

APPENDIX

to

' THE COMPARATIVE AND THE CREATIVE '

A. I. 1. After all, what is this primary creativity to which it seems fashionable to lay a claim ? It is the ability of a select few in the whole history of human thought and may or may not be related to the status they achieve or the esteem in which they are held. All other creativity must automatically become of the secondary variety. In this, the germ or nucleus supplied by a pioneer is explored, elaborated or nurtured with care, insight and perception by another. If one is really interested in tracing the lineage of primary creativity to its origins, it is only the Creator, if there is one, or the Primordial Cognitive Pool, if again that can be considered possible, which can lay legitimate claim to it. It is there that we must trace all germs of thought, discovery or invention. If we are unwilling (or unable) to accept this due to any reasons, or want to give us mortals primary creative status, this is applicable only in case of those who develop, discover or invent the nucleus around which growth occurs. Everything else, the planting, the watering, the sprouting, the branching, the blossoming, the beholding and the studying is, to that extent, a secondary process. Thus, every other writer who writes on a certain topic after the first one becomes a secondary thinker. In every sphere, therefore, the prerogative of primacy rests with a few ancients who were privileged to come in time before us, and propound the germ of a thought that we elaborate upon, or

depart from. In fact, purely because certain thinkers precede us in time, they have the privilege of being called originators or primary creators. It would then be incorrect to assume that any significant or new departure in philosophising represents primary creativity precisely because, although apparently new, it is not at all primary. It is an elaboration on something primary already existing and, to that extent must be called secondary creativity. That, however, does not make it any less significant either in its departure or its importance.

It would be equally incorrect to infer that either primary or secondary creativity is superior or inferior to the other. Having being born in point of time today, we can at best assume secondary creative status, howsoever great our ability to original or creative thinking. In this, we are neither superior nor inferior to other thinkers before us, or the ones to follow. In this, further, we are neither under-privileged nor inconvenienced; nor should we consider ourselves either unfortunate or get disappointed. In fact, we have to accept this status and build upon it, for this and the generation of thought to follow. To do so, we will first have to give up our fantasy and fashion of claiming primary creativity for ourselves or our favourites; and unrealistic ambitions. Only in the remote possibility that there still exists a germ lying in the aforesaid primordial pool of thought that has escaped discovery, will primary creativity ever be manifest in this or future generations. You may ask why we consider this possibility remote. Well, the only compelling reason for this is of course the possibility of tracing everything that is claimed to be original thought today, or tomorrow, to something that existed yesterday. This should help sober down fantastic ambitions and help overcome our pomposity. It need not involve either giving up or ignoring creative pursuits. Or serve as a hindrance to true original thinking. In fact, if anything, this should serve as a water-

shed between the true creative thinker and self-seeking masquerader. It will allow proper articulation to both the thinker who has lost his way in this quagmire, and the follower who may have got himself drenched therein unwittingly.

A. I. 2. The creative thinker, often, has the ability to be unconventional, though we must qualify this by saying that this is not invariable. Originality can be as much a rejector of certain conventions as a supporter of others. In general, however, it cannot tolerate or allow for blind subservience or fervour, for dogmatism, or for thought born primarily out of the need to belong or conform. Getting labelled, therefore, may have a special aversion for him; and even if this is not so, labels themselves may ill-fit him except for short spans of time. Frameworks seem unable to restrain or strait-jacket his thinking, and he is easily bored and disillusioned by them. This is one of the main reason why he often seeks new frontiers for exercising his creativity. And in whatever sphere he engages the same freshness of approach becomes apparent; and sphere itself is that much the richer.

Such thinking, further, has a special aversion for the psychology of the mob. It avoids the mentality and motivations of the herd, especially those prompted by shared short-term or selfish gains, or appeals that camouflage collective fear, panic or insecurity. These feelings arouse prompt and fervent responses from the laity, but usually leave him untouched. However, the properly oriented original thinker also knows that this need not motivate him to reject concepts purely because they are accepted by the majority. In other words, it is not the laity which is the issue; it is their unreason that he avoids; whilst from the realistic aspirations of the majority he can never afford to be detached. In fact, being conscious of the latter distinguishes the creative thinker who is a visionary eternally venerable from the

pen-pusher, the opportunist, or the meteoric thinker who burns out as fast as he rises. Further, non-conformity can itself become a dogma and a creed, and he knows well, and early, in his development, the dangers of applying it unscrupulously, as a master-tool. What he essentially combines is honest criticism with constructive realignment so as to lead to a more robust, vibrant and, only if necessary, altogether new framework.

A. I. 3 In creativity or originality, although novelty is essential, it is not a sufficient attribute. One would even say it is not necessarily the most important one. We must have it, of course, but we must have something much more. What follows is that not every idea need be considered creative just because it is new. It should be able to *create*, or at least lead to some such constructive goal. Any accent otherwise cannot but result either in pedantry or in chaos. For, just as obsession with the old can be stifling, that with the new can be equally anarchical. Part of the energies of thought cannot but be consumed in both this differentiation and its avoidance. Hence, to our earlier quality of originality, we must add constructiveness as another significant attribute of creativity of any worth.

What must also follow from this is that in an obsession with the label of creativity, one need not keep searching for new ideas alone. This is not as easy to avoid as it may seem. While most would agree that this be so, an equally large number would continue to acquiesce in it, and a not insignificant number may be made up of those who agree to what we said in the earlier paragraph. This is both out of design as well as ignorance. The latter can change with realisation, hopefully. It is the former from whom the greater danger lies.

Let us elaborate a little on why we should so believe. New-ness and its search can itself become a dangerous addiction. In

direction, especially if allowed unbridled sway, it can lead as much to significant as to reckless departures. Hence, rather than say we should keep searching for new ideas, we must qualify that we should keep searching for new *constructive* ideas. If at any time obsession with the former makes us forget the latter, it can be disastrous for both the thinker, his ability and his followers. In this the thinker has to act as responsible to himself as to posterity and its directedness. The powerful appeal of mischief, recklessness, despair and ennui has resulted in some philosophising that has been as new in its approach as profound in its depths. But judge it by the yard-stick of whether it is refreshing or constructive and we will know whether such creativity is ever of any worth; or anything more than an assay in thought-masturbation, a self-abuse practised down the centuries with some aplomb by a number of thinkers and their ardent and, one suspects, unwary followers. For, ardour coupled with carelessness is the surest guarantee of misdirection.

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