

**Frank Barron,
CREATIVE PERSON AND
CREATIVE PROCESS.
New York:
Holt, Rinehart and Winston,
1969.
212 pp. — \$3.95.**

To many of us creativity is like love, indefinable and immeasurable. Can anyone prescribe dimensions for creativity or the creative person? To do so may seem like trying to put the still, small voice of God into a two-ounce bottle, and yet Frank Barron and his colleagues, recognizing the current need among psychologists and educators to define what William James designated as the "transcendental ego," that vital flash of originality and genius which we call creativity, have attempted to assess certain qualities in so-called creative people and to make certain generalizations.

Dr. Barron, a member of the Institute of Personality Assessment and Research at the University of California, Berkeley, has initiated and participated in many studies on personality and is familiar with the work of other researchers. This study attempts to analyse the creative process through close scrutiny and testing of a selected group of men (architects, writers, mathematicians and scientists) for process there is an incessant diatribe purpose of discriminating the characteristics of the "creative" from the "representative" among the subjects. Among the writers he examined are such well-knowns as Norman Mailer, Frank O'Connor, Truman Capote, MacKinlay Kantor and Kenneth Rexroth, "none of whom sat still to be studied." (Preface, p. 6). These names alone titillate the interest of the average reader. The subject with its connotations of originality and

deviance is an absorbing one to students of human behaviour, psychologist or layman. A separate chapter deals with creative women. This exclusive treatment, which one might question, is predicated on the possibility that differentiating psychically creative women from less gifted individuals of either sex may lead to greater insight and solutions for the social and educational problems of women generally.

Two central questions emerge in the book: "Can we create such conditions of life and education that they [children] can grow up without loss of the ability to function creatively?" (p. 169), and, "Does the loss of potential for creative expression occur as a consequence of some organic law or is it that we *learn* to inhibit creativity in ourselves?" (p. 176). The answers to these questions, says Barron, are crucial to our survival as a species. "In the creative lectic and a tension between two opposed dispositional tendencies: the tendency toward disruption of structure and diffusion and [sic] energy and attention." (p. 179) (The second "and" is surely a missprint and what Barron intended was "of".) Only through some magnificently creative force, or what Aristotle called "creative reason" will mankind transcend the present plateau of his evolution and achieve what Père Teilhard de Chardin in *The Phenomenon of Man* has called the omega point.

Barron's technique is to focus on person and process and his approach remains "essentially intuitive and introspective even while it makes use of psychometrics and objective methods." (Preface, p. 6). Writing in an informal rather than a scientific style he nevertheless uses a good many supporting tables and quotes liberally from earlier scientific studies by such researchers as Paul Torrance, Helson, Getzels and Jackson. He assumes that each of

us is both "creature and creator" but that we vary in our quality as a creation and in our power to create — a statement supported by some fascinating data. For example, he finds that the high psychopathological measure of creative writers and architects is counterbalanced by a correspondingly high ego strength which, in the end, renders the artist more effective and more socially participative than the average; that "the academic underdog, the student with the low I.Q., seems to run off with the prize in the end . . . high creative as opposed to high I.Q.'s." (a conclusion not surprising to many a teacher!); that innovative teaching in the classroom helps to sustain the correlation between age and creativity found in children throughout the world but which tendency seems to be reversed in the United States (and, I am sure, in Canada); that "the most creative society of the future will develop new social forms in which masculine and feminine expression will be merged." (p. 113)

There are some piquant implications in all this. In general I found the book engaging and stimulating — a worthwhile contribution to the educator's understanding of the creative process. The inclusion of the chapter and the appendix to it on "Innovations in Business Management in Ireland" was unnecessary and seemed to intrude on the main theme. However, the chapter on the use of hallucinogenic drugs in the stimulation of creative action, while it also seemed outside the central discussion, raised a number of provocative ideas. The main weakness of Barron's book lies in its looseness of construction. There is a serious flaw in the continuity of ideas and the organization of material. As a documentary of experimental data (by no means all of it new or original) it is interesting; as a piece of literature it is inept. One wishes that Barron had injected as much creativity into his style as into his research. However, an aspect of his approach that I found

reassuring was his respect for scientific verification. He questions repeatedly the conclusiveness of certain findings, either because the research is too recent, or is insufficiently supported. He stresses the need for more scholarly research, and cautions against superficiality. Perhaps Frank Barron, himself, will be the one to capture and conquer more determinatively some of the concepts which swarm so provocatively from his book.

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**A BIBLIOGRAPHY OF
HIGHER EDUCATION
IN CANADA.
SUPPLEMENT 1971.
BIBLIOGRAPHIE
DE L'ENSEIGNEMENT
SUPÉRIEUR AU CANADA.
SUPPLÉMENT 1971.**

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Les Presses
de l'Université Laval, 1971.
311 pp.

When, in 1956, members of the National Conference of Canadian Universities expressed concern at the lack of systematic study of higher education in Canada, they took two characteristic actions. They first obtained financial support from the Carnegie Corporation of New York and next sought volunteers to carry out such a study. They chose two professors then in the middle professional ranks, Robin Harris at Toronto and Arthur Tremblay at Laval. How wise was their choice can be seen not only in the first bibliography, published in 1960, not only in the public careers of the two men since that time, but in the distinguished contributions which each has made to higher education. It is well known that Robin Harris has served on virtually every committee dealing with university