

# **Man and Creativity: A Contrastive Analysis between Western and Islamic Psychologies<sup>1</sup>**

## **Manusia dan kreativiti: analisis kontrastif di antara psikologi Barat dan Islam**

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### **Abstract**

Among all creations of God living on this planet, Man is the most intelligent, innovative and creative. Imbued with these qualities, Man was able to plan, create and recreate new things using the resources available in the environment. Man's position as God's best creation and as the recipient of the creative intelligence from his Creator has further advanced him in mastering science and technology. As a result of his advancement in knowledge and science in one way or another has ushered Man into creating great civilizations. While the discussion goes on as to whether Man's creativity is an inborn or a learned behaviour, this paper intends to explore and analyze some of the existing concepts of human creativity found in Western and Islamic psychologies. Very particularly, the researchers would like to examine the concept of creativity put forward by Freudian Psychoanalysis, Behaviorists, Humanistic and Islamic psychologies. It is expected that the findings of this research can motivate mankind to be more dynamic and productive in bringing the much needed positive change to the present world conditions.

**Keywords:** Man, Creativity, Contrastive Analysis, Western Psychology, Islamic Psychology.

### **Abstrak**

Di antara semua ciptaan Tuhan yang hidup di planet ini, Manusia adalah yang paling pintar, inovatif dan kreatif. Dengan dianugerahi dengan semua kelebihan ini,

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Manusia dapat merancang, mencipta dan mencipta semula benda baharu dengan menggunakan sumber-sumber yang terdapat di alam sekitar. Kedudukan manusia sebagai makhluk Allah yang terbaik dan sebagai penerima kecerdasan kreatif daripada Penciptanya telah memberi keupayaan kepadanya untuk semakin maju dalam menguasai sains dan teknologi. Hasil kemajuan dalam ilmu pengetahuan dan sains telah mendorong manusia untuk mewujudkan tamadun yang gilang-gemilang. Dalam suasana perbincangan yang berlansung dewasa ini mengenai; samada kreativiti manusia adalah suatu sifat pembawaan sejak lahir atau suatu yang dapat dipelajari, kajian ini ingin menorka konsep kreativiti manusia yang telah diutarakan oleh psikologi Barat dan Islam. Khususnya para penyelidik kajian ini ingin mendalami konsep kreativiti yang telah dikemukakan oleh aliran Freudian Psikoanalisis, Behaviorism, Humanistik psikologi dan psikologi Islam. Diharapkan penemuan penyelidikan ini dapat memotivasi umat manusia agar lebih dinamik dan produktif dalam membawa perubahan positif yang sangat diperlukan untuk merubah keadaan dunia sekarang ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Manusia, Kreativiti, Analisis Kontrastif, Psikologi Barat, Psikologi Islam.

### **Introduction**

This qualitative paper intends to survey some of the existing concepts on man and creativity. Very particularly, it will explore the different notions on man presented by Western mainstream and Islamic psychologies. Upon discussing the various concepts on man, the researchers will further advance in exploring the topic on creativity in a contrastive manner given by Western and Islamic psychologies. In anchoring the discussion on man and creativity, the researchers will provide an appraisal on the different schools of thought presented in this research.

### **Concept of Man in the Western Mainstream Psychology**

In the field of psychology, the research on man, which started in the ancient past, is an on-going study even during this modern scientific age. It is an undeniable fact that with the passing of time from the primitive to modern, new things have emerged with regard to the study on man and his nature. Being perennial in nature, the old and the new studies conducted on man, try to unearth and bring to light many of man's potentials, which were not known previously. Nye (1986),<sup>2</sup> states that although at times many of these studies complement one another in answering the intricate questions on the nature of man, there are also times when they contradict one another in their views on the theory and concept of man. Strangely enough, even living on the threshold of the modern and scien-

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<sup>2</sup> See: Robert D. Nye, *Three psychologies: Perspectives from Freud, Skinner, and Rogers* (California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 3rd edn.1986).

tific age, psychologists like other professionals who conduct studies on man, have yet to arrive at a consensus with regard to the question of what is the true nature of man.

In the Western mainstream psychology, the absence of an all-encompassing and holistic idea on human nature has been attributed largely to the diversity of paradigms adopted by these schools of psychology. In the case of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who was the founding father of this school of psychology, conceptualized man in a pessimistic and deterministic manner. His pessimistic view on human nature is based on his assumption that man is evil and selfish by nature. While Freud's deterministic concept on human nature explains that every human being is enchained to the psychosexual developments of his or her life. According to him, Man is no more than an animal enslaved to his sexual impulses. He further thought that man is controlled by his libidinal impulses and therefore should be un-socialized and irrational in his behaviour.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, Freud believed that man has no freedom to cut loose from the shackles of his psychosexual developments. As a consequence of not having the freedom of choice, man's behaviour is determined by the warring parties of his psyche; namely the id, ego, and superego. Moreover, Freud through his clinical research over-emphasized to the world that every man is driven by two psychological forces otherwise known as Eros (life instinct) and Thanatos (death instinct).<sup>4</sup> An exploration into Freud's ideas on the id, ego and superego gives a clear-cut understanding that man undergoes endless tensions, stress, conflict, dilemma, chaos, and a whole range of other psychopathological illness due to the turmoil caused by the forces that reside within the unconscious part of the human psyche. Simply put, Freud's ideas on man revolve around his theory of personality which is pivoted on his ideas on sexuality. With all these negative ideas, he painted a gloomy picture of man being an intellectual beast doomed for destruction.<sup>5</sup>

On the contrary, the behaviourist school of psychology which based its ideas on man in line with the 'tabula rasa' theory of John Locke (1632-1704) states that a child is a blank slate at birth waiting to write down its experiences with the passing of time. Behaviourism as well as

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<sup>3</sup> See: Gerald Corey, *Theory and practice of counseling and psychotherapy* (California: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 1986).

<sup>4</sup> See: Sigmund Freud. *An autobiographical study*, (James Strachey, Trans) (London: The Hogarth Press & The Institute of Psycho-Analysis, 1948).

<sup>5</sup> See: R. L. George & T. S. Cristiani, *Counseling: Theory and practice* (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn., 1990).

behaviourist psychologists who laid great emphasis on learning experience believe in the concept of man that can be equated to a mechanical object. According to behaviourists like Ivan Pavlov (1849-1936), J.B Watson (1878-1958) and B.F. Skinner (1904-1990), the environment plays a vital role in shaping man's behaviour and personality.<sup>6</sup>

With their 'S-R' (stimulus and response) theory, the behaviourists took the neutral stand by saying that man is neither good nor bad in his nature. By putting man on a neutral position, they are of the opinion that man becomes good when placed in a good environment and becomes otherwise when placed in a bad environment. In taking a neutral position, they do not believe in the concept that states man is born with some innate knowledge. Furthermore, they also reject the existence of constructs such as the conscious and unconscious in the human mind. With such ideas, it is understood that the form of psychology they believe in is just purely a scientific one, which is based on the learning theory that pays heed only to the observable behaviour of man.<sup>7</sup>

Contrary to the earlier schools of psychology; namely psychoanalysis and behaviourism, humanistic psychology, which emerged as the 'Third Force' of the Western mainstream psychology, deems man to be of innately good nature. Based on the existential and phenomenology philosophies, this school of psychology emphasized much on the conscious experience of man rather than paying too much emphasis on the unconscious mind, as what has been done by psychoanalysis. Humanistic psychologists also reject the behaviourist school of psychology for its mechanistic view on how behaviour and personality develop (Maslow, 1968). They do not agree with the behaviourist concept, which states that all human actions can be reduced to a stimulus- response type of reaction. According to them, man has a subjective inner dimension, which influences his actions and thoughts. As such, man has the freedom of choice either to respond or not to respond to the demands of his environment. The main icons of humanistic psychology like Abraham Maslow (1908-1970) and Carl Rogers (1902-1987) believed that the

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<sup>6</sup> Hasan Langgulong, *Kreativiti dan pendidikan: Suatu kajian psikologi dan falsafah* (Kuala Lumpur: Dewan Bahasa dan Pustaka, 1991).

<sup>7</sup> Malik Babikar Badri, *The AIDS dilemma: A progeny of modernity*. In Al-Attas, Sharifah Shifah (ed), *Islam and challenge of modernity* (pp.123-210), (Kuala Lumpur: International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 1996).

good potentials of man could only manifest in totality when he undergoes the process of ‘fully-functioning person’ and ‘self-actualization.’<sup>8</sup>

### Concept of Man in Islamic Psychology

Ideas on human nature put forward by early as well as contemporary Muslim scholars are based on the ideas presented in the Qur’an and Hadith. As such, Islamic psychology has a rather different approach in the study of man compared to many Western theories on man. Islamic psychology based on the religion of Islam has given a concept of human nature, which is diametrically opposite to what has been conceived by most Western schools of psychology. It presents a concept of human nature, which is comprehensive and all encompassing, describing that man has a physical, social, psychological and spiritual dimensions. The last mentioned dimension, is a missing thing in almost all Western schools of psychology. Islamic psychology highlights the many interesting facts on man.<sup>9</sup> According to Islamic psychologists, among all creations in the heaven and earth, only man has been bestowed with many distinctive qualities. As the recipients of these distinctive qualities from God the Almighty, man is placed on the highest pedestal in the hierarchy of creations. Some of the distinctive features explained by Muslim scholars are: man has been created in the best of forms ( Al- Qur’an, *Al-Tīn*:1-4), provided with the creative intelligence (*Al-Baqarah*: 31-34), given the power of speech and freedom of choice ( *Al-Rahmān*: 4; *Al-Insān*: 3), born in the state of *Fitrah* (primordial nature) without the ‘Original Sin’, man is forgetful in nature (*Ta Ha*:115), born with the natural tendency to be a believer in God (*Al- Rum*:30), he has a dual nature; body and spirit, he is the recipient of the *Amānah* (trust)(*Al-Ahzab*:72), *Mīthāq* (covenant) (*Al-A’rāf*-172), etc. Apart from that, man has been further honoured in his stature and position when Allah made all things created in the heaven and earth to be of service to him. (*Al-Jāthiyah*: 13; *Al-Isrā’*: 70).<sup>10</sup>

Due to the fact that man has been endowed with such noble qualities or for some other reasons only known to the Creator, man has been chosen to be His *Khalīfah* (vicegerent) on earth. As the vicegerent of

<sup>8</sup> H Misiak & V.S. Sexton, *Phenomenological, existential and humanistic psychologies* (New York: Grune & Stratton, 1973) & in Morris, C.G. *Contemporary psychology and effective behavior* (New York: Harper Collins Publishers, 7<sup>th</sup> edn, 1990).

<sup>9</sup> Zafar Afaq Ansari (ed). *Qur’anic concepts of human psyche* (pp.1-14) (Islamabad: International Institute of Islamic Thought Pakistan, 1992).

<sup>10</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali. *The Holy Qur’an: Text, translation and commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989).

God, man has to administer this world in accordance with the Divine Will of his Creator mentioned in the holy script of the Muslims. With these metaphysical concepts on man, Islamic psychology elucidates in clear terms on man's pre-existence in the form of soul, his birth, his life on this world with all the duties and responsibilities laid on his shoulders and also on the spiritual journey undertaken by man upon completing this worldly life.<sup>11</sup>

### **What is Creativity?**

At a time when scholars are debating on the issue; as to whether creativity is innate or is a learned behavior, this part of the research would like to briefly venture into what is creativity and what it means to be creative. According to Webster's New World Dictionary, creativity and creative individuals have the following qualities:

Creating or able to create, having or showing imagination and artistic or intellectual, inventiveness (creative writing), and stimulating the imagination and inventive powers.

According to Maimunah Osman, creative thinking among others involves the following:

- Able to generate new ideas;
- The ability to generate alternative ways to do things;
- An individual's ability to look at a situation from multiple dimensions and perceptions;
- The ability to see things in a broader perspective; and
- The ability to bring new added values to a thing/matter;<sup>12</sup>

While explaining what is creativity she is of the opinion that creativity involves the situations itemized below:

- To bring upon new ideas.
- New ways of solving problems.
- New ways of performing a task.
- Creating a new definition to a job.
- New ways of using a thing.

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<sup>11</sup> Afzalur Rahman, *Muhammad: encyclopedia of seerah*, Vol.6 (London: Seerah Foundation, 1988)1-10.

<sup>12</sup> Maimunah Osman, *Pemikiran kreatif* (Kuala Lumpur: Institut Tadbiran Awam Negara, 2005) 8.

-Creating new added values to a thing.<sup>13</sup>

Another vital issue related to creativity is how creativity has been perceived by people living in the different cultural contexts of the world. Some view creativity as a godly attribute inherited by some special individuals, while others think creativity as mimicry and a discovery made by someone. Besides this, the more often related vocabularies to creativity are critical thinking and innovation. Our reading on the topic of creativity has revealed that modern scholars overwhelmingly agree that being creative and critical are two qualities or attributes that are inseparable. Analogically explained they are the two-sides of a coin. In many instances, creative people demonstrate a high level of critical thinking. While innovation in the western culture entails a break away from tradition and old traditional ways of doing and looking at things and situations. In the East, innovation has been perceived as reinterpretation of traditional ideas in the new setting. For some, regardless in the East or West, innovation means to recreate new things and ideas out of the old and existing things or ideas.<sup>14</sup>

Turning to the question on what hinders one being creative, critical and innovative. There can be many factors. Below here are some of the factors:

1. One's belief that he or she is not creative because creativity is a trademark owned by some gifted individuals.
2. Afraid of being different from others. Don't want to be seen by others of his/her actions as outlandish, and not keeping to the tradition. Also, afraid of being criticized and marginalized by the society.
3. The fear of failure on promoting new ideas.
4. Feeling shy to be different from others.
5. Personal attitude of being negative to new ideas.
6. Never liked change of views and behavior.
7. Always looking at things from one's perspective only; narrow mindedness, "my way or no way" etc.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>13</sup> Ibid. (Maimunah Osman, 2005) 8.

<sup>14</sup> See: Richard Paul & Linda Elder, *The nature and functions of critical & creative thinking* (USA: The Foundation for Critical Thinking, 3rd edn, 2012).

<sup>15</sup> Op. Cit., See: (Maimunah, 2005).

The latest trend in understanding what are creativity, critical thinking and innovation indicates people generally agree that all these qualities are not the possession of a certain selected group of people. These are attributes that can be learned, borrowed or imitated and experimented over time to be refined. Through these qualities people can further improve their lives and able to bring the sustainable development for the survival of the entire human race.

### **Creativity According to Psychoanalysis**

The psychoanalysis school of thought in the Western mainstream psychology deems creativity or being creative as a sort of energy that comes from the id impulses which are sexual and aggressive in nature. In Freud's view, since this energy that gushes forth from the unconscious is unpleasant and socially unacceptable to the society, it needs to be transformed so that it finds acceptance in the society. In order to do this, the ego as the peacemaker of the human psyche between the id and superego, uses one of its defense mechanism known as sublimation to transform what is originally sexual and aggressive into a creative energy that produces behaviour and works of creativity. Freud in describing the origin of creativity in the mind said:

... First is repression, which is quite energetic. The second outcome occurs when sexual investigation is not totally repressed but is coped with by thought processes or by compulsive defenses. In the third outcome which is the 'most rare and perfect type,' sexual curiosity is sublimated into that inquisitive attitude which leads to creativity.<sup>16</sup>

Freud believed that a creative work of an individual is the outlet through which an individual releases all the stored up contents of his unconscious from early childhood for the reason they are not accepted by the society for being sexual and aggressive in nature. But through sublimation at a later stage in life the unconscious of an individual manifests itself in the form of creative work that will be acceptable to the society. Corey in elaborating on sublimation as one of the Freudian defense mechanisms stated the following:

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<sup>16</sup> Freud in Silvano H. Arieti, *Creativity: the magic synthesis* (New York: Harper Colophon Book, 1976), 22.



From the Freudian perspective, many of the great artistic contributions resulted from a redirection of sexual or aggressive energy into creative behaviors. Sublimation involves diverting the sexual energy into other channels, ones that are usually socially acceptable and sometimes even admirable. For example, aggressive impulses can be channeled into athletic activities, so that the person finds a way of expressing aggressive feelings and, as an added bonus, is often praised.<sup>17</sup>

Kris shared the same idea with Freud on creativity except he differed in his view to say that the ego uses regression and not sublimation as its defense mechanism as an outlet for the unconscious to express itself in the form of a creative work. In further explaining on how creativity comes to the surface, he explains:

From the release of passion under the protection of the aesthetic illusion to the highly complex process of re-creation under the artist's guidance, a series of processes of psychic discharge take place, which could be differentiated from each other by the varieties and degrees of neutralization of the energy discharged. All these processes, however, are controlled by the ego, and the degree of completeness of neutralization indicates the degree of ego autonomy.<sup>18</sup>

### **Creativity According to Radical Behaviorism**

Unlike psychoanalysis, the behaviorist school of psychology is interested in all that are observable behaviours of man. They are only interested in the observable things in man that can be subjected to scientific psychological investigation. Since human creativity, emotion and thoughts are not tangible, behaviourism is not interested in exploring at the very core of how these processes take place in the human psyche. As such, the behaviorist school of psychology presents an over simplified concept of creativity. Behaviorism is at loggerhead with the psychoanalysis concept of creativity which says that creativity in general or any creative work in its original nature is the libidinal and aggressive energy of the id which through sublimation is made presentable, adorable and acceptable to the society. To the behaviorists, creativity is something that can be answered in terms of stimulus-response.<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> Op. Cit. Corey, 1986, 15.

<sup>18</sup> Ernst Kris, *Psychoanalytic exploration in art* (New York: International University Press, 1952) 63.

<sup>19</sup> See: Frager, Robert & Fadiman, James, *Personality and personal growth* (New York: Harpers Collins, 1984).

No doubt behaviorists agree in principle that creativity is something that emerges from stimulus-response but they somehow differ in their own views in defining creativity. Radical behaviorist like Skinner argued that there is no such thing as creativity as all human activities have been controlled by people who dispense reinforcements and punishments like parents, teachers, peers, police, etc. He also believed that human dignity that comes from individual accomplishment and achievements are nothing more than something determined by the reward and punishment. To him, even creativeness in poetry is just nothing but merely an act of composing a poem out of 'bits and pieces' of the stimulus that come from the environment. He further deemed that even though creating a poem needs exploration and discovery but these acts are not viewed as creativeness, rather it is something related to the history of the poet and to the trial-and- error in the learning activities.<sup>20</sup> Irving Maltzman, a well-known figure in Behaviorism, believed that one can increase original behavior in others by simply rewarding them for their actions. As such, this explains that creativity in man is the result of encouragement and reward given to man's actions. Besides Skinner and Maltzman, Staats also explained creative thinking in terms of stimulus-response. He explains that creative ideas of an individual are made up of new combination of previously stored up unrelated ideas in the human memory. The final view on creativity from the behaviorist school comes from Mednick. His view on creativity is focused on mental association (e.g. when the word carrot is mentioned, one associates it to rabbit, etc.) In his opinion, a highly creative person is one who stores a large number of verbal and non-verbal mental associations which are readily at the disposal of an individual for recombining them into creative ideas.<sup>21</sup>

### **Creativity According to Humanistic Psychology**

Humanistic psychology deems that every individual has the capacity to be creative. Developing one's creativity is very much related to the social environment in which one lives. In a free society where there is no restriction and hindrance that blocks the natural human tendencies, man would be able to bring forward and develop his creativity which has been in existence innately within his inner self. According to Humanistic psychology, man by actualizing his creative potentials, he becomes a

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<sup>20</sup> Op.cit. See: (Langgulung 1991).

<sup>21</sup> G. A. Davis, *Creativity is forever* (Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1992) 56-59.

‘self-actualized’ person. Furthermore, some humanistic psychologists, especially Maslow, believes that the unconscious is not a storehouse of man’s instinctual drives alone but it also stores many hidden potentials that are creative and adorable to others once they are brought out from man’s inner self.<sup>22</sup> They also believe that these hidden creative potentials should not make use any of the ego defense mechanisms as this will damage and distort the true quality and essence of the good and creative contents of the inner self. Humanistic psychologists highlighted that there are two kinds of creativity. One that is reflected on all creative works that bear special characteristic and recognition, and the other type of creativity that does not represent any creative work that demands any special talent or skill. The latter is the concept of creativity expressed by humanistic psychologists like Maslow and Rogers.<sup>23</sup>

The above expressed views of the humanistic psychologists explain that man’s unconscious caters to store creative and adorable potentials is something contrary to the Freudian view that states the unconscious to be the powerhouse which stores sexual and aggressive instincts only. Moreover, Maslow and Rogers were on the same wavelength on their approval to say that creativity in a way means self-actualization. The following quotes will act as a justification to their idea on creativity:

The main spring of creativity appears to be the same tendency which we discover so deeply as the curative force in psychotherapy—Man’s tendency to actualize himself to become his potentials... the urge to expand, extend, develop, mature—the tendency to express and activate all the capabilities of the organism, or the self.<sup>24</sup>

... The concept of creativeness and the concept of healthy, self-actualizing fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, may turn out to be the same thing.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> See: Abraham H. Maslow, *Toward a psychology of being* (New York: D. Van Nostrand, 2<sup>nd</sup> edn, 1968).

<sup>23</sup> Op.cit., (Langgulong, 199) 208-210.

<sup>24</sup> C. R. Rogers, *On becoming a person* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1961), 350-351.

<sup>25</sup> Maslow in G. A. Davis, *Creativity is forever* (Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 3<sup>rd</sup> edn, 1992), 2.

My feeling is that the concept of creativeness and the concept of healthy, self-actualizing fully human person seem to be coming closer and closer together, and may turn out to be the same thing.<sup>26</sup>

### Creativity According to Islamic Psychology

Under the Islamic perspective of psychology, man's creativity in life is what he has got from Allah as the Supreme Creator of the universe. In discussing man's creativity from the Islamic perspective demands some elucidation on Allah's attributes as the Creative Creator of the world, and the universe at large. The attributes mentioned in the Qur'an that reveal Allah's power as the mighty Creator are namely; *Al-Khaliq* or *Al-Khallaq*, *Al-Badi*, *Al-Musawwir* and *Al-Fatir*. The following are the references of God's attributes as the Creator:

To Him is due the primal origin of the heavens and the earth: How can He have a son when He hath no consort? He created all things, and He hath full knowledge of all things (*Al-An'am* 6:101).<sup>27</sup>

That is Allah, your Lord! There is no god but He, the creator of all things; then worship ye Him, and He hath power to dispose of all affairs (*Al-An'am* 6:102).<sup>28</sup>

He it is Who shapes you in the wombs as He pleases. There is no god but He The Exalted in Might, The Wise (*Ali 'Imran* 3:6).<sup>29</sup>

All praise is due to God, Originator of the heavens and earth, who causes the angels to be [His] message-bearers, endowed with wings, two, or three, or four. [Unceasingly] He adds to His creation whatever He wills: for, verily God has the power to will anything (*Fatir* 35: 1).<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Abraham H. Maslow, *The farther reaches of human nature* (North Carolina: Maurice Bassett, 1973) 57.

<sup>27</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, translation and commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989).

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. See: Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid. See: Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid. See: Abdullah Yusuf Ali.

According to Langgulung, the verses above and many more such verses in the Qur'an that explain the Majesty and Power of Allah as the Almighty Creator can be classified into three different time periods in the creation of man and other forms of life in the universe. The first one explains how He created the universe, man and the other living organisms in the beginning merely out of nothingness. The second one explains how He will bring creations into existence once more again on the day of resurrection for judgment. The third one explains His on-going act in creating things which depict all changes and progress that take place between His first and second time periods. Furthermore, Langgulung is of the opinion that the last said act of creativeness of Allah in creating and bringing changes and progress in this world is being shared by man at a lesser degree.<sup>31</sup>

Similar to Langgulung, Iqbal has highlighted man's God given qualities to create and to be creative. In Iqbal's view, man being the vicegerent of Allah has been imbued with the many godly attributes. Due to this reason Iqbal feels that the ideal believer in God should be one whom he calls as the 'co-worker' with God. Since Allah gave this world to man as a raw and unfinished product to deal with, it becomes the duty of man to beautify and ameliorate what is unfinished. This idea of man being the 'co-worker' with God has been stated by Iqbal in one of his poems in *Payam-i- Mashriq* (Message from the East):

You made the night and I the lamp.  
 You made the clay and I the cup.  
 You made the deserts, forests, mountains high,  
 I flowerbeds and orchards and the park.  
 It is I who grinds the mirror out of stone.  
 It is I who makes from poison, antidote.<sup>32</sup>

Being the co-worker of Allah, man has to be an active individual who is strong in his will to further develop what has been given to him by God. In this sense, Iqbal in many of his poems has asked man to take a vital role of being in possession or in control of one's environment. Furthermore, Iqbal believed that it is the duty of man to bring forth the riches from the belly of the earth to be utilized for his spiritual develop-

<sup>31</sup> Op.cit. (Langgulung, 1991), 249.

<sup>32</sup> Iqbal in Annemarie Schimmel, *The secrets of creative love: The work of Muhammad Iqbal* (London: Al-Furqan Islamic Heritage Foundation, 1998), 26-27.

ment. In order to do this, man must equip himself with knowledge. As man has been taught by God, and given the faculty of naming things and forming concepts, it should be this gift of God that man must use to his advantage to gain dominance over the world of matter for his own spiritual upliftment. The claim made by Iqbal and Langgulung of man being a creative creator at a lesser degree than God finds validity in the following verse of the Qur'an:

Then We made the sperm-drop into a clinging clot, and We made the clot into a lump [of flesh], and We made [from] the lump, bones, and We covered the bones with flesh; then We developed him into another creation. So blessed is Allah, the best of creators (Surah Al-Mu'minun: 14).<sup>33</sup>

Since the last part of the verse suggests that Allah as the best of creators, then surely man who is the best creation of God with all the noble qualities given to him also qualifies to have the ability to create and innovate creatively new things on this planet. Furthermore, Iqbal believed that man is not a static being. By relating to the Quranic message that the universe in which man lives is one that is constantly growing every minute and every second, Iqbal applied the same to state that in man too there is a constant growth. By reading Iqbal's philosophical ideas on the human personality one can understand that he highly valued the role, potentials and creative mind possessed by man. Iqbal's ideas on man perfectly reflect the message found in the Qur'an. Iqbal's positive views on man can be clearly seen in what he said in his monumental philosophical work of the Reconstruction:

Man, therefore, in whom egohood has reached its relative perfection, occupies a genuine place in the heart of Divine Creative energy, and thus possesses a much higher degree of reality than things around him. Of all the creations of God, he alone is capable of consciously participating in the creative life of his Maker. Endowed with the power to imagine a better world, and to mould what is into what ought to be, the ego in him aspires, in the interests of an increasing unique and comprehensive individuality, to

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<sup>33</sup> Abdullah Yusuf Ali, *The Holy Qur'an: Text, translation and commentary* (Maryland: Amana Corporation, 1989).

exploit all the various environments on which he may be called upon to operate during the course of an endless career.<sup>34</sup>

The Quranic verse that states Allah taught all the 'names' to Adam (*Surah Al- Baqarah* 2: 31) could also mean that man inherits the many attributes of Allah in him. Among the many attributes of Allah, names like *Al-Khaliq*, *Al-Badi*, *Al-Musawwir* and *Al-Fatir* have great significance to the Islamic concept of creativity. Man, who inherits these attributes of Allah, has the tendency to exhibit creativity during his life in this world. The only difference between Allah and man as a creator is that, Allah is the Almighty Creator and His power to create and being creative is Absolute, while man's power to create is relative or rather limited. Allah can create out of nothingness, but man needs something to create other more advanced, developed, sophisticated and innovative things.

The prerequisites for man's creativity and being creative are due to his position as Allah's vicegerent on earth; given the freedom to exercise his freewill to choose all that is good for this life and for the hereafter, and also for being Allah's trustee in this world which demands responsibility and accountability at the same time. Despite the task of being Allah's vicegerent, having to shoulder the trust given to him, and the fact that he will be held accountable for his action, man has to actualize his innate potentials by being industrious, productive, progressive, innovative and creative. All these qualities and their manifestation in the human life in a way can be interpreted as worship (*Ibadah*) in Islam. As such, Islamic psychology views man's creativity as something that should be constructive and morally acceptable to the society, in line with the purpose for which man has been sent to this world. Creativity and creativeness in Islam also demand man to be upright, just, and ready to abide by Allah's commandments and to keep away from His prohibitions, also having no resentment and prejudice towards others.<sup>35</sup>

### Appraisal

The concept of creativity put forward by the three Western mainstream psychologies is different from one another. Freudian psychoanalysis looks at creativity as the sublimated energy of the Id made presenta-

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<sup>34</sup> Muhammad Iqbal, *The reconstruction of religious thought in Islam* (Lahore: Institute of Islamic Culture, 1996), 58.

<sup>35</sup> Op.cit, See: (Langgulung, 1991).

ble in arts and artistic works. Freud was of the conviction that the Id is at work at the very core of all works of creativity. To prove his case he analyzed great personalities in history like Plato (428-348BCE), Michelangelo (1475-1564) and Leonardo Da Vinci (1425-1519). In the case of Da Vinci, he analyzed this great Italian artist and inventor's life and wrote a book on him (Freud, 1916). To him, the state of being a creative person or a neurosis is separated by a thin line in the human psyche. One can be either one of the two depending on the situation and on how well the ego handles the situation. In Freud's view, creativity is not the spark that one gets from the environment to produce great works but it is the energy that comes from the unconscious of the human psyche which is later transformed into something acceptable by the help of one of the ego's defense mechanisms.

J.B Watson, Skinner and others from Radical Behaviorism think that creativity like knowledge exists in the environment. To them, man is a 'Tabula Rasa' right from birth. As such, knowledge, motivation and creativity come through the stimuli from the environment. People can be motivated, energized and display creativity for being in the right environment and given the right stimulus. Based on the learning theory, they think people can be creative if there is a reward for them. Moreover, they do not believe that things like innate knowledge and man's inner psychic powers that can be a source of his creativity. In short, they believe that creativity is a learned behaviour.

Maslow and Rogers believed that man is good in his nature and the human self has a lot of potentials for growth. Furthermore, they believed that man comes to this world with some basic, innate or latent knowledge. They also stated that man's creativeness not only comes from within his human psyche but also from the environment. To them, a 'fully-functioning person', 'self-actualized person' and the one who goes through 'peak experience' is an individual who is creative in his/her life. In short, they explained creativity in association with all these terms.

Islamic psychologists believe that every individual regardless male or female is capable of being creative. According to Islamic psychology, the state of man being creative is related to the *Al-Asma* taught to Adam by Allah the Almighty. The word *Al-Asma* in (*Surah Al-Baqarah*: 31) can be of anything like knowledge, languages, names of things, God's beautiful Names, etc. Langgulung and others have highlighted that the *Asma* given to Adam will be inherited by all his progenies (humanity as a whole). Besides this, Islamic psychologists also believe that creativity is within the human *Fitrah* (man's primordial nature)



in which man has been created. As such, there is creativity in the human soul that need to be actualized through proper parenting, schooling and conducive environment. From the Islamic perspective, man's creativity and creativeness come from the human psyche and also from the environment. Man's qualities being able to create and to be creative can be seen clearly in the civilizations he has created. Gifted with these noble qualities man has been given the position of God's vicegerent on earth.<sup>36</sup>

### **Conclusion**

This research on man and creativity has highlighted that different schools of thought in psychology have different concepts on what is creativity. The differences of opinion in their concept of creativity are based on their concept of human nature. Regardless in the East or West, all marks of human achievement and civilization were only made possible due to man's attributes of being a creative creator, inventor, and innovator. Man being the best creation of God, should use his creativity and all other God-given qualities towards creating a better world and not use his creativity to create war and destruction. Man's creativity should stop all destructions that have happened to the flora and fauna. Lastly, man has to use creativity in an ethical manner in line with the purpose for which he has been sent to this world.

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<sup>36</sup> See: Mohd Abbas Abdul Razak, *Human nature: A comparative study between western and Islamic psychology* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic University Malaysia, 1997).

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