



Title: 7 December 1987 Personal Correspondence on the Roles of Social Interaction in Creative Processes

Author(s): Dr. Shigeru Kounosu

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Dec. 7, '87.

Dear Prof. Butt

Thanks for your comments. I agree that the "Sensitivity" needs to be explained better. Let me think about that as a home work. I had an idea based on Mechanics and System Engineering, and I tried it once for Peace Research people. But it was a total failure. I guess, it was too much of oddity to explain "sensitivity" by "mechanics", even though it was a higher order one. I have to think of a better strategy.

In the meantime, I would like to ask your help on a related but different thing. That is about roles of Social interaction-discourse in Creative Processes.

We tend to ascribe Creativity to individual geniuses. But in many cases, I notice there were sort of "Environments", in which Creative Processes took place.

For example, Differential Calculus and Mechanics emerged out of an intellectual ferment, or rather "turmoil". People, then, had passionate arguments about the New Vision. There were personal dialogues, exchanges of letters, debates. There was a good reason why Galileo, Diderot, et a. wrote "dialogues". The pattern can be observed for the case of Quantum Theory, Relativity, Double Helices, etc.

There are difficult cases, such as Edison, who appears to have been a "Lone Wolf", creative in solitude. (Perhaps, rare do not know about his associates). Therefore, I am not making an assertion. But, if interpersonal environment is a factor, it is very interesting and important in the context of school education. In schools, we already have "groups". The question is how to "use" the group in such a way to make Creativity to emerge.

Reading an article about IQ test for northern natives, by chance, I came to notice one author talking of "improving performance by dialogue". He calls it "test-teach-test" approach. His interest is in testing, and does not go into "learning". But implication is that interpersonal discourse --- i.e. "talking" -- - is a positive factor.

I wonder if there is any data about whether or not "letting students talk" has some effects on learning performances.

In the same book, another author was writing that the Native Culture tends to discourage people to "Speak out". The author explained that natives do not want to offend others by saying things. They do not like assertive behaviors. Science, and intellectual things are assertive, therefore, they perform rather poorly. I would acknowledge that. But, at the same time, I think natives are too "defensive". It is an attitude of "playing it safe". And if interpersonal discourse is a factor in developing creative ability, such an attitude amounts to self-imposed "powerlessness".

Some of native writers know this --- the "chief" in one *Flew Over Cuckoos Nest* was "dumb", and his way out was "Speaking Out" ---. The centuries of oppression has silenced the people. The first step in-breaking the oppression is to speak out. This, however, runs against the native "Etiquette". I may have to call my native friends "cowards", or tell them that they are such a stacked-up snobs that they cannot make fools out of themselves by saying things. When they get angry, they might speak out. If the passion in love is not forthcoming, the passion in anger may be substituted. Creation needs the Energy of passion.

By the same token, girl students do not "speak out", about "scientific matters", and its consequence is that they block developments of their ability to think in the "silenced" subjects. People, subdued to "speechless" and "passionless", cannot do things, intellectual or otherwise. They can only be slaves.

It seems that intellectual developments can only be achieved by "expressing" it, in much the same way positive feedback works. And if so, schools have to be the place, forum, for expressions and discourses.

Am I right in speculating this? I would appreciate greatly, if you could kindly refer me to literatures on this point.

Yours

Sam K.