Social And Contextual Perception Of Creativity

The perception of 'the creative' is not something seen as normal, typical or the average (Weiner, 2000). Creativity is a mechanism involving the creation of new concepts or novel associations with existing ones, where it may take the form of adaptation and alteration (Rudowicz, 2003). Nevertheless, only if a creative product or an idea is accepted as attractive or embraced by others does it hold a meaningful significance. The first issue with defining creativity is that essential part of the concept is its positive evaluation. This judgement is also dependent on contextual and social considerations and there is no solely analytical explanation that may justify such evaluations. The latter obstacle with identifying creativity is a question of whether the creator recognizes the value of own idea. If not, then an individual who has a worthy, innovative idea but recognizes it as hollow would not be classified as creative (Boden, 1996). Since creativity is a rather nebulous term, its primary source is often undermined and this aspect is at the core of a lot of research. Although the first models of it are centred around an individual, more recent studies indicate that social influences and contextual factors play a major role in creativity formation (Shalley, Zhou, Oldham, 2004).

Creativity is an amazing force as it puts together agency, knowledge and foremost a desire to create. Rather than reactive, it is proactive as it drives civilizations into new ways of living. Therefore, the most nonexpendable question to ask should be concerned around what or who holds that desire and power rather than what the creativity is (Haiven,2014). During the 1950s, 1960s, and early 1970s, the prevailing perception of creativity was that it is an individual's quality; most people lack it and people who hold the quality are identified as geniuses. A genius in this context is a person different in ability and talent from everybody else, who needs to be recognized, nurtured and respected. Thus, the creative was reserved only for these individuals and could not be taught (Rudowicz, 2003). This style of thinking resembles the concept of the 'Big C' creativity, which indicates revolutionary, rare, creative thinking which is reserved for the great (Kauffman, Beghetto,2009).

The socio-cultural milieu of creativity flourished in the 1980s and gained on a particular interest in the 1990s. Over the past few years, the analysis of environmental and social effects on creativity has become even more intense, having wide implications for the sociology and psychology of human performance and resulting in its applications for general education, business industries and beyond (Rudowicz, 2003). Thanks to this shift in perception of creativity, it became more affordable and stopped being perceived as an exclusive good. Creativity became viewed not as a dimension other than action, but as a fundamental characteristic of it. Following this viewpoint, social actors who perform in social contexts would be endowed with creative behaviour in a natural way (Citta et al., 2019). The good pillar for that could be the concept of 'Small c' creativity, which is a type of creativity emerging in everyday activities, most often influenced by our environments, what may involve certain places or people we spend time with. It simply enriches human lives in various forms of day-to-day stimuli (Kauffman, Beghetto,2009).

Societal and contextual side to creativity lay at the core of this essay hence it is worth mentioning what is exactly meant by these terms. Societal is anything related to society, so a large group of interacting people in a defined territory, sharing a common culture. Whereas

context is interpreted as the space person is at and who is it with and the resources nearby. Generally, context is viewed as a user-oriented concept which focal point is surroundings rather than users' inner state (Shalley et al., 2004). The factor that links both of these terms is communication- a part of the culture and almost indispensable part of the context. Communication networks evolve in terms of reflexive interactions. The codification of these reflexive thoughts in words, that is, at the collective level, can be considered as society's operating system (Leydesdorff, 2002). Therefore, the constitution of creativity concerned around communication is being discussed. The hypothesis is that communication is a necessary mutual interest of creative collaborations, and even further innovative collaboration does not exist without communication. The process of communicating is so specific to creativity that even a new term had to be introduced. The 'creaplex' derived from Latin meaning 'to create in collaboration'. The creaplex is characterised as a specific form of communication system during which collective creativity arises. It is defined by project intent and focus, as it starts with an issue and, only if successful, brings to a final point a novel and suitable commodities such as a theory, a piece of art or services and goods (Sonnenburg, 2004). One could argue that a person could talk to oneself, without engaging in human interaction, yet still come up with creative outcomes. Nonetheless, this process appears to be an intellectual revision as communication skills derive from human interaction, so it still makes one's creativity societal. In fact, Sonnenburg argues that most of the creative acts happen in a collaborative context (2004).

The other researcher whose theoretical assertions help to understand the creative in the societal and contextual way is Mihály Csíkszentmihályi. He emphasises social and collaborative aspect to creativity above all in his systems approach towards it (1990). In his view, creativity derives from the interplay of an agent (personal background), field (society) and domain (culture); one influences the others and is influenced by them in turn. Throughout his work on the lives of creative people in a wide variety of disciplines, Csíkszentmihályi has established that people need to learn a certain 'symbolic domain' very well in order to be accepted as innovative and make significant contributions within a culture. Persons who make innovative contributions appear to have worked within a domain and learned it to the degree that they internalise the domain's rules and core facets. Therefore, the researcher believes that creative capacity can be built through developing facility within a domain. However, he also asserts that creativity is not the product of a human genius but an occurrence constructed through an interplay between creators and consumers. Csíkszentmihályi's work perfectly supports the concept of creativity generation through human interaction in a societal and contextual way.

Contrastingly, the investment theory of creativity compares creative people to wise investors; as investors do in the financial world whereas creative thinkers make a motion in the world of ideas (Sternberg, Lubart, 1995). The authors pay attention to the phenomena of frequent rejection of creative ideas by members of society. According to their research, the crowd frequently perceives the change to status quo as unsettling and sufficient reason to ignore creative ideas. On top of that, they argue that through their very definition, imaginative people appear to defy the crowd and resist conformity by choosing to go off in their very own direction. Consequently, they argue that the biggest barrier to reaching creative potential is not necessarily stringencies from others, but instead the constraints that one imposes on one's own mind. Nevertheless, these constraints may arise from mechanisms of enculturation and socialisation, meaning that it is always ambiguous if creativity limits are internally or externally enforced (Rudowicz, 2003). It is an interesting viewpoint as it turns the idea of societal and contextual factors as being helpful in the creative process on its head. Nevertheless, Sternberg and Lubart subsequently claim that people are not born uncreative or opposite, but rather develop a certain set of attitudes that

characterize creative individuals (1995). Samples of such attitudes are taking sensible risks, resilience in the face of setbacks, redefining issues in novel ways or ‘selling’ ideas that were not initially accepted by the audience. All of these examples are skills developed through interaction with other human beings, either directly or indirectly. Therefore, the creativity and the level to which is nurtured and encouraged by society is strongly dependant on societal and contextual factors.

Gl?veanu believes in the need to establish socio-cultural strategies that take into account the relationships among individuals, society and cultural factors in the process of creativity. He introduced the idea that challenges the foregoing paradigm of 'He', 'I', ‘We', in which ‘I’ perspective views creativity as a competence of few, special individuals, second one claims that everybody can be creative, yet it is still an individual attribute and the latest one focuses upon social factors that shape the creative process (2010). He proposed a novel theory that transcends the viewpoints of I (research on everyday creativity), HE (research on socially understood creativity) and WE (approaches that find the effect of social and systemic variables on creativity). He studies creativity within the context of the interrelationships between four components; cultural artefacts, community, the creative subject and new concepts and products created in the creative process. By proposing this paradigm the author definitely offered a definition of creativity as a generative and collaborative way of experiencing the reality. Creative processes do not only rely on individuals; understanding collaborative efforts in societal and contextual contexts is indispensable in interpreting creativity.

Understanding the concept of social creativity is highly important for all human beings’ development, yet it is especially significant in the development of children. The research into social creativity in children is of considerable importance for at least two reasons. Firstly, understanding social creativity is important from the viewpoint of parents, educators, scientists and adults, as for the value of cultivating social creativity skills in the next generations is undeniable. Indeed, evidence from diverse research fields suggest that society could benefit from more innovative social gestures (Taylor, 2013). Political, ecological and economic studies also point to the need for innovative responses to challenges such as ongoing wars, environmental crisis, growing social inequalities in access to critical needs such as energy or healthcare (Watters, 2010). Imagining new ways of working together helps one to look with some serenity into our future. This is also important to understand more about social creativity in order to figure out how and why certain individuals are better able than others to discover creative and effective ways to communicate with the social world and to improve ways to promote social creativity abilities in others who lack these. With a greater understanding of the roots of individual differences in this area, it will be possible to educate and intervene on relevant educational problems (Taylor, 2013).

The other reason relates to the unique advantage of studying social creativity for individuals growth. The developmental approach has appositeness for scientists who aim to understand how adult social creativity occurs, as it can offer insights into the pattern of creative skill acquisition. Comparison of children and adults about how they creatively engage in constructing their social environments could provide reasons for the nature of obstacles to social creativity for adults. Their recognition could be a real help in any organization where the creative opens up newer possibilities for companies’ growth and profit. Many businesses nowadays adhibit teamwork in searching for solutions. Social creativity thrives on the variety of viewpoints through which all voices are made heard. It needs meaningful communication between individuals negotiating in order to establish a common vision (Fischer, 2004). It also has the power to

simply bring individuals together and nurtures skills in cooperation. For example, social creativity can be put at great use at technological and computer media development. It is especially relevant to design as collaboration gradually gains more significance in design projects that involve expertise across a broad variety of domains (Greenbaum & Kyng, 1991).

Moreover, recent cognitive findings also highlight the importance of social factors in creative thinking and its implication. For instance, neuroscientist Facundo Manes emphasises the significance of social interactions in the formation of the creative and varied social experiences in creative growth '… the sociocultural factor plays a crucial role since the access to experiences of different nature reshapes the brain connections that are necessary to generate innovative solutions' (Manes, 2014, p. 207). Therefore, social and contextual creative thinking plays a role of a peculiar ‘brain training’ and may lead to a greater capacity for generating new and useful ideas and may even influence identity formation. Creativity may often seem to implicate solitary behaviour, but this behaviour is always built up on concepts, meanings, and motivations which are created socially. Even if an interaction is at the symbolic level, creativity evolves in connection with others, with technological, cultural, social factors and on the basis of the foregoing tools and knowledge in the society.

The social and contextual are not external factors to the creative processes. On the contrary, these reform permanently an individual in ways of thinking and acting on a daily basis (Hennessey, Amabila, 2010). Creativity can be approached from several different angles. It is relational as it emerges within social interactions and involves communication which is a pillar for creative collaboration, what introduction to ‘creaplex’ may serve great evidence for. Creativity is also contextual as it may be dependent upon available resources. On top of that, it is generative- it is based on existing cultural artefacts, symbols and uses shared meanings generated through collective societal experience. Even if a concept is rejected at first by the recipients, it does not necessarily mean that it lacks in creativity and does not take away the societal aspect out of it. The exploration of the creativity in research would never occur in case it would be only an individual attribute. Common assumptions popularized by the old way of thinking on creativity connect it with suddenness, spontaneity and solitary experience. However, developments in creativity studies clearly show that these stereotypes are not relevant. The creative always rely on, in various forms, on social interactions and context, so culturally created and reconstructed knowledge. These could be knowledge coming from the schools, read books, attended conferences at work, seen artistic works- all of the diverse experiences of everyday reality. These contexts offer concepts, perspectives and knowledge that are an essential part of creative processes.

The foregoing theories were questioned, explored and developed into new, fresh perspectives on creativity and showed social creativity in its whole glory. Its implications are endless, starting from expanding the brain connections to its usage across different institutions that could change the quality of living for many for the better. The most significant one would be the permanent introduction of collaborative creativity and help in its development in educational institutions, which serve the most significant starting point in the development of all of the human beings in modern societies. There is no doubt that creativity should be understood as social and contextual rather than an individual attribute and its various useful implications are undeniable. Moreover, we are, beyond doubt, living in a world of change which is in constant motion. It is a transition that happens at all levels and seems to take control of every part of our life and society. This sense of change frequently contributes to insecurity, a feeling that we are not prepared as what usually was the answer or the solution does not longer work (Negus,

Pickering, 2004). It is in these conditions that innovation and creative approaches are more relevant than ever and is proven to help with achieving the goals as societies, businesses and individuals (Westwood, Low, 2003).