

A THEORETICAL BASIS FOR HUMAN CREATIVITY

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Background

This paper constitutes part of the theoretical basis for a study proposing to investigate the possibility of measuring the vocal improvisations of musically trained and untrained populations.

Aims

The purpose of this paper is to define creativity as a fundamental characteristic of the human personality, from a variety of disciplinary standpoints. It will describe necessary cognitive processes, interactive relationships and other factors that might encourage or inhibit the creative process.

Main contribution

Creativity is arguably one of the most sought after of human capacities and yet also the most nebulous and least understood, and may occur in any domain where an individual is able to perceive a problem, and conceive of and plan a solution in advance of executing it. It is broadly defined as the ability to create novel ideas from existing material and is a phenomenon which exists through the agency of the unique processing tool of the imagination, itself central to the human advanced intellect and higher consciousness. It is memory, a vital feature of the imagination, which informs an individual's perceptions and makes his discoveries personal through the possession of a personal consciousness of identity.

Every human mind is able to connect often hitherto unrelated ideas and draw new meaning or insight from resulting new relationships through symbolic thinking and analogy based on previous knowledge. The resulting new insight will change future perceptions and understanding and, where it radically breaks away from accepted conventions in a society, it may challenge commonly held paradigms of understanding. Innovation, by definition, is dependent on the presence of existing ideas and requires verification as such by the society from which it comes. Thus, both innovation and value are considered, in Western culture, to be essential elements of the creative process and product.

Implications

Such theoretical considerations will contribute to a study that seeks to address the issue as to whether degrees of musical creativity, as expressed through vocal improvisation, can be differentiated.