

Criticality and creativity

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Individuality is the state or quality of being an individual; a person separate from other persons and possessing his or her own needs or goals. Individualism promotes the exercise of one's goals and desires thus one values independence and self-reliance while opposing external interference upon one's own interests by society and institutions such as the Government. Liberty is the ability of individuals to have control over their own actions.

John Stuart Mill, a philosopher, in his article Liberty under the chapter of Individuality as One of the Elements of Well-being has made an imperative that human beings should be free to form opinions, and to express their opinions without reserve. This is of beneficial consequences to the intellectual, and through that to the moral nature of man, unless this liberty is either conceded, or asserted in spite of prohibition. He recognized the difference between liberty as the freedom to act and liberty as the absence of coercion.

Individuals should be given the chances to come up with opinions or ideas and be allowed to express them without being stopped. For example, the Government should not refuse an individual to put into action their new ideas but should rather motivate them. It should not stop them because it thinks it can do better than them but should facilitate the idea by providing the necessities such as funds and freedom. Individuals can come up with opinions or ideas that may benefit them but at the same time impose a problem on others.

The liberty of the individual must be thus far limited; he/she must not make himself a nuisance to other people. But if he refrains from molesting others

in what concerns them, and merely acts according to his own inclination and judgment in things which concern himself, the same reasons which show that opinion should be free, prove also that he should be allowed, without molestation, to carry his opinions into practice at his own cost.

When individuals are given the freedom to come up with new ideas and exploit them, it encourages them to want to come up with better ideas, learn from their experiences thus promoting their creativity and developing criticality in them. The human faculties of perception, judgment, discriminative feeling, mental activity, and even moral preference, are exercised only in making a choice. He who does anything because it is the custom, makes no choice. He gains no practice either in discerning or in desiring what is best.

The mental and moral, like the muscular powers, are improved only by being used. The faculties are called into no exercise by doing a thing merely because others do it, no more than by believing a thing only because others believe it. If the grounds of an opinion are not conclusive to the person's own reason, his reason cannot be strengthened, but is likely to be weakened, by him adopting it and if the inducements to an act are not affected by, or rights of others are not concerned, it is so much done towards rendering his feelings and character inert and torpid, instead of active and energetic.

This is because originality is a valuable element in human affairs. There is always need of persons not only to discover new truths, and point out when what were once truths are true no longer, but also to commence new practices, and set the example of more enlightened conduct, and better taste and sense in human life.