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"They Who Dream by Day"

A Review of

The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity and Personality Research
by Gregory J. Feist, Roni Reiter-Palmon, and James C. Kaufman (Eds.)
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> They who dream by day are cognizant of many things which escape those who dream only by night.
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> — Edgar Alan Poe, *Eleanora*

We often think of creative people as eccentric or odd: Consider Salvador Dali in his flowing cape walking his pet ocelot or Albert Einstein picking up cigarette butts off the street to get tobacco for his pipe. However, unconventional behavior is only one aspect of creative personality. The interaction of creativity and personality is indeed multifaceted and complex. In fact, an entire scholarly volume, *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity and Personality Research,* is devoted to describing how personality and creativity are intertwined. And who better to edit this volume than Gregory Feist, whose work has defined the creativity/personality topic, and James Kaufman, whose reputation for editing some of the best scholarly volumes in the field of creativity research is unparalleled. They, along with Roni Reiter-Palmon, an expert in team creativity, have pulled together a group of multi-national researchers and experts to contribute chapters that explore the intricacies of the creative personality. The resulting volume will interest personality psychologists, researchers, and students in the field of creativity, as well as therapists who work with creative individuals and would like to better understand their clients. Organizational psychologists will also find the book interesting, as there are chapters devoted to teams and the entrepreneurial personality.

The *Handbook* is divided into three sections, roughly addressing process and structure of creative personality, emotions and psychopathology, and measurement and social influences. However, several themes run throughout the book and are found across a variety of chapters and sections.

Openness and Other Themes

The most apparent theme of the book is the importance of the Big Five personality factor *openness* (sometimes referred to as *openness to experience*, *intellect*, *openness/intellect*, or *imagination*) in the formulation of the creative personality. Virtually every chapter alludes to the correlation between creativity and *openness*, and 4 of the 21 chapters contain "openness" in the chapter title. Although this relationship is "old news" (*openness* has been known to be the personality variable most highly associated with creativity since Feist's [1998] influential meta-analysis of creativity and personality almost 20 years ago), authors in the *Handbook* introduce and review nuances and subtleties to this relationship that are both important and informative.

To begin, Oleynick and colleagues review evidence, first presented by DeYoung, Quilty, and Peterson (2007), that the openness factor actually comprises two distinct aspects: *openness* and *intellect,* and the authors demonstrate how these aspects are related to different elements of the creative process. Jung and Meadows, in their subsequent chapter, examine the brain networks related to the *openness* and *intellect* aspects, determining that while *intellect* maps onto the cognitive control network (responsible for deliberate, sequential, controlled thinking), *openness* maps onto the default mode network (associated with spontaneous thought). The default mode network is the purported seat of daydreaming and imagination (Buckner, Andrews-Hanna, & Schacter, 2008), and is the comfort zone of "they who dream by day." Thus, the *openness* aspect of personality is neuroscientifically connected to imagination and creativity.

These two chapters set the stage for another interesting theme that winds through the *Handbook:* the balance of cognitive control and unfiltered, disinhibited daydreaming that defines creative ideation and production. Fürst and Lubart refer to this as a balance between "order" and "chaos," and suggest that the balance can be an organizing system for understanding the creative personality. The former seems to be associated with the personality aspect *intellect,* as well as facets of *conscientiousness,* while the latter is associated with *openness*, low *conscientiousness*, or with Eysenck's factor of *psychoticism*. Various combinations of these traits play out across different domains of creativity (Taylor, McKay, & Kaufman, Chapter 10), including science (Feist, Chapter 5), comedy (Nusbaum & Silvia, Chapter 16), and entrepreneurship (Aktar, Ahmetoglu, & Chamorro-Premuzic, Chapter 19). Cognitive control and disinhibited daydreaming, along with their associated traits, also vary according to level of creativity, level of emotion regulation (Ivcevic & Hoffmann, chapter 11), and degree of risk for psychopathology (Simonton, Chapter 13, and Furnham, Chapter 14). It may well be that the cognitively disinhibited individual (high end *openness*), who is also high in cognitive control (high *intellect* and certain facets of *conscientiousness*), may demonstrate the creative genius that Simonton discusses in his chapter. This fits well with findings from our lab that the combination of cognitive control and disinhibition predict high creative achievement (Carson, Peterson, & Higgins, 2003), and that cognitive disinhibition is related to *openness* (Peterson & Carson, 2000).

Another interesting theme in the *Handbook* is one of diversity, both within and between individuals. Both Simonton and Damian, in their respective chapters, discuss diversifying experiences within the individual (this could be a mental illness or any unusual experience generally occurring in childhood); Chang, Su, and Chen talk about multicultural experience within the individual (in the form of multicultural or multi-racial identity, bilingualism, or

simply living in multiple cultures); and Litchfield, Gilson and Shalley discuss diversity of personality on teams. Although we tend to think of diversity as a beneficial factor for creativity across the board, this isn't always the case, as research on corporate teams has indicated (Bassett-Jones, 2005). And here, once again, we see the importance of *openness*, this time as a moderating factor. Damian suggests that people who are high in *openness* would be more likely to have a diversifying experience and would also reappraise such experience in a more positive way that may promote creativity, while Chang et al. believe that multicultural experience leads to creative performance—but only when it is moderated by *openness to experience*.

An unexpected treat in the volume is Dollinger's chapter on autophotography (e.g., "selfies"), as it veers away from the standard verbal self-report methods of assessing personality and examines individuality as revealed in photo essays. The richness of individuality in the photo essays is associated with one Big Five factor—you guessed it: *openness to experience.* It seems that all pathways to creative personality lead through *openness.*

Wish List for the Second Edition

Although all of the chapters in the *Handbook* are informative, there are some chapters that are conspicuous by their absence. There is no chapter in the current volume on the history of personality research in creativity, and the editors freely admit this in their final wrap-up chapter. For decades, the influential Institute of Personality Assessment and Research (IPAR) at the University of California, Berkeley conducted groundbreaking research on the topic of personality and creativity. This work deserves considerable coverage in any volume on personality and creativity research, but received only a single paragraph mention in the *Handbook.*

I would also have liked to have seen a chapter on the assessment of creative personality included. Although extensive coverage is given to the assessment of creativity itself (e.g., Hornberg & Reiter-Palmon, Chapter 15), the reader may rightly wonder how personality has been assessed across time in creative individuals. Most chapters discuss the Big Five measurements, and a few talk about psychoticism (part of Eysenck's EPQ), but there is no description and barely a mention of Gough's Creative Personality Scale (CPS), which is still widely used and is predictive of other measures of creativity (see Carson, Peterson, & Higgins, 2005). Also, the CPS (Gough, 1979) presaged well-publicized work by Gino and Ariely (2012) on creativity and dishonesty (honesty is negatively correlated with creativity in the CPS scale). The Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI) was also used extensively before the development of the Big Five to measure creative personality, and it is again only mentioned in passing, with none of the rich findings from the research on MMPI and creativity included.

While these two missing topics would have enhanced the overall value of the *Handbook,* they are minor omissions. Creativity has been and continues to be important to human survival, adaptation, and a life of rich and full experience. And a deep dive, such as the *Handbook*, into the aspects of human personality that enhance creativity at all levels and in all domains is an important endeavor. *The Cambridge Handbook of Creativity and Personality Research* deserves to be on the bookshelves of all who "dream by day"—not only

those who dream of the things that are yet to be created by the human mind, but also those who dream of the ways that we can further understand and nurture the creative personality.

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