

Creative States and Structures

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Abstract: This paper explores the states of consciousness associated with creative work and intimations of specific structures of consciousness that develop over the life of an artist or other creative individual. Creative states are transitory phenomenological experiences that are recurrent and predictable aspects of the creative process. Collectively they form a continuum experienced in the course of a creative work. Creative structures are developmental conditions of consciousness that emerge and incorporate one another in succession. A structure cannot be omitted in individual cognitive development, and, barring damage to the brain, structures are permanent and irreversible.

The Case for Creative Development

We all know someone whose creative accomplishments we admire. In the community where I live there are many visual artists and makers of fine craft whose works grace our galleries. Dancers, actors, designers, directors, and playwrights bring life to our theatrical venues. Musicians and composers entertain in the evenings and symphonic groups for mature and young players thrill us with their grasp of orchestral and chamber music. Singers regularly ply our stages, and children grow up going to theatre camp in the summer. Over time we can observe their growth and applaud their artistic discoveries.

Observation tells us that the techniques of art are learned by doing. As informative as the literature may be, we do not learn to draw by reading books about drawing. We learn to draw by moving the lead of a pencil over the surface of a piece of paper. We learn to draw by carefully observing the world around us, and making record of its nuance in pencil, ink, and pastel. We learn to draw by doing these tasks many times with concentration and absorption. In doing so we become subjectively and objectively immersed in the task.

No one can teach us how to draw. Mentors may suggest, give us assignments, and even grade our attempts, but they cannot impart the knowledge to us. We learn how to do that ourselves. We learn by doing. We learn by engaging the body and mind as one. We acquire competency through personal initiative and investment in the process. When we have acquired competency, we know it. We know it in our bones.

If we discontinue our training our technique stays more or less where it is. Children who stop learning to draw at age twelve will draw much the same way at age forty. If at age forty the individual continues to draw, the process of creative development will begin anew from that skill level. The first task of an instructor is to determine the location of the student's awareness. This is because levels of development cannot be omitted, and people learn from where they are, and not from some imagined place convenient to the instructor.

Product and Process

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Western society is organized within outcomes and products. We are a culture of objects. Our language is noun and concept heavy. As a result we overlook the verbs in people. That is why when we assess artistic achievement we tend to categorize and reify products over process. This is perhaps especially true in the visual arts, realms in which creative people make objects that often outlive them.

Most of my artistic experience has been in dance and theatre, arenas that are by comparison far more ephemeral in immediate apprehension. Creative works performed in a theatre have life in the movement and voices of people, players whose relationship with an audience is necessary, intimate, and invasive. My home is cluttered with the refuse of performance: props, and bits of scenery that have no useful purpose except the memory of something immediate, complex and transient that once was in the glory of its moment and will never be again.

In the performing arts people work for months in mounting intensity, often at great personal sacrifice, and then when the show is over everyone leaves, and that's that. A paper program, a costume piece, or a bit of ribbon from a bouquet of flowers are all that remain. As a theatre manager I am often the last to leave, the one who turns off the lights, and locks the doors. Many times I have stood on the empty stage after the set has been torn down and carted away. Many times I have stood there and listened to the echoes of people's voices, and often while I hear their tires across the parking lot as they leave. An empty theatre is a wondrous and terrifying place, full of the latent energy of the heartfelt efforts of people, and awesome in its potential to move, delight, and disturb. All theatres have ghosts.

There is no doubt that a theatrical production evolves as it is created. In the beginning there is the skeleton of a script or an idea waiting to be fleshed out by the presence and the energy of people. During rehearsal it acquires a living presence, a sense of the rightness of its being, that all the aspects hopefully belong, and harmoniously contribute to a whole that is exponentially greater and more powerful than the sum of its parts. As each detail is added or taken away the whole can be assessed anew, and so a director or choreographer feels her way recursively sifting over and over in the continual attempt for perspective. That final vision may not arrive until very close to performance and will continue to grow and change over the run of the show. It is all about process.

Creative products change over time. The choreographic works of Martha Graham that were done in her youth were different from the pieces she created in mid life. She did not attempt the Greek tragedies until she was a mature adult. The childhood compositions of the genius Mozart were different in quality from the works created in adulthood. Popular musicians are often faulted when they change their compositions to reflect their inner growth. Bob Dylan picked up an electric guitar. Baryshnikov performed the works of Twyla Tharp. At each venture (May, 1994) fans, critics, and anyone else with an investment roared, but they did it anyway.

They did it because growth and change are what creative work is all about. Creative products are the incidental results of creative processes. The process fuels and drives the product, not the other way around. Even though it may appear that the end product is the goal, the end is the result of the journey and the journey is what is most important. It is the journey that nurtures the artist, not the product, even though it's nice and we like it. We like to hang it on a wall and look at it because it reminds us of who we were when we did it and who we have since become.

Creative States

There are commonalities of consciousness in creative work that are cross-disciplinary and inherent in human experience. Creative states have been explored and documented by numerous individuals (Combs, *In Process* – b). Here I explore states of consciousness arising out of my own experience and observations. Creative states are transitory phenomenological experiences that are recurrent and predictable aspects of the creative process. Collectively they form a continuum experienced in the course of a creative work.

Creative states may be experienced by individuals in the course of their creative work either alone or in groups. Creative states may also be experienced by a group that is engaged in collective creative work. These states of consciousness occur in linear sequence, each state giving birth to its successor. At the end of the sequence the creator returns to the beginning and cycles through the sequence on a higher level, this time with the information provided by the first cycle. This cycle of transformation occurs in recursive fashion until the completion of a project. Challenging projects may require multiple cycles. Simple projects may be resolved or completed with one or two cycles.

The first stage of the cycle concerns the encounter of the individual with the immediate problems of the creative project. This may also be viewed as the creative's encounter with his or her worldview (May, 1994). The creative is attempting to bring about something new, something not currently found in his or her apprehension of the world. This is a time of potential. Everything is possibility, and nothing is concrete. It is a time of the gathering of bits and pieces, of pursuing where the intuition leads, and tracking down the back alleys of thought and image. At this point the project may appear grandiose because all possibilities are open for consideration.

The difference in feel between this and any other condition is that a process has been initiated because it has been infused with intent. The creative *intends* the completion of the project, and so the applications of thought and will have been brought to bear upon its solution. Intent enables the creator to envision a solution, embody the work with his or her personal energy, and focus the will. Intent creates the system that will ultimately result in a creative solution.

What is carried within the mind is then to some extent actualized in the outer world. This often happens as a form of synchronicity (Combs & Holland, 2001). If I have *gathered* the image of a dragonfly, and have given it importance, I will often begin to see dragonflies everywhere in my personal life. Suddenly, I see women everywhere wearing dragonfly pins. I may receive a card in the mail from a friend with the image of a dragonfly. Another friend may mention she has a pond full of dragonfly nymphs. This particular scenario occurred with my most recent piece of concert choreography in which I combined the attributes of a dragonfly with myths of water nymphs to create a composite female character.

It may be appropriate to attribute several phases to this one stage of the creative process. What begins as a itch in the mind develops into active conscious gathering of material as elements are considered and either adopted or discarded. In this phase there is the impression that one has begun to get somewhere with the mental processing of the work. Aspects are being collected but they do not as yet form any kind of clear picture. Characterizing this phase is a growing preoccupation, or even obsession, with the work. The creator appears to be distracted. He or she may even become irritated if interrupted by everyday tasks or domestic relationships. The artist is often said to be "in her own world." This phenomenon illustrates a common attribute of highly creative people, that is, the ability to shut down the awareness of immediate

surroundings and narrow the focus to the task at hand. In this state the individual may not hear other people in the room, or be aware of activity in his or her immediate vicinity.

For the creator, the intense mental activity becomes all encompassing. Even the smallest of details opens up a world for exploration. In time, the creator becomes frustrated with this phase of encounter. The artist, scientist, or creative by any other name begins to want resolution. There emerges an intense longing for clarity. There may even be deadlines requiring it. My way of working has for many years required me to meet deadlines. If I have committed to producing an evening of dance my show has been put on the theatre calendar. Advertising dollars have been spent before I am even certain what I am doing! Time has been set aside in the theatre that cannot necessarily be filled by anyone else. Precious dollars have already been spent on studio time for rehearsals. My intent under these conditions becomes a source of energy and power.

This energetic focus allows me to draw to myself that which is necessary for the completion of the work. If I need people, studio space, and costume or set materials, these will be made available. The converse side of this equation is that I have developed the skills for completing a performance with high production values using very little money. I have found that it is often necessary to become creative with how one works, in terms of resources, in addition to the creative effort utilized in the emergence of the product itself. It is one thing to create a dance. It is another entirely to support that dance with studio rental, lighting and set design, costuming, audio, a sufficient number of trained technicians, and advertising. One must become an attracting magnet for the creativity of others.

Eventually, the gathering process of encounter can become unsustainable. Deadlines loom and the essential concepts remain elusive. The high energy and anxiety of this phase precipitates the next state in the cycle, release. Release is the condition in which the intent and mental preoccupation of the encounter stage is actively abandoned. This can occur deliberately, as a result of frustration, or accidentally, if the creator becomes distracted. The end result is the same. The creator stops thinking about the project either because he has exhausted all current efforts to manifest a concept and decides the time for release has come, she is simply exasperated with the process and decides to abandon it and do something else for a while, or because he or she has become distracted with other life events.

How this works is yet a mystery. It may be the forces which are abandoned in the conscious life continue to operate in the collective unconscious (Campbell, 1976). Perhaps what has been created through intent has been a pattern that continues to produce effects within a universal information field such as Laszlo suggests exists (Laszlo, 2004). It may be that the mind simply needs a rest in order to continue at a later time. This stage is a kind of limbo in which the creator is uneasy and perhaps confused, or is simply waiting.

Having experienced these phenomena many times, I am now able to choose when to exercise the stage of release and enter into a conscious period of waiting in which I avoid all contact with or thought about the project. Often this is very difficult. Sometimes, however, it can be amusing and even fun. If I am working on a piece of writing which has proven difficult, like this paper for instance, I can distract myself with a science fiction film and profitably return to the writing afterward.

The stage of release is utilized most effectively when the creator has exhausted all avenues for progress in the encounter stage. If the encounter stage has not been thoroughly utilized, however, the creator will just return to the problem anyway as a part of the next recurrent cycle. The release stage, which the creator often experiences as a mental holding of the breath, generally lasts as long as it needs to.

Now, I don't mean to be difficult here. It's just the way it is. I am reminded of the experience of downloading my email from the local server. If an email contains a large number of megabytes, it may require several irritating minutes to download. My experience of the release stage is similar. If I have embarked on a challenging project, I may experience release stages that are excruciatingly long in duration. If on the other hand I am working on a project that is well within my experience and skill set, the release stage may go by so quickly, passing from problem to solution, that I am hardly aware of it at all!

The end of the release stage can be ecstatic, and generally it catches the creator unaware. The concept can flood into the mind on a routine drive home from work, while waiting in line at the bank, in the middle of the night, or over coffee at a restaurant. My last major choreographic project was fraught with challenge. A number of minor creative cycles had come and gone and still I was without the inner sense of plot that would make all the imagery hang together. Having reached a point of complete frustration with the task, I had laid it aside, even though I was facing looming deadlines, and determined to distract myself with activities at my job.

One afternoon, after at least two weeks of marking time in the rehearsal studio, I left work and went to one of the local watering holes for coffee over my writing notebook as I did many afternoons after work or before theatrical productions in the evening. I sat down in the booth and immediately the thoughts began to come. For two hours I wrote feverishly. For eighteen days I downloaded the production in detail, writing in my notebook at every opportunity, and even waking up multiple times during the night to jot down ideas. For eighteen days I was completely obsessed with the show. On the nineteenth day I entered my office and looked around. Time had passed and there were tasks that needed to be done. I realized I was back. The third major stage had begun.

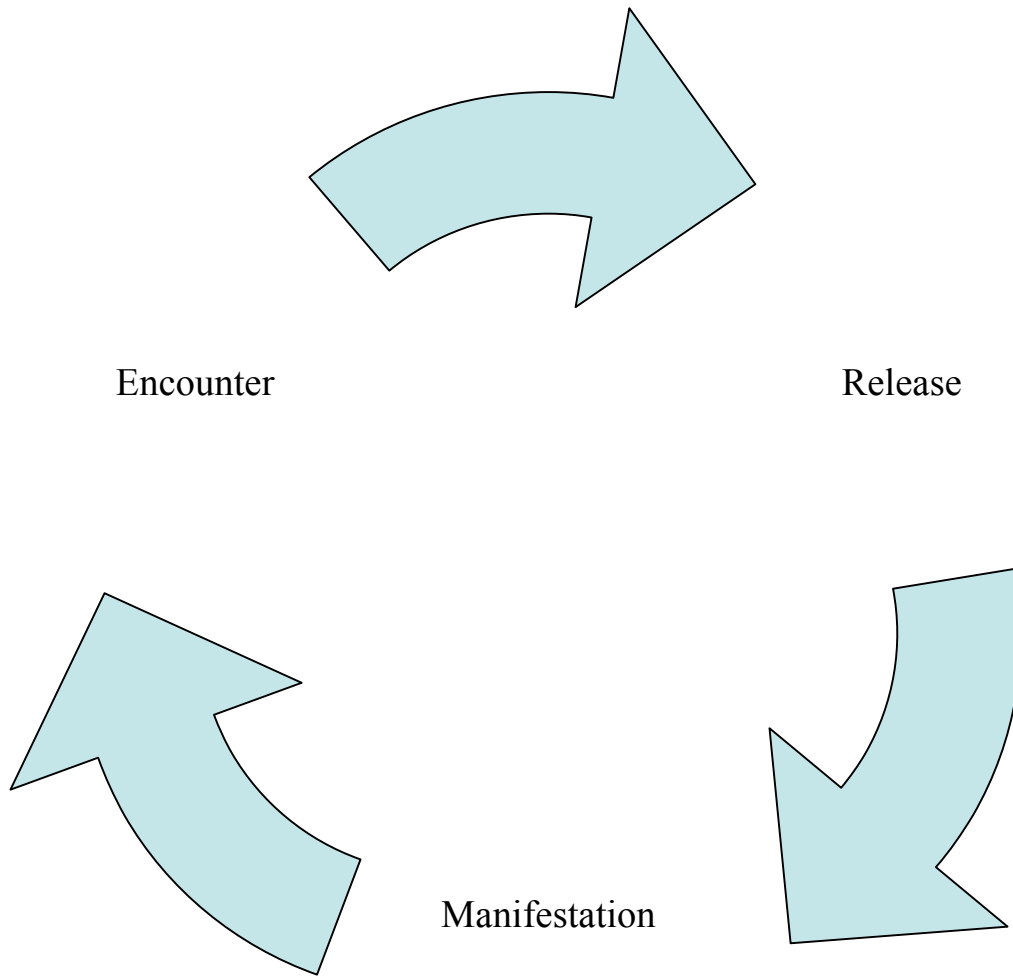


Figure 1. Creative Cycle of Transformation

The third state of consciousness in creative endeavor I call manifestation. It is the time in which the concept is actualized through the personality and skill set of the creator. It is usually a time of intense activity. In my experience this period can be joyous and marked by synchronous and psychic events. It can also be fraught with surprises that threaten to derail the project. Work of the previous stages is coming to fruition. If this is the last cycle before completion, all the work of the cumulative cycles is brought to bear. In other words, if you are prepared all is well and good. If not, you are in trouble. This is especially evident in theatre.

This state is characterized by a feeling of manic elation as the creator goes about executing the concept. Energy is abundant, and consequently this state is most often known as “flow” (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). Another major characteristic of this state is a pervasive myopia that precludes knowledge of anything not related to the task at hand. I manage a theatre, and so I deal with people in this state on a regular basis. This is the condition in which they most often arrive at the theatre. The larger and more complex the production, the greater the energy,

and the deeper the myopia. Most people, however, are unaware that they have entered an altered state, and this makes our job at the theatre all the more tricky.

A case in point is our annual production of the *Nutcracker*. This event requires the combined efforts of many people over a period of several months. The production is elaborate with many special technical effects. It is essentially a pageant of a hundred or more children and adults that is passionately served by members of the community who have worked the show for years. Individually these are lovely caring people who exert enormous volunteer effort for the benefit of children and the delight of the community. They are conscientious in their use of the facility and are notably thorough in keeping it organized and clean. They cover all aspects of their production and are a resident company in that they also store all of their set pieces and costumes at the theatre. Periodically they even donate equipment and labor for the improvement of the theatre facility itself paid for with the proceeds of the show. Great.

Even though they are lovely people individually, collectively they are an aggressive, invasive entity that overturns and rearranges every corner of the facility. This collective entity is unaware of the needs of classes that use the theatre concurrently. It is unaware that any other group is using the theatre, or will use the theatre. We are housed in a school and we are understaffed. Every year we are faced with the complete overhaul and restoration of our organization within the theatre immediately after the *Nutcracker* production vacates. We have other users arriving, sometimes the next day, with their Christmas shows, their manic energy, and their own myopia. The work load on our part is enormous, and generally invisible to others.

When challenged on any particular issue, such as the disappearance of equipment, the members of the *Nutcracker* staff are often defensive if not hostile. In their own minds they are doing their best. As difficult as this is for us to manage, these attitudes are the normal presentation for the third stage. An important aspect of our jobs at the theatre is to be the watchful eye that others cannot be, particularly when it comes to safety issues. Theatres are dangerous places, and in the heat of production, risks may be taken that endanger people or equipment. In my experience people will do most anything, use anything, and commandeer anything to insure the perceived success of their production. Afterward it is often true that no one will know who did what or why. Theatre has, once again, magically happened.

There are two schools of thought in regard to theatre. The first is that theatre magically happens. The second is that theatre is the result of great attention to detail and a huge amount of hard work. As you might imagine, I am inclined to the latter view, and believe the former is ascribed to by people who do not as yet understand the creative process or the demands of the art.

The states of consciousness I have described, encounter, release, and manifestation, are born of my own experience in dance and theatrical production. One linear series forms a creative cycle. The degree of initial encounter determines the number of cycles required for the completion of a project. Each creative cycle builds upon the ones before it, creating a systemic flow of consciousness and process, a spiral of transformation (Roff, 2003). I have witnessed the same process in other art forms, and found its description in the work of scientists, and even alchemy. It has become the way I accomplish most everything. The process is ancient. However, understanding how it works in human endeavor is not as yet common knowledge. Few people involved in creative activity understand the creative process and the states of consciousness that accompany it.

This exploration is only the beginning of a process of investigation. It will be interesting to determine how these states of consciousness relate to those states described in the Wilber-

Combs Lattice (Combs, 2002)(Wilber, 2006), for instance. There is no doubt in my mind that these states evolve quantitatively and qualitatively in their expression according to the structure of consciousness in which they are embedded. That they evolve over the growth of an artist is true in my experience. This, too, is an area for further research.

Creative Structures

Creative structures are developmental conditions of consciousness that emerge and incorporate one another in succession. A structure cannot be omitted in individual cognitive development, and, barring damage to the brain, structures are permanent and irreversible (Combs, In Process – b). This writing is the beginning of an exploration that posits the existence of a line of cognitive development in creative capacity.

There are, of course, commonalities with established cognitive stage theories. However, in this argument I will focus on those aspects that are most indicative of creative achievement and, secondarily, relate these stages to other established norms.

The first of these is the naïve, magical, and impulsive creative structures. These have much in common with Wade's naïve cognitive structure (Wade, 1996), Wilber's impulse/emotion (Wilber, 2000), Gebser's archaic to magical structure (Gebser, 1985), Wilber's emotional/expressivist stage in art (Wilber, 2000), and Piaget's sensorimotor and preconceptual cognitive stages (Combs, In Process - a). This is the first postnatal consciously expressive cognitive structure. The child may or may not be capable of holding objects but may express herself in materials such as fingerpaint or various dough mediums. For the adult this can be a form of play. These are expressions in present time. There is little thought given to the end product. Instead there is the joy and immersion in the doing of creative activity. There is no acquired technique, no perspectival stance, at this point in development nor is there necessarily a desire for greater technical ability. There is simply the delight in the chosen medium of expression. The creator experiences a sense of oneness with the medium and the process. Resulting products possess a magical, or totemic, significance and are precious to the creator.

Over time the naïve structure is incorporated by the emerging mythic structure. The creator views the works increasingly in terms of the end result or product. Children begin to venture into representational forms and often express stories they have heard or created. Language is increasingly important as creative expressions take on mythological themes. Creatives seek a variety of mediums and may also enjoy working in groups. Adults begin to turn their thoughts to accuracy in execution.

Children in this structure, say five to seven years of age, are fascinated with the mythological. My approach to dance training for this age group includes explorations in composition, dance choreography. These children can understand beginning movement concepts such as level, path, and shape, and are capable of constructing story in movement. They delight in creating dances and performing with and for each other. They are often attracted to participate in productions that incorporate fairy tales and mythological themes, like the *Nutcracker*. Theatre training at this level can involve the creation, either alone or in groups, of stories that have internal meaning for the participants. With the aid of a skillful director, these playlets can be rehearsed and brought to performance level with memorized lines and movement. These theatrical endeavors solicit mental focus and great emotional investment for these children.

Many adults may have difficulty at this stage. I suspect this is what often defeats the efforts of individuals who begin work in an art form as adults. Our culture does not support

mythological explorations on the part of adults, and it can require courage on their part to participate in activities that draw out or embody the mythological. I have used actors in my choreographic works. Some of them take to it naturally, realizing that acting is ninety percent physical expression. Others have difficulty making that mental leap and feel awkward expressing themselves without speaking. Dance embodies magical and mythological expression whereas theatre can allow the actor the illusion that they are only there to exercise the higher cognitive functions. I have observed that many theatrical players are word dependent and instruction must be given to draw them into engagement with their bodies in preparation for a production.

It is at this point that many Western people stop in their creative education. Desire for better technical facility motivates those who want to continue. These individuals have come to realize that the enjoyment they experience in the exploration of their medium can be enhanced through developed technical skills. This is the hallmark of the concrete structure.

Opportunities for technical training in art forms or in the sciences are not universally available in Western society. Children may or may not have classes in the arts and sciences available in school. Some children benefit from tutoring or private lessons. Most do not have those opportunities. Modern adults may turn their efforts to cooking and the decorative arts, creating gardens, wall coverings, or other practical applications that are approved in Western society. Others may elect to take piano lessons or a class in drawing or painting at the local community college.

The concrete structure in creative development is characterized by a focus on outcomes. One is rehearsing for a concert. Another is painting a picture of a covered bridge, or carving a sculpture of a bear out of spruce wood with a chainsaw. Commonalities exist with Piaget's concrete operational structure of cognitive development (Combs, In Process - a). Children and adults acquire technique by following the rules. Rules establish validity for the creative individual at this stage. Acquiring mastery provokes feelings of accomplishment. Participants in creative arts training of all ages learn by doing. This is competency based learning. No one has to tell the individual when they have accomplished the task. It is evident both to the student and the observer.

Beginning students in stagecraft at the Mariner Theatre where I work start with a list of competencies, repeatable skills they must master and demonstrate that help them acquire a familiarity with various areas of the facility and promote safe ways of working. Students may attempt demonstrations of competency as many times as necessary without penalty to accomplish a given task. One either knows how to set up a microphone and output the sound to the main speaker cluster or one does not. One either knows how to take control of the work lights or one does not. Becoming competent in basic theatre skills makes an individual useful around the theatre and enables them to then choose which avenue of learning they will pursue next, say, either sound, lights, or stage rigging. In this way the learning is student driven and facilitated by the instructors as increasing concrete levels of competency are acquired. Young students of the arts immerse themselves in formal training in the concrete structure. Conservatories everywhere are full of people at this point in their development.

Abstraction enters the picture with formal operations which characterize the next structure in creative development. Skill sets continue to be developed but now the individual creative is able to utilize acquired techniques for abstract ends of meaning. Products need not be literal to convey beauty and profundity. Stories become complex, and design acquires subliminal features. Perspective enters the realm of visual art, and theatrical productions display

depth in the design of scenery and lighting. Choreography features complex layers of drama. Line and shape in dance give way to complex three dimensional design in moving forms. Group endeavors become intimate and bonding excursions.

Levels of knowing reach beyond the ability of words to describe. Some musicians decide to compose, some dancers express an interest in choreography, and a minority of actors decide to direct. Students fresh from conservatories try their hand at auditions, and others solidify their knowledge by teaching. This is an exciting time in the development of a creative. Armed with skill sets, a young creative takes on the world of his or her creative domain. Scientists enter graduate school, while creatives in other professions invent new products and start business ventures.

This time can also be bewildering and full of disillusionment. One possesses all that one's teachers could impart but nothing of one's own. It is often at this juncture that young artists in Western society graduate from college and enter the job market. Often they are unprepared for the realities affecting their employment which, in a society that does not place a high value on creative endeavors, can be crass indeed as compared with their educational experience.

Many young people give up their dreams and move into "practical" professions in keeping with the economic imperative and Western social dictates. Adult practitioners may be content to practice at this level of achievement, relegating their artistic and other creative activities to a continual but secondary role in their lives supported by more pragmatic financial pursuits. A minority of individuals continue to struggle to make their creative work their life's occupation. A small percentage of them may attain a level of success that is recognized by Western standards, ample financial reward and recognition within one's field. Creative work is not supported in many fields in Western society. Even scientists work within the boundaries of opinion and prejudice, and few are those who are able to venture far beyond what is currently deemed acceptable.

Creative work is inherently heretical. It is the nature of the creative process to foster growth and change, to venture into unknown territory, and overthrow accepted paradigms. To continue the path of creative work, one must acquire the support of one's fellows. Many artistic individuals gravitate to major metropolitan areas. Here there are possibilities for employment, and public venues for one's product. Many toil away for years in New York or Los Angeles believing that success is determined by whether or not they can "make it" in these cities. However, large cities just have more of everything, good and bad, and one soon learns the difference between steady employment and celebrity in our culture. The overnight success has usually been around for a couple of decades, and many more individuals have quiet but successful careers than ever become famous.

Many artistic individuals and creatives of all description choose instead to settle in areas of great natural beauty. Here comradeship may be found among creatives of similar temperament in remote locations supported by enthusiastic communities. Rare combinations of natural beauty, and metropolitan advantage also attract and maintain creative community. San Francisco and Seattle are prime examples of this. In making these choices creative individuals move over time into the consciousness structure of autonomy.

Autonomy is characterized by a realistic appreciation of one's abilities and inclinations. By repeated reliance on one's wits, skill sets and competencies of process are made one's own. One's speech comes from experience, one's skill is second nature, and projects can be swallowed whole with energy and delight. Doubt regarding one's decision to develop a creative life is gone,

and acceptance of who one is becomes a given. One's personal life and one's work often blend seamlessly together.

Creative integral awareness is characterized by mastery and impeccability within the extent of the individual's creative technical range. The work has now become more about concept and process, the product an expression of the individual's mental and spiritual development. Technical skill has moved to the background of awareness, and the creative can be observed engaging in creative activity with an attitude of playfulness and joy.

One further example of development I would like to posit at this time is the psychic, the area in which a creative demonstrates results that would normally be considered beyond the realm of human endeavor. It may be these occurrences cannot even be explained by those who enact them. Individuals may display what would otherwise be considered superhuman physical feats or actions of group awareness clearly beyond the norm. These demonstrations may also involve manipulations of materials, and events that appear to embody synchronistic phenomena in both coincidence and effect. These instances appear to occur when individuals or processes so organize their surrounding environments as to attract that which is needed at the perfect time for its utilization.

Summary

My descriptions of these states and structures should be considered an exploration rather than a definitive description at this time. It is my hope that further investigation into the nature of these structural phenomena and states of consciousness may take place. The existence of creative states and structures posited here is a reflection of my lived experience and my joint observations with others over many years of creative work.

Creativity is an important and necessary part of being human. We understand many of the attributes of creative people. We know their cognitive and emotional inclinations. We are beginning to understand how study of artistic disciplines affects the growing structure of the brain. We recognize creativity in many areas of human endeavor in addition to the arts and sciences, and we can appreciate the attributes of communities that attract creative people (Florida, 2002).

We do not, however, understand much about the process of creative realization in individuals or in group endeavors. We are often unable to ascertain where an individual or project exists in relation to its creative process, and we are often mystified by the behavior of creative individuals and groups. As members of Western culture, we enjoy the products of creative people but so often we fail to understand or appreciate those who provide the products we enjoy.

This is written in hope that a positive change in these social attitudes may occur. As our global society struggles to address the many urgent problems that beset our lives and the environment, creative attributes are sorely needed. We cannot solve today's problems with yesterday's cognitive abilities. A new way of seeing is called for, and this requires creative effort. We must learn to embrace our innate creative abilities and the ambiguity, complexity, and adventure of discovery that are their expression.

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