

**Name of collection**

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Language and creativity. What is creativity? And what does it have to do with language?

Creativity is a notoriously difficult concept to define. The Oxford English Dictionary defines it as--

The faculty of being creative. Ability or power to create.

The word derives from the adjective creative, which means--

Having the quality of creating. Able to create. Relating to or involving imagination or original ideas.

And this, in turn, comes from the verb create.

To bring into being, cause to exist, to produce where nothing was before.

A dictionary definition only gets us so far. We can also look at how other people have defined it and the key features they've identified for it. Creativity is--

Intelligence, having fun.

The process of having original ideas that have value.

Every act of creation is, first of all, an act of destruction.

Creativity is not a capacity of special people, but a special capacity of all people.

But perhaps it's easiest to start by looking at the different contexts in which linguistic creativity can occur. This range includes high literary art.

Oh Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright, in the forests of the night.

And also, everyday communication.

Education shouldn't be a death sentence. Education shouldn't be a death sentence.  
Education--

People found guilty of not using punctuation deserve the longest sentence possible.

We can also look at the wide range of ideas and practices that creativity can involve.

Poetic, dramatic, literariness, aesthetic, foregrounding--

Defamiliarization, artful, playful, imaginative, translating, revising.

Remixing, repeating.

Repeating, repeating.

Recycling, performance.

Performance, participation, evaluation.

Critique.

Across all these definitions, a few key ideas crop up again and again. Creativity is seen as something which is new or novel, which is valued, and which is appropriate to its context. But even pinning it down to these key ideas just leads to further questions.

What does it mean to be novel?

What counts as being appropriate?

How can we judge value?

And who decides?

So how do we take an analytical approach to creativity? We can start by thinking of it in terms of three different aspects. We can look at it in terms of its products.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright, in the forests of the night.

In terms of the processes it involves--

A lamb walks into a baaaahr.

And in terms of the purposes to which it is put.

[LAUGHS]

When we study it, we can focus on different elements of the phenomenon and we can use different lenses to do this. We can use a textual lens to look at how language is manipulated in various ways to create a particular effect.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright, in the forests of the night.

We can use a contextual lens to examine how meaning is tied to the social, cultural, and historical context in which the communication takes place, and we can use a critical lens to examine the values and assumptions that are embedded in the context. For example, we can look at how value is assigned to acts of creativity and the implications this has for society.

45 once, 45 twice, sold at \$45 million.

So where does this leave us? When people talk of something being creative, what they're usually doing is making a value judgment, and usually, a specifically positive value judgment. A highly--

Creative--

Piece of work sets his--

Creative--

Spirit in motion.

Looking for--

Creative--

Alternatives.

Tokyo's a great--

Creative--

City.

An all-around--

Creative--

Thinker.

She's a unique--

Creative--

Artist.

People take a number of different positions about how exactly it should be studied, for example, whether the focus should be more on the products of creativity or in its process.

Tyger! Tyger! burning bright in the forests of the night.

But despite these differences, it remains a very important topic for people from a wide range of disciplines.

And the reasons for this are because of the key roles it plays in human communication.

The fact that it's a way of making what we say all right stand out, of initiating and responding to change.

And ultimately, of organizing our understanding and experience of the social world.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

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