosperity based on the 3Ts of economic development—talent, technology, and tolerance [and] [...] rates and ranks 139 nations worldwide [...], Moldova ranks 105th (including `technology index` - 85, „talent index” - 57, „tolerance index” - 128) [17, p. 6, 56]. Consistently, according to the *Global Innovation Index*, Moldova is ranking 64 of 132 Economies [18, p. 4].

But reality shows that there are other facets of creativity too. It is also the case of „malevolent creativity” [19; 20, p. 1039-1040]). Humanity has also been very creative in inventing methods of torture. A simple search on google shows whole lists of (psychological and physical) torture methods and instruments of torture, of great variety [21], which is far too different from the existence of lists of methods of gaining happiness, for instance, the sources being much more reserved and abstract in this sense. What is really alarming many of the methods of torture are used equally in times of war and peace; the world of movies and online games is full of violence; violence is everywhere, it is evolving, acquires new shapes, new approaches. People are creative in offering alternatives: psychological, sexual, economic violence, instead of physical violence; economic, cyber, information attacks, instead of armed attacks; disinformation and disorientation, instead of directed training and control over the information provided; white torture instead of physical methods of torture. Democracy has been just as inventive in elaborating, within interdisciplinary professional teams (including military and intelligence staff, psychologists) a „broad spectrum of creative innovations”, in developing a „system of innovative interrogation techniques” - „clean torture, no-touch torture, stealth torture, white torture or psychological torture” [22].

And silence is very often next to violence, to stagnation, being able to stimulate and indirectly support negative creativity and negative creative alternatives.

About silence. As a brake for creativity and change

Silence is in families: domestic violence is an example; in many communities it seems abnormal to denounce it.

Silence is in organizations, i.e. *organizational silence*. It is not the case of data or internal practices, deployed within the limits of the law, but that of illegal practices that have become commonplace at work and no one wants to talk about them. The reasons are diverse, from lack of evidence, to fear or worry of losing the job or even acceptance of the state of affairs and becoming part of these practices.

Silence is in classrooms: it is a common phenomenon, known to all the teachers and the learners. There are different reasons that force students to be silent (factors with reference to the level of knowledge, psychological and emotional factors, cultural and ideological background, communication barriers, the manner of teaching and communication (authoritarian, democratic, friendly, subjective, discriminatory, differentiated etc.). This kind of silence is not a stimulus for progress or, as Nguyen Thu Hanh suggests, silence is not always gold [23]. To make a change, students need to be supported by boosting confidence in their capacity to influence this process, to be involved in building a world in which they would like to live and create.

Silence, in such situations, may be a real brake for change and (positive) creativity. Not, of course, it is not only silence, there are always more factors that are interconnected and influence the course of events. For thinking, in the context of the topicality of the subject, Zorica Mrsevic proposes „an interesting question [...]”: Did the civil war in the former Yugoslavia cause an increase in domestic violence, or did domestic violence cause the war?“. „The query [...] looks similar to the famous chicken and egg question” [24, p. 43-44].

Silence, violence, illegality, inefficiency. And creativity

To keep quiet about violence, illegality is a method of maintaining an abnormal environment for civilized life, an obstacle for shaping strong personalities and for achieving good governance. Silence or voice – is a choice that should be made through examinations of conscience, the results (the impact) of such examinations being genuine in relation with those who keep and prove morality and integrity even when they are alone.

For this kind of exercises, would be helpful reading in front of the mirror „The story of M.”:

„I’ve always been angry with my grandparents. They knew how abusive my father was. They saw my mom’s face all cut and bruised and swollen. They saw the bruises on my legs with cuts down the middle from the special belt buckle my father had made to beat us with. She also told me that she saw him beating on me as early as just a few months. And yet I had to live through fourteen years of it. I’m still so angry that no one helped us even when they all knew and didn’t live that far away” [25, p. 43-44].

Silence (voluntary silence) as a choice demands much less creativity than to be sound. The second option is true art.

Those responsible for achieving good governance can only be vocal and creative. The judiciary, as part of the state mechanism directly involved in this process, has a legal and a moral duty to significantly contribute to ensuring the citizens' confidence in the reality of the legal order in the society through protecting and guaranteeing fundamental human rights. State authorities should adopt and implement policies and strategies focused on preserving human capital, which is the foundation of creativity, innovation, voice, courage. Even if the level of economic development of the country is not a high one, talent and positive creativity are able to brake patterns and energize processes. The example of Moldova, along with India, Kenya and Vietnam, that „hold the record for overperforming on innovation relative to their level of development for the 11th year in a row” [26, p. 7] is a relevant one. It is enough to have a glance on „European states ranking in the first positions” within the European Creativity Index, to find that „the ability of states to attract, retain and develop creative human capital and to exploit creative capabilities tends to become, to a significant extent, the key to global competitiveness” [27, p. 892].

Conclusion

Finally, creativity seems to have kept its trend attribute for our generation. In such conditions, the economic, political, social, cultural, ideological, psychological environment, at different levels – individual, community, national, global – may play a crucial role in building even unpredictable paths for creativity. „Individuals scoring higher in conventional creativity tests may also achieve higher scores in tests for malevolent creativity, because they can apply their general divergent thinking faculties across different contexts. This may indicate a cognitive route to malevolent creativity” [28, p. 719].

So, dare we:

Be creative in times of crisis, in times of silence?

Creative for making our voice be heard, seen and felt?

Creative in the right direction? Creative for change and peace?

Why `Zero Creativity`?

This paper is a product of a lack of inspiration period. That is what we were able to produce from zero creativity.

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