

Imagination, Cognition & Creativity – philosophy's view – Günter Abel (Philosophy), TU Berlin (Germany)

The following six aspects will be developed:

(1) The distinction is emphasized between (a) mere novelty (in the sense of: first appearance of something) and (b) genuine resp. radical creativity (in the sense of bringing about something fundamentally new).

(2) Three types of creativity are distinguished: (a) weak creativity (in the sense of combinatory new arrangements of already given elements); (b) strong creativity (in the sense of a transformation, a transgression and/or a replacement of old principles, rules and patterns by new ones); and (c) moderate or intuitive creativity (in the sense of what is relevant when human imagination plays a constitutive role in cognition, perception, language-use and representation).

(3) The psychological features of creative individuals are distinguished from what might be called »philosophical ,creativity assumptions'«, focussing on the structures of creative processes themselves.

(4) The use and understanding of symbolizing signs is considered to be one of the most basic characteristics of the human mind, particularly of the creative mind. No creative mind without signs and interpretations. Using and inventing signs, imaginative problem solving and establishing new successor-signs as well as the arbitrariness of signs build up a space of creativity.

(5) The crucial relation between ›creativity‹ and ›rules‹ is focussed (including the questions of rule-following, rule-transgression, rule-violation, rule-invention). On the one hand, only the conscious transgression of established rules may lead to bringing something new into the world. On the other hand, the creative mind is rule-setting, not a mind of self-satisfying rule-destruction. The point about creative rule-transgression is a double one: rule-transgression does not follow a meta-rule (hence, you can't teach creativity); and inventing new rules opens up new and deep insights.

(6) A proposal is made as to the question of how the creative mind fits into our naturalistic and scientific world view. Creativity can be conceived of as a phenomenon of emergence, taken in its terminological sense in the philosophy of mind as well as in the systemic complexity theories (of synergetics, self-organization and chaos), emphasizing the features of radical newness, unpredictability, and non-reducibility to antecedent elements. This includes the move from the realm of logical and empirical possibilities to actual potentials.