

Biosong Blog 10 (August 3, 2022) Creativity

I am a human being, so I will evolve – by generating (creating) new versions of myself and my world as I progress through life. My BEING is actually my BECOMING. And there is more to it than that – we enjoy producing artefacts in the form of written stories, drawings, paintings, sculptures and musical scores that are also a new version of something, so we call them our Creative Works.

Creativity is one of the special qualities of being human, though all living beings have it to some extent. The natural ability to invent – to respond in a way that was not programmed so as to adapt to changing circumstances – has been essential for the evolution of all life forms. But doing Creative Works is our human speciality. Being built-in to our Biology, that also comes about naturally, of its own accord. This means it is something that we ‘allow to happen,’ rather than make happen. Our Creative Works are also deliberate actions, but the very act of attending to them is just as likely to inhibit them as to promote them.

So what is it we are ‘allowing to happen’ and why do we call the result a Creative Work? Our left-brain attention can combine ‘facts’ to generate a larger story, which is useful for problem-solving, but it is confined to a definite logic and order that always ‘adds up.’ The quality that we are perceiving in a Creative Work has something completely different about it that our right-brain attention can perceive. It is a new *Gestalt*.

This German word for ‘form’ or ‘shape’ has come to refer to a special quality whereby the overall pattern of something is more important than any of its parts, so we recognise a ‘unified whole’ as a distinctive property – we see its ‘totality’ in a satisfying way. This concept is enormously important to the satisfying use of our mind. In a Creative Work, something NEW has been created, but it isn’t just something old that has been altered – it is a whole NEW SOMETHING. We haven’t seen that *Gestalt* before.

I should say, some of us see it as an original, while others may not. What is a beautiful Creative Work to some might seem to be nothing special to others. This is a mysterious quality that we can’t quite make explicit, but which we value very highly when we recognise it. There is an indescribable pleasure just in apprehending a truly Creative Work for those whose right-brain attention wants to ‘take it in.’ This is related to another of our special qualities – the **wonder** and awe we feel when we behold a beautiful sunset or a majestic mountain. I will say more about these feelings. They enrich our lives.

The special qualities of humanness are energising experiences – they are a ‘force’ or an impetus for our living process. People often say they feel stronger and more alive when they are working on any kind of creation. Creativity is central to the ‘life force’ that gives us hope for our future and brings pleasure in the present moment.

The contribution of right-brain attention to Creativity is well documented. Following a left-brain stroke many famous artists and composers (and others such as Jill Bolte Taylor, Blog 5) have felt they were more creative. Handel wrote the whole of *The Messiah* in three weeks immediately after such a stroke, to give just one example.

There is much more to say about the way our mind can **appreciate** the *Gestalt*, along with the subtleties of metaphor, irony, humour and affection, without which we are not fully alive.