A Microgenetic Approach to the relationship between creativity and aggression in mental disorders

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Abstract

This research investigates the connection between creativity and aggression and different mental disorders, while examining their mutual influence on each other. Examining this topic is done in reference to Eysenck’s three dimensions of personality, as well as to other traits: absorption, schizotypy and anxiety. These topics are currently investigated by using various questionnaires as well as by the Microgenetic Method – which uses visual stimulation. In this study artworks (see stimulus I and II below). By using this method it is possible to investigate the influence of visual perception of stimulus and the way an individual projects his or her inner world and personality is tested by examining the projection content toward the stimulus. The study examines five different groups: (1-2) individuals dealing with mental disorders – with or without an aggression background (3) creative-individuals; (4) aggressive-individuals; (5) and a control group.

The expectation was to find relationships between creativity and aggression, especially in psychopathology groups. These relationships connect broadly to the psychoticism dimension of Eysenck's three personality dimensions, which was also expected to be high among the pathology groups. These pathology populations were deliberately chosen because they are on the extreme expression of various personality traits and dimensions, particularly the aspects related to measures of creativity and aggression. Perhaps, psycho-therapy for those populations can be suited specifically to the individual's profile, using different creative therapy methods.

Research assumptions:

- A. Stimulus I will stimulate the participants in a different way compare to stimulus II.
- B. A correlation will be found between the various variables of creativity and between the various variables of aggression.
- C. Creativity and aggression are both attached to Psychoticism (P) dimension. Connection between creativity and aggression will be found and differences between the 5 groups in those traits will be found.
- D. Differences in personality profiles of the different research groups will be found, especially based on the personality dimensions of Eysenck:
 - 1) Mental illness - high on P and N scales, and on schizotypy questionnaire. low at E.
 - 2) Mental illness (aggressive) – compare to mental illness without an aggressive past behavior: higher on P and N scales and on schizotypy questionnaire.
 - 3) Creatives- high on P and N scales and on schizotypy questionnaire but lower than the mental illness groups. E scale will not be consistent.
 - 4) Aggression- P higher than control group but lower than mental illness, E and N high.
 - 5) Control group – not particularly high or low at any dimension.
- E. Gender differences will be found.

First results:

- Participants had significant different scores in aggression between the stimuli – when "face" aroused higher aggressive reaction and reports that were more diverse.
- The presented results suggest that the group variable do have an effect on the scores of the verbal reports on each category for each stimulate (2 scores- total and aggression X 2 stimuli "face" or "murder"). Specifically, our results suggest that creative individuals and aggressive individuals have close mean scores in both the total score and in the aggressive score of both stimuli. Those two groups differ in their scores from individuals coping with mental illness, when the last group has lower scores.

The Microgenetic method results

Stimulus I (“murder”)– “Judith slaying Holofernes”\ Artemisia Gentilescho

Creative woman without a psychiatric past:

	Stimulus I	Stimulus II
1 (17 ms)	Puzzle	Frame
2 (17 ms)	Light	Lightning
3 (33 ms)	Human	Blurring
4 (33 ms)	Meeting	Scribble\Scrawl
5 (50 ms)	Painting	Become clear\brighten
6 (50 ms)	Blurring	Orange
7 (67 ms)	Shadow	Opposite colors
8 (67 ms)	Filling	Obliquely
9 (83 ms)	Close\near	Yellow
10 (83 ms)	Photography	Become consolidated\become united
11 (117 ms)	Become clear\brighten	Blur
12 (117 ms)	Woman	Human being
13 (167 ms)	Painting	Shout
14 (167 ms)	Publication	

Stimulus II (“face”) – “Potrait of the poet Kleist”\ Andre Masson

Woman dealing with mental disorder – without an aggression background:

	Stimulus I	Stimulus II
1 (17 ms)	It was too fast, I could not see	Sun vase
2 (17 ms)	Clouds	I have nothing to say
3 (33 ms)	People dancing	Spinning bunny
4 (33 ms)	Courting\woeing	I have nothing to say
5 (50 ms)	It present each picture twice	Small forest
6 (50 ms)	Process	Sun dazed
7 (67 ms)	Hollywood salon	Man spring
8 (67 ms)	Reach out your hand and touch her	The dragon
9 (83 ms)	People like mountains	The hat that my mother knitted for me
10 (83 ms)	Is there a doctor in the audience?	Man retreat
11 (117 ms)	Bloodshed	Chamsa (lucky talisman – shaped like a hand)
12 (117 ms)	Hand holding hand	Society
13 (167 ms)	Turned over	Scared clown
14 (167 ms)	Resuscitation	The monster from Kiryat Ha-Yovel (a famous sculptor in Jerusalem-Israel)