# “The Creative is Critical and the Critical is Creative”

From the perspective of scientific skepticism, being critical is a fundamental element of thinking and applying the criteria and evidence in reference to the respective sets of permissible information. This means that being critical involves the application of processes that involve the careful acquisition of information and using it to reach rational and well-justified conclusions (Trevelyan and Wilson, 2012, p.485). In this regard, being critical starts from the mindset and the way of thinking which requires the incorporation of principles, values, and concepts of critical thinking in a context. This requires an appropriate reflection of the nature and function of the actions needed. Although the principles of being critical are universal, the applications require philosophical contextualization.

Creativity is a concept which involves the appropriate and novel responses to a task with an open mind. Creativity is thus a process of engaging in a task without a clearly defined and identifiable product or outcome. In a broad perspective, being creative can be defined as the ability to create exciting and new connections between things, places, and people by exploring new possibilities to discover new meanings of the universe (Haraway, 2010, p. 35). Certainly, as stated in seminar 2, creativeness and innovation requires the artful imitation of information in self-reflexive display. This means that critical thinking and creativity are intertwined and are positively related to each other in a positive symbiosis in which none exists without the existence of the other. This paper will seek to analyse the proposition that “the creative is critical and the critical is creative”.

If seminar 11 is anything to go by, social reality is presented through critical thinking while creativity is presented through fiction to represent reality. This shows that creative and critical works in dualism. Developing a capability in creative and critical thinking is an important aspect of life which comprises generating and evaluating knowledge clarifying ideas and concepts, seeking possibilities, solving problems, and considering alternatives. This means that the two cannot be separated as they are both required equally to solve problems in life by looking at alternatives and being guided by reasons, caution, and rationality (Trevelyan and Wilson, 2012, p.482). Being creative and critical are both integral to all the activities that need thinking deeply and broadly using dispositions, behaviours, and skills such as imagination, resourcefulness, logic, reason, and innovations in all aspects of life.

It is important to appreciate that in the life’s ever-changing and dynamic events, critical and creative thinking play a fundamental role in the most looking for the suitable and attainable solutions to challenges. Successful decision-making requires an integrated form of thinking which is intentional, purposeful, and productive for effectiveness and practicality of decisions made. It is only by using creative and critical thinking that someone can apply an effective sequence of thinking skills (Morton, 2010, p. 16). Collectively, this helps an individual to increasingly develop a sophisticated understanding of the effective process of decision-making and problem-solving by applying new ideas and unfamiliar information. Since being critical underlines the importance of applying reason and rationality while creativity involves using new ideas and strategies, none can work effectively without the other (Trevelyan and Wilson, 2012, p.482). This is mainly because of their equal necessity in developing the ability of an individual in using knowledge in thinking and using strategic thinking skills to increase the management of, and motivation of, solving life’s problems.

The emergent nature-cultures as explained in seminar week 9 has identified that the creative and critical represent nature and culture which can never be viewed as universal categories or polar opposites. They exist in a co-constitutive relationship where none can exist without the other. Responding to the ever-changing environment of human interaction which is characterised by various challenges including social, environmental, political, and economic pressures requires creative and critical thinking. Purposeful use of critical and creative thinking is highly characterised by using skills, confidence, motivation, adaptability, enterprising, innovation, and creativeness (Borges, 1998, p. 115). Being creative and critical is a combination of two aspects which are not interchangeable. However, the two concepts are strongly linked, and they bring complementary dimensions to learning and thinking. This is because when one tries to use evidence, the other generates new ideas to fit the context thus giving the best resolution in any situation.

Importantly, critical thinking is an imperative way of engaging the mind in learning to develop an argument after recognising the applicability of the available information as evidence. It is, therefore, the core of wise reasoning and intellectual arguments which involves supporting an argument with relevant data as evidence (Harris and de Bruin, 2017, p. 13). This helps to solve problems using the relevant information to draw reasoned conclusions. In a broad perspective, critical thinking involves using the skills of appraising, hypothesising, evaluating, inferring, questioning, comparing, reasoning, sequencing, explaining, analysing, interpreting, testing, and generalising the information.

On the other hand, creativity and creative thinking incorporates the aspect of learning to generate, develop, and apply new ideas in every life situation. Essentially, this implies that since every situation is unique in context, creative thinking is applied in specific contexts which require the ability to view a situation in a new way. It also involves identifying alternative explanations and the ability to make new links that help in the generation of a positive outcome by forming something original (Borges, 1998, p. 115). Creativity is characterised largely by combining parts, refining and sifting ideas to construct objects and theories, discover possibilities, and act on intuitions. In a creative endeavour, the outcomes may occur as virtual reality, digital-generated output, investigations and performances, or complex images and presentations.

During any form of thinking, the critical and creative aspects are both involved right from the start. During concept formation, an individual undertakes a mental activity that helps someone to classify, contrast, and compare events, objects, and ideas. Since concept learning has a close alignment with metacognition, it can be abstract or concrete. In this regard, it must be appreciated that the things learned in one situation can be applied in the future in a different situation (Pegram, 2006, p. 19). This underpins the elements of fair and open-mindedness, intellectual flexibility, reasonableness, inquisitiveness, and other dispositions. On the other hand, it requires readiness to exercise new concepts and ideas by trying to do things in new ways, considering alternatives, and persistence. These elements are all engraved in creativity and criticality and, therefore, are enhanced by, and promote the aspect of critical and creative thinking.

It is beyond doubt that critical and creative thinking are interlinked and only work simultaneously as they are both applied in activities that integrate innovation, imagination, logic, and reason. According to the writing experiment in seminar 4, the creative and the critical can be viewed in the light of deconstruction and structuralism. Deconstruction means giving attention to structure in the form of systems, synthesis, forms, and ideas just like being critical. However, structuralism is a gesture of assuming a certain need by viewing it as being problematic and then reconstructing it. For instance, solving a challenging situation requires someone to focus on a specific item and topic logically (Adorno, 1989, p. 35). This implies that one needs to take some time to analyse the situation, sort out the conflicting claims, think about the possible solutions, weigh evidence, and then take time to reflect on the issue so as to use logical reasoning rather than emotions.

In addition, the person is required to have a burst of energy in creativity characterised by the ability to consider responses and come up with innovative, new ways of solving the situation. All these aspects exemplify critical and creative thinking. Creative and critical endeavours are communicative processes which create precision and flexibility (Pegram, 2006, p. 19). Since communication is a fundamental process of thinking, the symbiotic relationship between thinking and sharing embodies the importance of having the creative and the critical as one as the two help in visualisation and innovation. As a result, the critical helps in the visualisation of a situation while the creative develops new ideas and helps in innovation.

The critical involves realism which is based on constructedness of representing things through concrete sensory imagery. This elaborates the capability to encourage skills’ enhancement, learning tendencies, and disposition towards a specific pattern of intellectual behaviours. The writing experiment in seminar 5 about literary realism shows an element of critical which is guided by objective reality. The critical, therefore, include being strategic, adventurous thinkers, flexible, broad, and making plans. It also integrates the element of displaying integrity and intellectual perseverance, as well as demonstrating metacognition (Morton, 2010, p. 14). A person who is critical has a high sense of mindfulness and skillfulness when using their habits of minds and thinking disposition such as managing impulsivity and risk-taking when they are confronted with situations to which they do not have immediately apparent solution. This means that although the situation is new, a person is required to use logic in analysing it and new, unapparent ideas in solving them thus showing the inseparable link between the creative and the critical.

It is worth noting that both the creative and the critical capitalise on the natural passions, talents, aptitudes of an individual. As such, the creative and the critical are fostered through the opportunity to be used in such dispositions as a metacognition, reflecting on possibilities, adventurous and broad thinking. Collectively, the two result from adaptability, open-mindedness, intellectual flexibility, and the readiness to experiment (Pegram, 2006, p. 19). Furthermore, the two are elements of thinking, perceptions, and the brain and are thus a link between emotions and cognition. In this sense, the creative and the critical are enhanced by learning when they are exposed in a rich environment containing multiple stimuli. This stresses that the two elements are enhanced when the mind is engaged in natural curiosity through meaningful challenges, and none exists autonomously without the other.

In reference to Kirby’s proposal about the rethinking of the ground in seminar 7, being creative exemplifies the generative substance that is immutable that motivates matter by incorporating transformation. On the other hand, critical is the element of bringing oppositional logic with a sense of ideality which is empowered by inscriptive efficacy. The fact that creative and critical thinking depends on information and the imparting of knowledge means that critically and creativity is developed through education as and are a mirror reflection of each other. Explicit teaching enhances the critical and the creative as the individual is encouraged to continuously engage in high-order thinking. This involves using imagination and logic and engaging in continuous reflection on the most suitable and effective way to solve issues, challenge and tasks (Borges, 1998, p. 115). Since the creative aspect involves suitability to a situation and using contingency strategies to solve situations in ways that provide the best outcomes, selective application of information and reasons is necessary. This means that although the creative uses new ideas to solve an issue, it relies on the availability of information and knowledge and using the information selectively and spontaneously to suit the existing situation at best.

The sheer fact that the critical involves the ability to think rationally and clear means that it is enhanced by the ability to engage in independent and reflective thinking. This means that critical thinking helps a person to logically understand the connection between concepts and ideas which he uses to evaluate and construct arguments by justifying their values and beliefs. In this perspective, it is easy to deduce that critical thinking does not reflect the accumulation of information (Pegram, 2006, p. 19). Instead, it involves the ability to deduce consequences from the information that a person has and use it to solve problems. The implication of critical thinking is thus an important aspect of creative thinking as it involves constructive tasks and cooperative reasoning. In this regard, creative and critical thinking becomes connected in application which involves acquiring knowledge and using it to enhance work processes.

While it is a common argument among some people that the critical impends on the creative and that critical thinking inhibits creativity, I believe that claim is unfounded. The main hypothesis behind this argument is that critical thinking requires a person to closely follow the rules of rationality and logic and, therefore, faults creativity which requires a person to challenge the status quo and break the rules. However, this argument is only based on a misconception. To the best of our understanding, critical thinking has a great compatibility with challenging the status quo and “out-of-the-box” thinking. Certainly, critical thinking pursues the less popular approaches thus challenging consensus (Adorno, 1989, p. 35). As a matter of fact, critical thinking is highly embedded in creativity just as creativity is embedded in critical thinking. As an integral part of creativity, critical thinking is very important in evaluating and improving creative ideas just like it is important for creativity to help in critical thinking by thinking beyond the norm and supporting the new school of thought with logic.

In reference to the writing experiment in week 8, it is important to note that the performative can only be defined through the descriptive utterances. In this perspective, the performative is the creative aspect while the critical is the descriptive. Since both the creative and the critical encompass our ways of thinking, they are both fostered through activities. However, any activity that promotes the critical by enhancing critical thinking capability, it also improves the creative by improving the creativity and creative thinking skills. This posits that the creative and the critical are both fostered by independent and collaborative tasks. In this regard, the creative and critical thinking is fostered through some form of tension and transition between the two (Brodin, 2010, p. 107). For instance, both are applied in challenging and engaging situations and are applied in the context which is within the ability of a person. Importantly, creativity must be supported by critical thinking through logical thinking, inquiring into possibilities, tolerating ambiguity, seeking alternatives, open-mindedness, and reason which are the elements of the critical. On the other hand, the critical must be supported by the element of creativity which includes being innovative, using imagination, and taking risk.

It is important to identify that although the creative and the critical mostly appear as confusing statements and some people tend to believe they hold the same meaning, their application is different. This means that the two statements cannot be used interchangeably since they hold different meanings. The generation of ideas which is encompassed in creativity does not maintain reason and needs to be supported with reliable information and knowledge to substantiate its applicability in context (Pegram, 2006, p. 19). This is the essence of critical thinking which tries to develop and create logic and show the reasoning behind the new idea and the consistency of its applicability in context. On the other hand, critical thinking requires thinking beyond the norm and creating new logic and form of reasoning that is supported by evidence. This means that the creative and the critical are two different sides of the same coin, which although different in application and meaning, complement each other and only works as one.

If the definition of the creative is anything to go by, the creative must be seen as an innovative and imaginative concept that is highly defined and characterised by an aspect of originality. In other terms, creativity encompasses the ability of origination, invention, and imagination of a new idea, value, or concept (Adorno, 1989, p. 35). It can also be approached as an attitude to accept newness and changes, the willingness to consider new possibilities and ideas which are better than the existing ones while at the same looking for ways to improve the existing and new ideas.

However, we must first appreciate that being creative requires one to have a rich array of knowledge and information regarding a concept. This helps one to understand the failures, weaknesses, and strengths of the existing idea. This is the importance of critical thinking in creativity as critical thinking requires one to analyse a concept so as to deduce its weaknesses and its strengths and understand where improvements can be made (Brodin, 2016, p. 973). Likewise, critical thinking must be complemented by creativity as visualising a concept in terms of its weakness and strengths with the aim of creating an improvement in it depicts an aspect of creativity.

In conclusion, we must appreciate that creative thinking and critical thinking are both aspects of information and knowledge. Although they cannot be used interchangeably, none can exist without the other as they both involve using information to create a new idea, a solution to a problem. They are thus based on the curiosity of getting information and later using it to solve a problem based on logic, rationality, and reason as evidence to support a new idea or concept. In this perspective, it is important to note that the creative and the critical are like the two sides of the same coin which works by complementing each other.

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