The Part Ibn Khaldun's Personality Traits and his Social Milieu Played in Shaping his Pioneering Social Thought

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This paper examines the factors that influenced Ibn Khaldun in producing his pioneering and creative work, the *Muqaddimah* where he outlines his science of *al-Umrân al-Basharî*. The paper is divided into five sections. The first section illustrates the problem of determining the factors behind creativity. The second section considers recent research by psychologists about the personality traits leading to creativity. The third section discusses Ibn Khaldun's work and demonstrates why it should be considered as creative. The fourth section argues that it is the interaction between the internal personality traits and the external social factors that more fully explains creativity. The final section derives from Ibn Khaldun's work to picture and analyze the specific social milieu that influenced Ibn Khaldun, and his personality traits along with a discussion of the creative problem solving process he may have used.

1. The Aim of this Paper

This study attempts to shed light on what contributed to Ibn Khaldun's pioneering creative social thought as represented in his "science of al-Umrân al-Basharî" (human civilization). Modern research by psychologists especially into the creativity and the innovativeness exhibited by prominent figures in science, philosophy, and the arts across various human civilizations over time will also be considered. In general, studies on Ibn Khaldun's remarkable achievement in social thought tend to explain the

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Khaldunian phenomenon by pointing to social variables rather than to the personality traits of the author of the *Muqaddimah*.[1] The birth of Ibn Khaldun's New Science was, according to this view, the outcome of the quasi-deterministic social circumstances experienced by Ibn Khaldun. In other words, creative and innovative thought is seen here to be the result of the imperatives of stringent social determinism. This perspective has ultimately led to a general lack of study into the role Ibn Khaldun's personality traits played in the unfolding of his thought. In light of modern psychology's insights and findings regarding human personality traits triggering and promoting the spirit of creativity and innovation in certain individuals, it is hardly acceptable to seek an objective assessment of an innovative person without seriously taking into account this person's personality.

A consensus now exists, as will be shown, indicating that creativity is a complex phenomenon whose actualization is neither directed nor governed by just one single factor. Thus, the narrow social deterministic view of creative work contradicts the very nature of the phenomenon of pioneering innovative work. According to the psychologist, Howard Gruber, creativity is the outcome of a multitude of factors that have enabled the efforts of Einstein, Darwin, Beethoven and Ibn Khaldun, for instance, to be crowned with distinction in the worlds of knowledge, science, music, and art. Genetic, familial, motivational, and cultural factors are among that multitude that sharpen vision and help creative individuals triumph in their fields.[2] Consequently, explaining the creative work of this historian or that painter or of this musician or that scientist only through the factor of their social milieu would jeopardize reaching a more complete and mature understanding of the complex phenomenon of their creativity.

In other words, the social deterministic view of creative work has to be considered a shortsighted and ultimately a superficial perspective. It is an approach unsuitable to creative work that is cherished as the most supreme work of all. Only the minds and imaginations of a tiny minority of individuals can produce this sort of work. Therefore, the goal here is to unveil the multiple levels whose interaction led Ibn Khaldun to create his New Science of al-'Umrân al-Basharî and to better understand the role played by personality traits in the creative and innovative processes. In other words, this paper is a modest attempt aimed at humanizing the phenomenon of creativity or liberating it, as far as possible, from the grip of rigid social structures and political circumstances whose importance on the emergence of the individual's creativity has been strongly advocated by the partisans of social determinism.

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1   See for instance, M. Al-Jabri., *Al-Assabiyya and the State* (in Arabic), 3rd ed. Attalîa, Beirut 1982; Y. Lacoste, *Ibn Khaldun* Paris 1956; and M. Mahdi, *Ibn Khaldun's Philosophy of History,* Maspèro, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1971).

2   H. Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brains: A Cognitive Approach to Creativity,* Basic Books, Inc., New York 1982, p. 357.

2. The Phenomenon of Creativity

a) Discerning and Producing Creative Work

Undoubtedly, the disciplines of psychology and the new field of cognitive science are the first modern scientific areas to become the most preoccupied with the study of the phenomenon of creativity among certain individuals. Hundreds of studies on creativity have already been published in specialized scientific journals. Yet, there is neither an accepted scientific theory of creativity nor even a consensus on a definition of creativity. Likewise, there is no genuine agreement among researchers as to the way to study it scientifically.[3]

As to what constitutes creative work, there have been many attempts on the part of specialists to define criteria and measurements. The psychologist Jenne S. Bruner thinks that people's response to creative work takes two forms: "effective surprise" and the "shock of recognition" or a sense of satisfaction, although an answer was unexpected.[4] Cognitive science research suggests that the human mind can in most cases identify creative works despite any strangeness involved, the diversity of people's tastes, and the lack of objective criteria and norms by which creative works can be judged.[5]

Such findings on the powerful human perception of creativity clearly point to the presence of innate predispositions that permit individuals to distinguish between creative and offensive or even wicked works. The acceptance of such an assumption leads to another deduction which is important to the theme of this paper. If we recognize aspects of creativity by some kind of innate intuition, doesn't this mean à priory that our genetic make up is also innately equipped with the potentiality to produce creative works? In other words, having innate capacities that permit us to discern and evaluate creative works implies that humans are born with personal creative talents which could effectively lead certain individuals to achieve actual creative work. Taking into account the human potentiality to produce creative works and the innate sense with which humans judge the creative works of the few members of a given society that actually produce them, it is our hope next to shed more light on the personality traits that the creators possess.

b) The Characteristics of Creators

The American psychologist Morris Stein has reviewed the literature on creative works and has identified nineteen characteristics whose presence in the personality of individuals is reportedly correlated with the creativity phenomena. It is admitted, however, that there are many contradictions among the items on the list.[6] There is a

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3   M. Hunt, *The Universe Within: A New Science Explores the Human Mind,* Simon and Schuster, New York 1982, p. 279.
4   Hunt, *Universive Within,* p. 281.
5   Hunt, *Universive Within,* p. 283.
6   Hunt, *Universive Within,* p. 284.

consensus, though, among specialists who have studied creativity that there are a number of personality traits that are common among creators. Creators are known to be hard working individuals who are flexible and independent in their thinking. They are more willing than the typical individual to modify or change their frame of thought. It should be noted that this relative similarity in certain personality traits related to creativity does not imply that creators are similar or identical in the remaining aspects of their personality. Their other traits are as diverse as those in the other members of society.[7]

As to the intelligence of creators, scientific research is now calling for a change in the widespread traditional view. Creators are no longer considered to be extra intelligent as the majority of society may now believe. To be more precise, researchers have concluded that "highly creative people are more than normally intelligent, but not extraordinarily so."[8] Considering that there are a great number of persons whose intelligence is quite high and also that many of them haven't become distinguished creators, it is clear that the phenomenon of creativity requires more than mere intelligence.

Research into gender differences related to creativity has shown that women produced fewer creative works in the past due entirely or in most part to their being deprived of educational, cultural, and social opportunities. In addition, some women may have developed a self-defeating mentality or an inferiority complex syndrome regarding their potential to be creative in the domains of thought, science, and the arts. Thus, the relation between gender and creativity has been found to be even weaker than the one between intelligence and creativity.

Regarding the role of age in shaping creativity, research has found some correlation between the age of about forty-five or middle age and the emergence of individuals' significant creativity. The ages at which Shakespeare, Freud, Picasso, and Ibn Khaldun became creative demonstrate this correlation.[9] In other words, adulthood is the period of life in which creativity begins to assert itself and unfold its greatest potential. Thus, because the well-known Swiss psychologist Jean Piaget said so little about adult mental development, he has been criticized. It is reported that when his student Howard Gruber expressed his desire to study the phenomenon of creativity, Piaget responded doubtfully without much sympathy saying that "the study of that touches everything."[10] Despite this, Gruber and his students did not become discouraged. They carried out studies of major creative works by pioneering creators during their adult lives. Gruber himself spent a decade studying Charles Darwin's creativity and published a book entitled *Darwin on Man*. Gruber believes that those who study

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7   Hunt, *Universive Within*, p. 285.
8   Hunt, *Universive Within*, p. 285.
9   Hunt, *Universive Within*, p. 285 and D. J. Levinson, *The Seasons of a Man's Life*, Ballantine Books, New York 1978, pp. 191-317.
10 Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 352.

the phenomenon of creativity must reconstruct the mental life of the creator throughout the different phases in the evolution of their creative work. "Snapshots of this evolving mental life can't be read off directly, even in the case of note-maker as compulsive as Darwin."[11] Gruber used Darwin's notebooks to see how he dealt with organizing the ideas that led him to his theories on the evolution of man. "Ideas stumble over each other in a seemingly chaotic fashion. The underlying order is something to be constructed, not observed."[12] Gruber had to identify the important motifs. In the case of Darwin, themes like origins, variations, survival, natural selection, heredity had to be spotted in order to see how those themes produced a series of "cognitive maps" that captured Darwin's view of his project at various stages in its evolution. Finally, Gruber, on the basis of studies of numerous creative works, arrived at a number of features that typify creators. They can be summarized as follows:

1. "Whole thinking" persons hold onto a number of interacting intellectual subsystems. One of those subsystems is involved in the organization of knowledge. They tend to seek to relate various facts and theories scattered across their area of concern in order to reach a coherent and comprehensive synthesis.

2. Typical creators produce a complex network of searches that engage their curiosity over long periods of time. These activities often help sustain each other and bring about an incredibly active creative life.

3. Creative persons not only bracket certain problems that might lead them into blind alleys, but they also "destroy problems" that may threaten to take them far away from their chosen network of hypotheses.

4. Creative individuals often pursue a number of dominant metaphors. As images, these metaphors are wide in scope, rich, and susceptible to considerable exploration. Thus, they expose the investigator to certain aspects of phenomena that might otherwise remain invisible.

5. The work of creative persons should not be considered mere reflections of unconscious motivation or accidental career choices. Rather, their choices are often animated by a series of self-conscious problems and projects that the creators are determined to monitor regularly and to carry through to successful completion. Gruber calls this sort of orientation the guiding purpose of the creator.

6. Creative persons love their field of work no matter what it is. Their creative work becomes part of their emotional life. The creators' infatuation with their work resembles that of the lover to the beloved.

7. Gruber's analysis shows that creators are confronted with difficulties and loneliness. The chances of failure in their solitary voyages are usually high.

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11 Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 353.
12 Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p.353

Such risky endeavors require creative individuals to be courageous and capable of deviating from others, resisting public scandal, and even enduring outright social exclusion. Most innovative and creative people will at times experience a strong need for personal, communal, or religious support.[13]

c) Hybrid Knowledge and Creativity

A book of great relevance to this study by Robert Pahre and Mattei Dogan has recently been published both in English and French.[14] I have personally read the French version. In the book, Pahre and Dogan stress that creativity in the social sciences is highly correlated with what they call "creative marginality." They have found that the renewal of ideas and theories in the social sciences is often accomplished by those who have crossed from their own field of specialization into other domains of specialization on the periphery of their own. That is, they communicate and exchange ideas with those in social science disciplines outside their own narrow fields of study. The two authors summarize their finding in the introduction to their book as follows:

... the main idea we will explain is that innovation/creativity in the social sciences often occurs and leads to more important results if what is done is the outcome of a process of a hybridization of several disciplines. This phenomenon constitutes the cause and effect at the same time of a continuing fragmentation of the social sciences that ends up with narrower specialized sub-disciplines and an opening of the way for a process of a new vertical synthesis of those disciplines in the materialization of so-called hybrid domains.[15]

Given the importance of the concepts of "marginality" and "innovative/creative" in the book, the authors offer two principal clarifications. The word "marginal" comes from the Latin *margo* which means border or edge. This suggests that social scientists should be present at the boundaries of their own disciplines. In other words, they should be pioneers. As the history of science shows, scientific progress occurs in the intersections of circles having different centers. It occurs where the new frontiers enable the innovative and creative scientists to come up with new theories and thoughts.[16]

As for "innovative/creative," they are seen as any progress in scientific research that involves a fundamental contribution to the enrichment of the knowledge of any of the social science disciplines.[17] There are many ways for creativity to be achieved. A few examples would be proposing important hypotheses, improving methodology,

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13 Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 355.
14 M. Dogan and R. Pahre, *L'innovation dans les sciences sociales: marginalité créatrice*, PUF, Paris 1991.
15 Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 11.
16 Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 10.
17 Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 28.

and discovering solutions to old abandoned mysteries. Creative work does not have to lead to scientific revolutions. What is important is that progress occur.[18]

For Pahre and Dogan, then, creativity in the social sciences is basically the outcome of hybridization between the sciences. The isolation of the sciences from each other and extreme narrow specialization is unlikely to lead to genuine innovation and creativity. With hybridization, however, famous social sciences theories, concepts, laws, and research methods have resulted. They point out that decisive scientific progress is frequently the outcome of the integration of two scientific points of view.[19] In other words, if sociologists, economists or psychologists distance themselves somewhat from their own field of specialization and establish contacts with neighboring disciplines, they will have a better chance of making innovative contributions. With this conclusion in mind, the two authors identified what they call the "density paradox." The paradox is that the sub-disciplines that have a great density of specialists often generate less innovative/creative work while the dense presence of scientists is likely to motivate them to cross the boundaries of their specialization to other peripheral neighboring disciplines.[20]

3. Ibn Khaldun's Pioneering Social Thought

Having briefly identified some of the features involved in creativity, it is time to consider the creativity involved in Ibn Khaldun's work as manifested particularly in his *Muqaddimah*. In order to assess his work I want to consider how it is different from the work of Greek philosophers and different from that of Islamic scholars along with considering Ibn Khaldun's own statements about his New Science and the opinions of those who have studied his works.

a) The Difference between Ibn Khaldun's Thought and that of his Greek Counterparts

There is no doubt that Ibn Khaldun knew that he had discovered a New Science not known among the Greek philosophers or among the wise men of Persia and India. Furthermore, the work of Muslim thinkers before Ibn Khaldun also did not match the high quality of Ibn Khaldun's science of al Umrân al-Basharî. Ibn Khaldun himself states that Aristotle's political thought is quite different from his social thought.

In the *Book on Politics* that is ascribed to Aristotle and has wide circulation, we find a good deal about our subject. The treatment, however, is not exhaustive, nor is the topic provided with all the arguments it deserves, and it is mixed with other things. In the book, the author referred to such general ideas as we have reported, on the authority of the Môbedhân and Anôsharwân. He arranged his statements in a remarkable circle that he discussed at length. It runs as follows:

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18   Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 24.
19   Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 35.
20   Dogan and Pahre, *marginalité créatrice*, p. 51.

'The world is a garden the fence of which is the dynasty. The dynasty is an authority through which life is given to proper behavior. Proper behavior is a policy directed by the ruler. The ruler is an institution supported by the soldiers. The soldiers are helpers who are maintained by money. Money is sustenance brought together by the subjects. The subjects are servants who are protected by justice. Justice is something familiar (harmonious), and through it, the world persists. The world is a garden...' And then it begins again from the beginning. These are eight sentences of political wisdom. They are connected with each other, the end of each one leading into the beginning of the next. They are held together in a circle with no definite beginning or end. The author was proud of what he had hit upon and made much of the significance of the sentences.

When our discussion in the section on royal authority and dynasties has been studied and due critical attention given to it, it will be found to constitute an exhaustive, very clear, fully substantiated interpretation and detailed exposition of these sentences. We became aware of those things with God's help and without the instruction of Aristotle or the teachings of Môbedhân.[21]

This quotation underlines two important things: that Ibn Khaldun was not imitating Aristotle in the *Muqaddimah* and that what he had accomplished in establishing his New Science was "without the instruction of Aristotle."

Ibn Khaldun's criticism of Aristotle's political thought indicates dissatisfaction with Greek thought on two levels: dissatisfaction with Greek philosophy in general and dissatisfaction with Aristotle's social thought in particular. Ibn Khaldun presented his criticisms of Greek philosophy in the sixth part of his *Muqaddimah*. His comments are similar to those of the well-known Muslim thinker Abû Hâmid al-Gazalî particularly in his book, *The Philosophers' Absurdity*. Both claim that Greek philosopher's are wrong to accept that human reasoning is suited to understanding the correctness of articles of faith or the reasons that things exist. However, Ibn Khaldun found one positive aspect of Greek philosophy, "As far as we know, this science has only a single advantage, namely, it sharpens the mind in the orderly presentation of proofs and arguments, so that the habit of excellent and correct arguing is obtained."[22]

Nonetheless, the author of the *Muqaddimah* ends the section on philosophy by strongly warning Muslim thinkers to be well rooted and versed in the science of the Islamic Sharià before they proceed to examine philosophical thought. His warning is as follows: "Therefore, the student should be aware of its pernicious aspects as much as he can. Whoever studies it should do so only after he is saturated with religious law and has studied the interpretation of the Qur'ân and jurisprudence. No one who has no knowledge of the Muslim religious sciences should apply himself to it. Without that knowledge, he can hardly remain safe from its pernicious aspects."[23]

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21 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History*, trans. Franz Rosenthal, ed. N.J. Dawood, Abridged, Nineth Bollingen Paperback Printing, Princeton, N.J. 1989, p. 41.
22 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 405.
23 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 405

The dangers of possessing circles of knowledge that are in conflict to some extent, dangers Ibn Khaldun was alerting Muslim thinkers of his time to, are hardly unfamiliar to Arab and Muslim thinkers today. Educated Muslims today face a sort of dualism with regard to language, culture, and thought. For some a Western language or culture predominates causing problems such as alienation from their cultural roots, cultural dependency, inferiority complexes, and a collective identity crisis.[24]

As for Ibn Khaldun's dissatisfaction with Aristotle's social thought, it rests on certain aspects not being considered, not being explained enough, or being mixed with other aspects as indicated in the quotation above from Ibn Khaldun on Aristotle's *Book of Politics*.

What becomes clear is that the differences between Ibn Khaldun and Greek philosophers are profoundly influenced by his Islamic background. He believes in revelation and the Islamic Sharià as in the following quotation: "... But the bodily resurrection and its circumstances can not be perceived by means of logical arguments, because it does not proceed in a uniform manner. It has been explained to us by the true Muhammadan religious law. The religious law should therefore be considered and consulted with regard to those circumstances."[25]

As I see it, any attempt to reject the influence of Islam on Ibn Khaldun's thought is biased, unrealistic, and lacking in objectivity. As for his analyses and discussions of social phenomena in the *Muqaddimah*, as somewhat indicated in his criticism of Aristotle's *Book of Politics*, he believed that establishing a credible science of al-Umrân al-Basharî depended on three elements: introducing new concepts, dealing in full detail with the nature of things and their parts, and providing clear evidence drawn from the realities of al-Umrân al-Basharî for any of his concepts, ideas, or theories.

Clearly these three elements are not that different from the modern view of dealing with social studies. One difference is that today searching for the causes of social or natural phenomena has become sacrosanct. The only exception is Max Weber's *Verstehen Sociologie*. He claims that social scientists should not always look for explanations or the causes of behavioral social phenomena because this is not always within the social scientist's reach. Thus, social scientists should be satisfied with the comprehension (*verstehen*) of the phenomena under consideration. The *Verstehen* approach requires, according to Weber, that social scientists not confine themselves to just identifying the external factors influencing the social actor's behavior. They should also look at internal factors such as cultural values or particular interpretations provided by individuals. This Weberian sociological outlook, to a great extent, contradicts Durkheim's perspective of Social Determinism, which continues to dominate many of the modern schools of sociological of thought.

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24 M. Dhaouadi, "The Sociology of the Causes of Success and Failure in Language Nationalization in the Algerian, Tunisian, and Quebecker Societies" (in Arabic), *Al-Mustaqbil Al-Arabi*, no. 142 (December 1990), pp. 40-56.
25 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 405.

b) The Difference between Ibn Khaldun's Thought and that of his Arab-Islamic Counterparts

Ibn Khaldun believed that his New Science differed substantially from what had been done before him by Arab Muslim thinkers in the field of politics. As far as he was concerned, neither Ibn al-Muqaffâ nor Abû Bakr al-Turtûshî had succeeded in building strong foundations for the science of al-'Umrân al-Basharî. Thus, he states:

The statements of Ibn al-Muqaffâ and the excursions on political subjects in his treatises also touch upon many of the problems of our work. However, he did not substantiate his statements with arguments as we have done. He merely mentioned them in passing in the flowing prose style and eloquent verbiage of the rhetorician.

Judge Abû Bakr al-Turtûshî also had the same idea in the *Kitâb Sirâj al-Mûrûj*. He divided the work into chapters that come close to the chapters and problems in our work. However, he did not achieve his aims or realize his intention. He did not exhaust the problems and he did not bring clear proofs. He sets aside a special chapter for a particular problem, but then he tells a great number of stories and traditions and he reports scattered remarks by Persian sages such as Buzurjmihr and the Môbedhân, and by Indian sages, as well as material transmitted on the authority of Daniel, Hermes, and other great men. He does not verify his statements or clarify them with the help of natural arguments. The work is merely a compilation of transmitted material similar to sermons in its inspirational purpose. In a way, al-Turtûshî aimed at the right idea, but he did not hit it. He did not realize his intention or exhaust his problems.[26]

Here Ibn Khaldun admits that there were a few Arab Muslim scholars who tackled a number of the issues examined in his *Muqaddimah*. However, from his point of view both Ibn al-Muqaffâ and al-Turtûshî were not systematic enough. They suffer from what we might call a lack of "natural fieldwork evidence." Ibn Khaldun actually uses the term "natural" as in "both Bedouins and Sedentary people are natural groups" and "the Bedouins are a natural group in the world." Thus, the term "natural" for Ibn Khaldun means that there are objective reasons that lie behind the emergence of this or that group.

Ibn Khaldun also saw that the laws, theories, and concepts of the science of al-Umrân al-Basharî could not be established without his having direct contact with the dynamics of the social life of both Bedouin and urban milieus. Such contact today is called fieldwork, and it is for such lack of evidence that Ibn Khaldun repeatedly criticized Ibn al-Muqaffâ and al-Turtûshî. Thus, it can be concluded that neither of them can have a very good grasp of the factors influencing historical and social events.

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26 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, pp. 41-42.

c) The Science of al-Umrân Al-Bashârî as Seen by its Author

There is no doubt that Ibn Khaldun was convinced that his *Muqaddimah* opened a new frontier in the discipline of history. His view of his book is that it represents original work leading to a breakthrough in its own field. In his own words, "This book has become unique as it contains unusual knowledge and familiar if hidden wisdom."[27] He is confident that he has been innovative and has brought a new spirit into the science of history, a science he saw in a state of stagnation because of the long held traditional methodology it employed. Ibn Khaldun's science of al-Umrân al-Bashârî is, thus, unusual science. In modern terms, the science of al-Umrân al-Bashârî is adequately innovative and creative. Ibn Khaldun himself describes the content of his *Muqaddimah* as follows: "I corrected the contents of the work carefully and presented it to the judgment of the scholars and the elite. I followed an unusual method of arrangement and division of chapters. From the various possibilities, I chose a remarkable and original method."[28]

He also outlines more specifically some of the ways in which he was able to be creative and innovative in the *Muqaddimah*. He basically set out to explain social phenomena and historical events, adopt a broader perspective, and by arranging the parts and chapters of the book differently use a new methodology. In his own words again:

When I had read the works of others and probed into the recesses of yesterday and today, I shook myself out of that drowsy complacency and sleepiness. Although not much of a writer, I exhibited my own literary ability as well as I could, and thus composed a book on history. In this book I lifted the veil from conditions as they arose in the various generations. I arranged it methodically in chapters dealing with historical facts and reflections. In it I showed how and why dynasties and civilizations originated.[29]

As his own words indicate, he was aware of the fact that he was indeed a pioneering and a creative figure in the science of history.

Ibn Khaldun, in another statement about his work, attributes his success to inspiration from God. He does not actually expect any major errors to be found in his work, either. In other words, he believes that he, with divine help, has re-oriented the study of history and set it on the right path.

We, on the one hand, were inspired by God. He led us to a Science whose truth we ruthlessly set forth. If I have succeeded in presenting the problems of this science exhaustively and in showing how it differs in its various aspects and characteristics from all other crafts, this is due to divine guidance. If, on the other hand, I have omitted some point, or if the problems have gotten confused with something else,

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27 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 9.
28 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 8.
29 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 7.

the task of correcting remains for the discerning critic, but the merit is mine since I cleared and marked the way.[30]

His comments also indicate that he believed he was setting out what his New Science included and didn't include. He was, thus, taking an active role in laying out the areas needing further study for the historians and thinkers following him such as al-Maqrîzî, Ibn al-Azrak, and Ibn Hajâr al-'Asqalâni.[31]

Ibn Khaldun's pride in establishing his New Science did not, however, stop him from wondering why he did not encounter ideas like his own before.

In a way, it is an entirely original science. In fact, I have not come across a discussion along these lines by anyone. I do not know if this is because people have been unaware of it, but there is no reason to suspect them of having been unaware of it. Perhaps they have written exhaustively on this topic, and their work did not reach us. There are many sciences. There have been numerous sages among the nations of mankind. The knowledge that has not come down to us is larger than the knowledge that has. Where are the sciences of the Persians that 'Umar had ordered to be wiped out at the time of the conquest? Where are the sciences of the Chaldeans, the Syrians and the Babylonians and the scholarly products and results that were theirs? Where are the sciences of the Copts, their predecessors? The sciences of only one nation, the Greeks, have come down to us because they were translated through al-Ma'mûns efforts. He was successful in this direction because he had many translators at his disposal and spent much money in this connection. Of the sciences of others, nothing has come to our attention.[32]

Here he speculates that the absence of the science of al-Umrân al-Basharî as he understood it could be because it had not occurred to others or because what was written of a similar nature was destroyed or hadn't yet reached his society. He also considers another factor.

Scholars seem to have been interested in the results (of individual sciences). As far as the subject under discussion is concerned, the result, as we have seen, is just historical information. Although the problems it raises are important, both essentially and specifically (exclusive concern for it) leads to one result only: the mere verification of historical information. This is not much. Therefore, scholars might have avoided the subject.[33]

He makes the point that scholars may have avoided the subject which is interesting because his work is similar to present-day sociology which did emerge quite late. Auguste Comte, the founder of modern sociology, explained its lateness in emerging by stating that sociology was an especially difficult and complex science. Thus, Ibn

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30 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 42.
31 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun et ses lecteurs*, PUF, Paris 1983, pp. 9-38.
32 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 39.
33 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 39

Khaldun's doing sociolgocial work in the Middle Ages and in a historical period of profound decline in the Arab Muslim civilization[34] clearly testifies to the creativity and the genius of the author of the *Muqaddimah.*

d) The Response to Ibn Khaldun's Creative Thought

The Tunisian historian Ahmed Abdesselam, in his book *Ibn Khaldun and His Readers*, surveys a considerable number of scholars of different schools of thought and specializations.[35] There are those who were interested in studying Ibn Khaldun's work, those influenced by his thought in their writings or in their analyses of different issues, or those who adopted Ibn Khaldun's thought in their reformist projects as in the cases of such Arab Muslim reformers as the Tunisian, Kayridîne Bâshâ, and the Egyptians, Rifâ'ah at-Tahtâwî, Muhammad Abduh, and Jamaladdîn al-Afgânî. The author's analytical review stretches from the Middle Ages to the second half of the twentieth century. Abdesselam considers the impact of the *Muqaddimah* on both Arab Muslims as well as on European scholars and thinkers. The overwhelming conclusion that Abdesselam's book leads to is that Ibn Khaldun's work was very high quality work that was also innovative and creative. This is acknowledged not only by scholars in the Islamic world but also by scholars from elsewhere around the world. Ibn Khaldun's own statement that his work was "unusual knowledge" is certainly confirmed.

This does not mean, however, that Ibn Khaldun's thought did not raise questions and did not receive criticism. Some amount of questioning and criticism, however, can be seen as an implicit sign that Ibn Khaldun succeeded in being creative. As for specific criticisms, H.A.R. Gibb criticized the fact that Ibn Khaldun's epistemology was strongly influenced by Sunnite jurisprudence, theologian scholars (fuqahâ), and the scholastic theologians (ulamâ al Kalâm)[36] On his part, Yves Lacoste while admiring Ibn Khaldun's analysis criticized him for what he called dualistic thought. In Lacoste's opinion, what Ibn Khaldun wrote in the Maghreb (North Africa) was different from what he wrote in Egypt. He found his Maghrebian thought realistic and rational while what was written in Egypt seemed sort of irrational Sufi thought.[37] As for Mohsen Mahdi, he found Ibn Khaldun's thought philosophical in nature describing it as traditional Islamic thought. Consequently, Mahdi appears to be surprised to find that Ibn Khaldun was the only classical Muslim thinker able to found the science of al-Umrân al-Basharî.[38]

Present-day scholars, including admirers of Ibn Khaldun, have also found points to criticize. For instance, Raîq al-'Azm and Fahmî Jadaân disagree with his law claiming

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34 S. Hamîsh, "Philosophy or Living History?" (in Arabic), *Al-Nâqid Review*, no. 51 (September 1992), p. 24.

35 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*

36 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 54.

37 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 90.

38 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 92.

the inevitability of human civilizations' decline and fall. Abdurrahmân al-Qawâqibî finds Ibn Khaldun's perception of a strong correlation between *al-taraf* (luxury) and the fall of human civilizations incorrect. Al-Qawâqibî believes that totalitarian political regimes are the cause of the downfall of human civilizations.[39]

The Egyptian literary writer and thinker, Taha Hussein, also criticizes Ibn Khaldun's thought. Although he praises him for his humanistic and rational thought, he criticizes him because he finds his use of the term "science" lacking in precision and unlike the modern usage and because his science of al-Umrân al-Basharî is not really equivalent to the modern discipline of sociology given that Ibn Khaldun generally focuses on the dynamics of states and not on societies per se.

As for scholars who have praised Ibn Khaldun, there are many indeed. To mention just few, there are first the Arab intellectuals, the late Egyptian sociologist, Abdulwâhid Wâfî and the Moroccan, Mohammad 'Abid al-Jâbrî. Then, the comments of four Western writers will briefly be considered. Abdulwâhid Wâfî is known for his voluminous study of Ibn Khaldun, the best and most complete of its kind in Arabic. Wafi makes the following comment on Ibn Khaldun's creative thought and methodology:

...In writing history Ibn Khaldun adopted a new organization in his work different from that of those who had written history before him. Most of the Arab Muslim history books preceding Ibn Khaldun's period used to classify historical events chronologically. The events of one single year were put in one table despite the lack of connection and the distance separating them. Ibn Khaldun modified this method using a more precise and synthetic one. Ibn Khaldun divided his book of World History (Kitâb al-'Ibar) into seven different books and each book into different parts and each part into different chapters. He separately traced the history of each state from the beginning to the end while taking into consideration the interconnections among the different states...[40]

As to the nature of Ibn Khaldun's New Science, professor Wâfî makes the following remark:

It is out of the issues and themes treated in the *Muqaddimah* that Ibn Khaldun succeeded in putting forth a science no other scholar had dealt with before. He called it "the Science of al-Umrân al-Basharî" or "the Human Social Gathering." It is the science we now call sociology. Ibn Khaldun studies social phenomena in order to discover the laws which govern them.[41]

The Moroccan, Mohammad 'Abid al-Jâbrî, has also written extensively about Ibn Khaldun particularly in his book *Al-Assabiyya (group feeling) and the State*. Al-Jâbrî strongly disagrees with the criticism, mentioned above, related to dualism. In al-Jâbrî's

39 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 65.
40 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (in Arabic) ed. Wâfî, A. Wâhid, vol. 1, Dar Nahthati Misr, Cairo n.d., p. 120.
41 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah* (in Arabic), p. 192.

opinion, the *Muqaddimah* is developed in a unified way both in its thought and in its organization. In addition, he argues that Ibn Khaldun was firmly committed throughout his book to logical thinking and does not find the analysis of supernatural phenomena (prophecy, mysticism, dreams, and so on) in the book a deviation from the logical framework since supernatural phenomena are integral components of collective "social gathering." Thus, it was correct for Ibn Khaldun to search for a sound justification for their existence in the Arab Muslim civilization. In doing so, he did not go against the scientific spirit, but rather he remained objective vis-à-vis the study of the supernatural.[42]

Regarding the four Western authors and their positive evaluations of Ibn Khaldun's work, first is the Soviet Orientalist Svethana Baciéva who from a Marxist perspective considered Ibn Khaldun the first, among the thinkers of the Middle Ages, to liberate the study of economy from philosophical and moral values.[43] Secondly, is Yves Lacoste who also from a Marxist perspective thinks that what distinguishes Ibn Khaldun from earlier historians of all civilizations was his capacity to establish a Science of History (La science historique).[44] Then there is the author N. J. Dawood who presented a shorter version of F. Rosenthal's complete translation of Ibn Khaldun's *Muqaddimah* and who expressed his opinion of Ibn Khaldun's work this way:

It (the *Muqaddimah*) can be regarded as the earliest attempt made by any historian to discover a pattern in the changes that occur in man's political and social organization. Rational in its approach, analytical in its method, encyclopedic in detail, it represents an almost complete departure from traditional historiography, discarding conventional concepts and cliché's and seeking, beyond the mere chronicle of events, an explanation and hence a philosophy of history.

In rejecting idle superstition and denouncing uncritical acceptance of historical data, Ibn Khaldun adopted a scientific method totally new to his age, and used a new terminology to drive home his ideas. That he was fully aware of the originality of his thinking and the uniqueness of his contribution is illustrated by the many references he makes to his 'new science.'[45]

Finally, there are the comments of the late great British historian, Arnold Toynbee:

In his chosen field of intellectual activity he appears to have been inspired by no predecessors and to have found no kindred souls among his contemporaries and to have kindled no answering spark of inspiration in any successors and yet in his Prolegomena (*Muqaddimah*) to his Universal History he has conceived and formulated a philosophy of history which is undoubtedly the greatest work of its kind that has ever yet been created by any mind in any time and place.[46]

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42 M. Al-Jabri, *Al-Assabiyya*, pp. 119-19.
43 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 86.
44 A. Abdesselam, *Ibn Khaldun*, p. 93.
45 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, pp. IX-X.
46 A. Toynbee, *The Study of History*, Vol. 3, Oxford University Press, London 1956, p. 322.

4. Towards a Full Understanding of Creativity

As has already been pointed out in this study, a credible theory of creativity and even a clear definition of creativity have not yet been achieved by modern scientists. This makes for an uneasy situation. However, researchers can establish an operational definition of creativity by identifying its tangible indicators. Thus, there is continuing research that attempts to disclose those factors that enhance the potentialities of certain individuals to become creative. The studies of psychologists in particular, as already summarized above, focus on the characteristics or the personality traits of creative individuals no matter what field they are in. Psychologists have asked, for instance, whether the creative person possesses a distinct super intelligence, whether the behavior of creative persons is characterized by independence and courage, characteristics likely to help them be unafraid of revealing their ideas or creations to the public, or whether there is a link between achieving creativity and the creators especially loving their work.

Psychology, as a specialized discipline, is not expected to give great importance to the social factors that might be involved in the creativity of any particular individual. Nonetheless, the theory of the psychologist Gruber did not reject altogether the role of certain social factors, the ones shown by research to be associated with the production of creative work. In fact, there are cultural and familial influences that have been found to be helpful in assisting potentially creative people reach creativity.[47] Likewise, the social problems that creators perceive in their social milieu, whether that is a small village or the global village, can contribute to their development of a creative spirit. As pointed out before, the studies attempting to shed light on Ibn Khaldun's creativity have largely favored attributing it to social factors while basically ignoring his personality traits. This prejudice, however small, is likely to hinder the development of a mature and full understanding of the phenomenon of creativity, as also stated earlier in this paper.

This writer concludes that a researcher interested in genuinely grasping the secrets of creativity must hold to the idea that creativity is the outcome of an interaction between creators with their particular personality traits and the external environment. Surely, in the absence of such an interaction there is no chance for the development of creativity. Accepting that both the personal and the environmental factors are involved, however, does not entirely settle the issue of fully understanding creativity. What is not clear is the extent to which the two major factors (the personal and the external) contribute to creativity. Keeping both in mind does, however, provide some order, so to speak, to the methodology used in studying creativity. For instance, the study of personality traits is required since at least some personality traits are potentially involved. One conclusion is that an above average intelligence but not super intelligence is needed for any person to become a creator. Likewise, there are the findings about creators being middle aged or around the age

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47   Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 357.

of forty-five.[48] In other words, without the study of personality traits creativity won't be understood.

At the same time research into the role of social (external) factors in triggering the creativity of certain individuals is needed. So far research has not determined very precisely the weight of such factors in bringing about creativity. Social circumstances are just attributed to be at least in part important. What also remains obscure is the way the social factors are involved in the unfolding of creative work. The impact of social factors on the working out of creativity tends to be less clearly understood than the significance of above average intelligence, for example. The confusion surrounding the way social conditions influence the process of creativity in a given society comes from the fact that these same social conditions do not lead to creativity among the vast majority of the individuals in the same society. In modern social science terminology, the phenomenon of creativity is not a mere dependent variable of the social factors. It is rather the outcome of a harmonious marriage between the creator's personality traits and the social conditions in society. Of course, such an imprecise statement of the weight of both types of factors brings up the question once again of their actual contribution to creativity. In answer, it now seems that data from psychologists is beginning to show that personality traits are the more decisive factors in creativity. Thus, keeping in mind the findings of pyschologists, as discussed in part two. of this paper, regarding the characteristics of typical creative individuals is important, for it is these traits that must exist in the personalities of the persons who are to become creative. Without these traits the social factors that can activate the processes of creativity can not play their role. In other words, it is possessing the personality traits of the creative person that is of primary importance since the role of social factors is of secondary importance. With these conclusions in mind it is time once again to turn to Ibn Khaldun and consider the factors influencing his creative work.

5. The Factors Influencing Ibn Khaldun's Pioneering Work

Of course, Ibn Khaldun's pioneering work in the *Muqaddimah* was greatly shaped by the interaction between his social milieu and his personality traits, which will be discussed here. Another influence on him, in this writer's opinion a third semi-independent variable, was the crisis in the science of history Ibn Khaldun understood to exist. Thus, in this part of the paper I will take up Ibn Khaldun's social milieu first, then the crisis in the science of history, and finally, Ibn Khaldun's personality traits.

a) Ibn Khaldun's Social Milieu or the Socio-political Factor

The socio-political factor or the social milieu in which Ibn Khaldun lived involves two aspects: (1) the state of Arab Muslim society particularly in the Maghreb and (2) Ibn Khaldun's long lasting political activity among both the sedentary and the

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48   Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 30

Bedouin regions. The general situation in the Maghreb (the West) and in the Mashreq (the East) was that these areas were in a state of deterioration. Ibn Khaldun himself in his *Muqaddimah* describes what happened, "... this was the situation until, in the middle of the eighth (fourteenth) century, civilization both in the East and the West was visited by a destructive plague which devastated nations and caused populations to vanish. It swallowed up many good things of civilization and wiped them out." This brief text indicates that global and radical change had taken place in both the East and the West of the Arab Muslim world and that the change in question was of a negative nature. In fact, the destructive plague lead the list of many negative changes that dangerously devastated the entire Arab Muslim world. Again from the *Muqaddimah* the radical nature of what happened is obvious, "When there is a general change of conditions, it is as if the entire creation had changed and the whole world been altered, as if it were a new and repeated creation, a world brought into existence anew."

Ibn Khaldun also outlined some of the negative changes that occurred due to the plague.

"...It overtook dynasties at the time of their senility, when they had reached the limit of their duration. It lessened their power and curtailed their influence. It weakened their authority. Their situation approached the point of annihilation and dissolution. Civilization decreased with the decrease of mankind. Cities and buildings were laid waste, roads and way signs were obliterated, settlements and mansions became empty, dynasties and tribes grew weak. The entire inhabited world changed. The East, it seems, was similarly visited, though in accordance with and in proportion to (its more affluent) civilization.

Ibn Khaldun's analysis of the state of decline and disarray the Arab Muslim societies both in the East and the West were subjugated to emphasizes political, economic, demographic, and social changes. In its socially deterministic nature it resembles Durkheim's approach. In emphasizing the political and economic effects of the depopulation that occurred, he indicates the importance of manpower much as Adam Smith would. For both Ibn Khaldun and Adam Smith human work constitutes the real wealth of nations.

As for Ibn Khaldun's political activity, as the above quotations indicate he was not a scholar of the distant spectator type. What he wrote was to a great extent a response to the traumatic changes and transformations of his times, times that had raised considerable anxiety, fear, and perplexity. As his own words indicate, he could not remain indifferent, "...Therefore, there is a need at this time that someone should systematically set down the situation of the world among all religions and races, as well as the customs and sectarian beliefs that have changed for their adherents, doing for this age what al-Mas'ûdî did for his." His writing of the *Muqaddimah* while he lived in Qalat Banî Salâma, today's Algeria, was a serious intellectual attempt to put things in order or to establish the intellectual framework necessary for the comprehension and explanation of the events that occurred. His work was to make sense

of them and give them meaning. His science of al-Umrân al-Basharî was his attempt to put and end to the traditional and routine way of writing history. It aimed at understanding of what he calls the inner (Bâtin) and not the apparent (al-zâhir) part of history.

His ability to carry out his aims were no doubt aided by the fact that he had gained vast political experience among both Bedouin and sedentary people in the West of the Arab Muslim world due to the various positions he had been given by the rulers and the princes of his time. Numerous analysts of Ibn Khaldun's work are correct in pointing out that his political experience in the field enriched his knowledge and his imagination enabling him to succeed in developing his New Science with its concepts, methodology, and theories that led to greater clarity in explaining the dynamics of Arab Muslim societies.

Although Ibn Khaldun's political experience is of significance, it is important to remember that many other Muslim personalities also had political experience and yet they did not produce work like his. Considering just one example should make this point clear. A contemporary of Ibn Khaldun was Ibn al-Qatîb. He was born in Grenada in 1313 and was killed in Fez in 1374. He was a historian, a geographer, a literary writer and a physician. He worked for Grenada's Sultan, Ibn al-Ahmar. Like Ibn Khaldun, Ibn al-Qatîb was the victim of several political plots and conspiracies and was put in prison as well. From just this brief sketch of his life it is clear that he had at least as much political experience as Ibn Khaldun. Nonetheless, there is no comparison between the two men as far as their writing about history is concerned. Ibn al-Qatîb's famous history book is the *Global View of Grenada's News*. It is the history of the rulers, the scientists and the literary writers of Grenada starting from the time Muslims arrived in Spain and is very different from Ibn Khaldun's pioneering work. One is only reminded again that the phenomenon of creativity is complex and can not simply be attributed to experience or to social factors.

b) The Crisis, the Science of History was in

It should be noted that Ibn Khaldun himself does not mention his own political experience as a factor motivating him to write his book. However, he does make direct reference to the traumatic changes that occurred in society and to the state of crisis the science of history was in. These were the concerns behind his desire to work on his New Science. Thus, examining his views on the science of history is a subject that must be discussed if Ibn Khaldun's work is to be understood. In other words, Ibn Khaldun was a determined historian. This should explain why he begins his *Muqaddimah*, immediately after his very short Invocation, with a discourse on the Art of the Science of History and the crisis it was in. In his opinion, historical works were lacking in credibility because of the way the science of history had been practiced by earlier Muslim historians. Having made this judgment it was a state of affairs he could not remain indifferent to. It seems likely to assume that Ibn Khaldun, being a scholar and historian, may have found dealing with the problems he

noticed related to the science of history a more compelling reason for writing than explaining the tragic events of his time.

Ibn Khaldun was clearly very dissatisfied with the traditional history books. Some of his comments include the following:

The inner meaning of history, on the other hand, involves speculation and an attempt to get at the truth, subtle explanation of the causes and origins of existing things, and deep knowledge of the how and why of events. History, therefore, is firmly rooted in philosophy. It deserves to be accounted a branch of it... Little effort is being made to get at the truth. The critical eye, as a rule, is not sharp. Errors and unfounded assumptions are closely allied and familiar elements in historical information. Blind trust in tradition is an inherited trait in human beings. Occupation with the (scholarly) disciplines on the part of those who have no genuine claim to them is widespread... The later historians were all tradition-bound and dull of nature and intelligence, or did not try to avoid being dull. They merely copied their predecessors and followed their example. They disregarded the changes in conditions and in the customs of nations and races that the passing of time had brought about... Other historians, then, came with too brief a presentation... They are not considered trustworthy, nor is their material considered worthy of transmission, for they caused useful material to be lost and damaged the methods and customs acknowledged to be sound and practical by historians.[49]

Ibn Khaldun also evaluated the work of particular historians which seems to indicate that he was well read and confident enough to criticize other historians by name. He also sets up distinctions that enable historians to find the right balance in their presentation. For example, he distinguishes between just providing information about events and the inner meaning of history, and he points out that some historians covered historical events over a very broad range of times and locations while others restricted themselves to their own time and city. He also mentions historians who provided too little detail which implies that providing too much detail can also be a problem.

More importantly, he breaks with the traditional ways of writing history. His description of how later historians wrote about particular dynasties and his own approach are telling.

When they turn to the description of a particular dynasty, they report the historical information parrot-like and take care to preserve it as it had been passed down to them, whether imaginary or true. They do not turn to the beginning of the dynasty. Nor do they tell why it unfurled its banner and was able to give prominence to its emblem, or what caused it to come to a stop when it had reached its term. The student, thus, has still to search for the beginnings of conditions and for (the principles of) organization adopted by the various dynasties. He must himself inquire why the

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49   Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 5-6

various dynasties brought pressure to bear upon each other and why they succeeded each other. He must search for a convincing explanation of the elements that made for mutual separation or contact among the dynasties.[50]

It seems that it his great familiarity with many historical works and their shortcomings that allows him to suggest a new "paradigm," as Thomas Kuhn would phrase it. In Kuhn's terms, the Arab Muslim science of history was going through paradigm crisis. There was a need, consequently, for a new paradigm to emerge in order to put an end to the impasse.[51] Ibn Khaldun's science of al-'Umrân al-Basharî was indeed that new paradigm. As Ibn Khaldun himself points out, "This should be a model for future historians to follow."[52] However, Ibn Khaldun's new perspective on the science of history did not create the enthusiasm among his contemporaries or those who came after him that it should have. This is perhaps the most eloquent testimony to the fact that Ibn Khaldun's new intellectual paradigm constituted a pioneering vision centuries ahead of its time.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, however, Ibn Khaldun finally began to be discovered. Many studies by Muslims of Ibn Khaldun have made their contribution to the social sciences of the twentieth century. Muslim intellectuals have also pointed out the links between Ibn Khaldun's analysis, concepts, and theories and Western social sciences. The increasing interest in the *Muqaddimah* in both the Islamic and Western worlds indicates that its vision is quite compatible with the spirit of modern thought. For the minority of Muslim thinkers who claim that Islam is not fit to adapt itself skillfully to the twentieth century, there is a lesson to be learned from this interest. As this writer has pointed out, Ibn Khaldun's thought has its roots in Islamic culture. This fact even led to some criticism such as by Gibb along with Mahdi's surprise at Ibn Khaldun establishing his philosophy of history on traditional Islamic intellectual foundations. This indicates that Islamically inspired methods and perspectives can succeed in modern times, and an unbiased understanding of this is required.

c) Ibn Khaldun's Personality Traits

In examining Ibn Khaldun's personality traits, I will be looking for those traits said by modern psychology to be correlated with creativity, no matter how many shortcomings there might be in the creativity studies. It is clear that they will still be helpful in gaining more understanding of Ibn Khaldun's creativity.

An important trait is working hard. Creators come from among individuals who continuously work hard. As for Ibn Khaldun, it is known that he wrote the entire voluminous *Book of al-'Ibar* in a period of about four years.[53] It is certainly a short

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50 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 5-6.
51 T. Kuhn, *The Structure of the Scientific Revolutions*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago 1969.
52 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 30.
53 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:* (in Arabic), p. 80.

period for such thoughtful work. More surprising is that, as Ibn Khaldun himself informs us, writing the *Muqaddimah* took five months, "I completed the composition and draft of this part, before revision and correction, in a period of five months ending in the middle of 799 (November 1377)."[54] This represents a really remarkable achievement. It is likely that a more ordinary history book could not be written in half a year. As for how Ibn Khaldun did it, perhaps he was assisted by the fact that he resided in Qal'at Bani Salâma (in Algeria) where he was able to work alone and in tranquillity. Another trait correlated with creativity is middle age, especially around the age forty-five.[55] As mentioned before, Ibn Khaldun wrote the *Muqaddimah* and the remaining parts of the *Book of al-'Ibar* around the age of forty-five.[56]

The willingness and ability to combine information from several disciplines or "hybridize" it, as described by Pahre and Dogan, is another trait important to creativity. Ibn Khaldun was known to have encyclopedic knowledge or knowledge of a number of disciplines. Ibn Khaldun was well-informed in most of the prevailing branches of knowledge known then in the East and the West of the Arab Muslim world. His knowledge at least in three areas: the science of history, the science of al-fiqh (jurisprudence) and al-Umrân al-Basharî was even wider and deeper. Regarding the ability to hybridize knowledge, surely Ibn Khaldun's encyclopedic knowledge enabled him to move easily from his specialization in history to domains beyond history's frontiers like philosophy, education, al-fiqh, poetry, and so on increasing his chances of becoming creative.

Another trait of successful creative individuals, one discussed by the psychologist Gruber, is that they obtain the support they need such as religious support. There is no doubt that Ibn Khaldun had a strong religious belief, and that it was his Islamic faith that supported him. That this was so is clear from statements he makes in the *Muqaddimah* itself. Throughout he refers to Qur'anic verses like: "God guides with His light whom he wills,"[57] "He gave everything its natural characteristics and then guided it."[58] He also uses sentences where God's name is mentioned such as: "God gives success and support,"[59] and "...God knows better."[60] He also found Qur'anic texts that substantiated and proved his own observations especially his theory on the decline of civilizations. He basically attributed their decline to luxury (*al-taraf*) due to the negative impact it had on society and on individuals.

When elegance in (domestic) economy has reached the limit, it is followed by subservience to desires. From all those customs, the human soul receives a multiple stamp that undermines its religion and worldly well-being. It cannot preserve its

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54 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:*, p. 459.
55 Gardner, *Art, Mind, and Brain*, p. 354.
56 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:* (in Arabic), p. 78.
57 The Quran 24/35 cited in Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 42.
58 The Quran 20/50-52 cited in Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 42.
59 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 43.
60 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 57.

religion, because it has now been firmly stamped by customs that are difficult to discard (It cannot preserve its worldly (well-being), because the customs (of luxury) demand a great many things and (entail) many requirements for which (a man's) income is not sufficient)."[61]

To further explain how luxury brings on decline he says:

Immorality, wrong doing, insincerity and trickery, for the purposes of making a living in a proper or an improper manner, increase among them . . . People are now devoted to lying, gambling, cheating, fraud, theft, perjury and usury. Because of the many desires and pleasures resulting from luxury, they are found to know everything about the ways and means of immorality, they talk openly about it and its causes and give up all restraint in discussing it, even among relatives and close female relations where the Bedouin attitude requires modesty (and avoidance of) obscenities.[62]

In other words, luxury can make immorality possible, while maintaining luxury can lead to illegitimate methods of gaining wealth. According to Ibn Khaldun, a civilization in which the behaviors he mentions are on the increase will fall. A verse from the Quran seems to support his view. "If this (situation) spreads in a town or a nation, God permits it to be ruined and destroyed. This is the meaning of the word of God. When we want to destroy a village, we order those of its inhabitants who live in luxury to act wickedly therein. Thus, the word becomes true for it, and we do destroy it."[63]

A final way in which Ibn Khaldun's religious faith supported him was that he attributed his success to inspiration from God as already mentioned in part three of this paper. It is also true that he saw his efforts to research and read the works of others as important. As he says, "It should be known that the discussion of this topic is something new, extraordinary, and highly useful. Penetrating research has shown the way to it."[64] Of course, if something is new, a researcher is not going to find that others have already written about it. Thus, inspiration from God will come as a welcome blessing.

To end, mention should be made of a modern pyschoanalytical concept that appears to correspond to what Ibn Khaldun referred to as divine inspiration. This is the concept of the unconscious or that part of the psyche people are unaware of but infer to be there. Researchers studying the phenomenon of what they call "creative problem solving" find the concept of the unconscious a useful one.[65] It was the German physicist and physiologist, Helmotz Hermann who first spoke about the role of the unconscious during creative problem solving. He identified three phases in the problem

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61 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, pp. 285-86.
62 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 286.
63 The Quran 17/16-17 cited in Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 287.
64 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 39.
65 Hunt, *Universe Within*, p. 297.

solving process. Some time later two scientists, Henri Poincarré and Graham Wallas, added a fourth phase. The four phases are: (1) the saturation phase where researchers, for example, begin and become fully involved in a research project until they stop because they realize that they have met a problem which prevents them from progressing with their work, (2) the incubation phase where the researchers relax and recuperate without making any conscious effort to study or go over the problem they are having, (3) the illumination phase where suddenly and unexpectedly the solution to the problem or a discovery, depending on circumstances, emerges, and[66] (4) the verification phase where the researchers attempt to check the validity or credibility of their new and creative solution or discovery.[67]

These four phases of what can be called a creativity process are generally accepted among scientists. It is true, however, that not much is understood about the incubation and illumination phases where no conscious effort is made and yet suddenly a solution is found. The ancient Greeks attributed such sudden discoveries to metaphysical forces or in other words to divine inspiration.[68] Although, the same inability to understand remains today, modern scientists turn to the concept of the unconscious to explain what happens. The other two phases, the saturation and verification phases, where conscious work is done are better understood.

Using these four phases ought to help us to understand how it was possible for Ibn Khaldun to write his *Muqaddimah* in just five months keeping in mind that just writing it out by hand might have taken more than two months. What seems likely is that Ibn Khaldun had already become concerned with the issues involved before residing in Qal'at Banî Salâma. This is also likely since he wrote the other parts of his *Book of al-'Ibar* before he wrote his *Muqaddimah*.[69] In those other parts he presented the shortcomings of the other history books he was acquainted with and wrote an enormous number of pages dealing both with the history of the Arabs and the peoples they had come in contact with. Thus, it is possible that before turning to his most creative work, the work in the *Muqaddimah* , he had gone through the four phases mentioned above or something like them. Perhaps his concern with discovering the inner meaning (*Bâtin*) of history had begun during the writing of the more typical historical volumes of the *Book of al-'Ibar* enabling him to enter the first or saturation phase. Assuming that he was initially unable to work out his new vision of history, he could have then gone into the second or incubation phase. In this phase in order to give himself a break away from whatever specific problems had occurred, perhaps he dealt with other aspects he felt more sure about while his unconscious mind worked on the problems. As for the discovery of the science of al-Umrân al-Basharî, it was bound to have taken place in the third or illumination phase. Ibn

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66 Hunt, *Universe Within*, pp. 296-97.
67 *Encyclopedia of Psychology*, The Dushkin Publishing Group, Inc., Guilford, Connecticut, U.S.A. 1973, p. 61.
68 Hunt, *Universe Within*, pp. 296-97.
69 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah:* (in Arabic), p. 79.

Khaldun was very astonished and surprised by his own new discovery. He also recognized that it was especially significant. These are signs that illumination was involved. Of course, it is not known whether Ibn Khaldun actually went through the three phases mentioned so far. The fact that he wrote his *Muqaddimah* last does make it possible, though.

As for the fourth or the verification phase, given the methodology that Ibn Khaldun writes about that he called the law of al-Mutâbaqa, he would have been able to do the checking of his own ideas that is involved in this phase by using this methodology himself. His own words (below) give a good idea of his law of al-Mutâbaqa:

He (the historian) further needs a comprehensive knowledge of present conditions in all these respects. He must compare similarities or differences between present and past conditions. He must know the causes of the similarities in certain cases and of the differences in others. He must be aware of the different origins and beginnings of dynasties and religious groups, as well as of the reasons and incentives that brought them into being and the circumstances and history of the persons who supported them. His goal must be to have complete knowledge of the reasons for every happening and to be acquainted with the origin of every event. Then, he must check transmitted information with the basic principles he knows. If it fulfills their requirements, it is sound. Otherwise, the historian must consider it as spurious and dispense with it.[70]

All in all, it seems very possible that Ibn Khaldun's creative work was accomplished within the framework of the sort of creative problem solving process just described. What is unclear about this process is exactly how the illumination that occurs and produces the original ideas that make some people famous does occur. When creative individuals are asked about how they made their discovery or produced their creations they offer the following sort of answer: "I don't know, it just came to me." Other familiar expressions are "it just dawned on me," or "I just realized it."[71]

Sigmund Freud would claim that it is due to the workings of the unconscious mind. Others would emphasize "the Invisible Hand" of God or divine inspiration directly influencing the conscious mind or perhaps working through the unconscious mind. Ibn Khaldun himself attributed his discoveries to divine inspiration as do many other famous thinkers and scientists.

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70 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 24.
71 Ibn Khaldun, *The Muqaddimah*, p. 24.

ÖZET

İbn Haldun'un Öncü Sosyal Düşüncesinin Şekillenmesinde Şahsiyet Özellikleri ve Sosyal Çevrenin Payı

Bu makale İbn Haldun'un "beşerî umran ilmi"nin esaslarını ortaya koyduğu *Mukaddime* isimli yaratıcı ve öncü çalışmasının yazımında onu etkileyen faktörleri incelemektedir. Makale beş kısımdan oluşmaktadır. Birinci kısımda yaratıcılığın arkasındaki faktörlerin belirlenmesi problemi ele alınmaktadır. İkinci kısımda, psikologların yaratıcılığa götüren şahsiyet özellikleri hakkında yaptıkları son araştırmalar değerlendirilmektedir. Üçüncü kısımda, İbn Haldun'un çalışması incelenerek onun neden yaratıcı kabul edilmesi gerektiği hususu üzerinde durulmaktadır. Dördüncü kısımda da, dahili şahsiyet özellikleri ile harici sosyal faktörler arasındaki etkileşimin yaratıcılığı daha iyi açıklayacağı savunulmaktadır. Son bölümde ise İbn Haldun'un yazdıklarına dayanılarak onu etkileyen sosyal çevrenin ve şahsî özelliklerin bir resmi çizilip analiz edilmektedir. Ayrıca, İbn Haldun'un kullanmış olabileceği yaratıcı problem çözme süreci de tartışılmaktadır.