

# Co-Creating the Real: A Transdisciplinary Dialogue

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Vlad P. Glăveanu<sup>1,2</sup>  and Luis de Miranda<sup>3</sup>

## Abstract

This article is the fruit of a written dialogue between a sociocultural psychologist and a philosopher invested in the study of the Creative Real, in a context that resonates with process philosophy and posthumanism. Each of the two authors come from a different tradition (or, rather, different traditions) to the topic of posthuman creativity and their approaches overlap considerably but include as well important points of difference, ranging from writing style to key concepts and areas of application.

## Keywords

sociocultural psychology, creal, dialogue, creativity, posthumanism

This article is the fruit of a written dialogue between a sociocultural psychologist and a philosopher invested in the study of the Creative Real, in a context that resonates with process philosophy and posthumanism. Each of the two authors come from a different tradition (or, rather, different traditions) to the topic of posthuman creativity and their approaches overlap considerably but include as well important points of difference, ranging from writing style to key concepts and areas of application. The authors found it important, thus, to use a dialogical format that favors listening and co-creation without diluting the argument into a false and comforting fusion. Dialogue is here a methodological tool in order not only to expose new ideas but also to generate cross-fertilization. The value of such transdisciplinary conversations rests in the fact that they are—or should be—ongoing: The aim is not to conclude but to generate reactions, ideas, new dialogues. For this purpose, the article starts with opening statements and the replies to them, then moves on to describing concrete cases that the authors experienced in their practice, followed by comments on each other's cases and final reflections about the effects of this “crealectic” exchange.

## PART I: Theories

**Vlad:** As a sociocultural psychologist, I have always been concerned by creativity as a more-than-psychological phenomenon (e.g., Glăveanu, 2020a). This is because, in psychology at least, there has been a historic push to not only individualize creative expression and relegate it to the realm of the exceptional, but also fundamentally reduce it to brains,

isolated moments of insights, revolutionary products, or the minds of some people rather than others (Montuori & Purser, 1995). There is, thus, a lot at stake when it comes to this topic as our theories will necessarily talk about the human and the non-human, the issue of agency, the functioning of society, and the ethical concern for others and for the environment. Unfortunately, many of these big questions have been absent from a lot of theorizing in creativity research focused, as it has been since the 1950s, on cognitive processes, personality traits and, more recently, neurobiological mechanisms (Abraham, 2019; Barron & Harrington, 1981).

Sociocultural psychology offers an alternative to individualistic and exceptionalism-based views of creating as it starts from different ontological and epistemological assumptions. Instead of Cartesian-like separations between mind and matter, brain and body, self and other, person and culture, the human and the non-human, it seeks to reconstruct continuities between them (Glăveanu & Clapp, 2018). Instead of focusing on celebrated creators and creations, it “democratizes” one's participation in the discourse and practice of creativity (Kaufman & Glăveanu, in press). Instead of intra-psychological processes, socioculturalists focus on creative action and numerous ways of being in the

<sup>1</sup>Webster University Geneva, Bellevue, Switzerland

<sup>2</sup>University of Bergen, Norway

<sup>3</sup>Uppsala University, Sweden

### Corresponding Author:

Vlad P. Glăveanu, Webster University Geneva, 15 Route de Collex, Bellevue 1293, Switzerland.  
Email: glaveanu@webster.ch

world (or within what Harris, 2016, calls “creative ecologies”).

In building this relational and pluralist ontology, sociocultural psychologists use a variety of tools and approaches from various disciplines. For example, one may draw on pragmatism to theorize creative experience as taking place within the person–world encounter (Dewey, 1934; Mead, 1934). We can make use of dialogism to highlight the kind of dialogues that constitute a creative process (Bakhtin, 1975) and the educational, ethical, and political value of being in dialogue with marginal, non-hegemonic perspectives (Freire, 1996). All these approaches help challenge not only reified, elitist and exclusive views of creativity, but expand our understanding of the (creative) person beyond the boundary of the skull or skin. In this way, sociocultural approaches connect with certain perspectives within cognitive science, especially those advocating for an expanded, enacted, embodied, and distributed mind (e.g., Clark, 2008). And yet, the interest of socioculturalists is not to expand the mind, bit by bit—it is to transform our understanding of it altogether.

And this is where the meeting between sociocultural psychology and posthuman, process philosophy (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Whitehead, 1978) can be extremely fruitful especially in problematizing further the notion of the person. As I often mentioned in the past, sociocultural psychology, like any branch of psychology, is concerned with the person but this is a “person in context” approach, one in which both people and their contexts participate fully in creativity. There is an ongoing process of de-centration of the creative self in sociocultural research (Glăveanu & Lubart, 2014), by no means a dissolution of the person or its gradual disappearance within the context. I can certainly agree that it is not human beings that are at the center of creative expression, but neither are objects or ideas in and of themselves. What needs to be foregrounded are relationships, assemblages of human and non-human actors, to borrow a Latourian phrase (Latour, 2005) or, from a pragmatist-informed sociocultural standpoint, actions in and on the world. It is in the doing that creativity finds its “locus” and this doing is, at once, psychological, embodied, social, cultural, and political.

**Luis:** The first move you make, Vlad, is to distance yourself from the methodological individualism that pervades creativity studies. The idea that creative power is a competitive psychological skill that can be trained toward more efficiency seems to be a feature of the Protagorean shadow of the industrial and postindustrial era (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005). I find that the Surrealists, undoubtedly an influential movement beyond the field of art (Nadeau, 1989), are among the best advocates of the fact that creativity is “more-than-psychological,” for example, through their symbolic device ironically called “automatism”: putting out the psychological ego out of the way to let the

creative onflow (which they perceived as extra- or infrahuman) express itself through them. The world-making process of the creative real is a “crealing,” a “worlding” that should not be anthropocentric.

You are proposing that creating is a sociocultural fact, an act emerging from a collective and yet personal being in the world. Do you intend to mean that the exceptionalism of creativity remains in the social and collective sphere of the human as collective movement, and that non-human realities are not creative, even if they can interfere as “non-human actors”? Is creativity just a sociocultural perspective? You speak of “the world,” which is a concept that bears possibilities and limitations throughout its modern history (Gaston, 2013): World may suggest an ordered whole, a finite and regulated ensemble of humans, protocols and things, in other words a discursive human-centered reality. What about the unconditionality of the uncontained, what phenomenologists call *the Open*, what Physicists call the wave function or dynamic spacetime (Barad, 2007), in other words the pre-discursive?

Our human life-worlds are often given in a more or less enclosed “we-subjectivity” (Husserl, 1970, p. 108): shared norms, codes, a language, common sense, worldviews, groupthink. *Worlds* are important for pluralism, when they allow for pragmatic “loci of relationships” and entanglements of well-belonging, but there is a domain for creativity that is not fully *of this world*, that is pre-mundane or extramundane, open and wild. I agree that the person or subject cannot be dissolved for ethical, psychological, and political reasons, but in my practice of care as a philosophical therapist I encounter persons that suffer from *too much world*: They need some distancing from the normative sociocultural corset. How can personalism be compatible with a creative critique of human exceptionalism?

**Vlad:** Luis, in your comments you captured well the essential positioning of the sociocultural approach with its “departure from creation as mind-located, self-conducted and person-centered” and its “opening to matter, body and culture.” And you raised also two very interesting and important questions that get to the heart of how sociocultural theory has key points of overlap but also some (potentially radical) differences with posthuman thought.

In a nutshell, sociocultural theory does not abandon the human (which, read from the perspective of the history of psychology, would be equivalent to “behaviorism through the back door”; Jovchelovitch, 1996) and starts its theorizing of creativity, unapologetically, from human experience. This doesn’t mean that what I and many fellow socioculturalists mean by “human” is the bounded, unitary, and exceptional position humans have awarded themselves within humanism and the project of modernity. Far from it: the “human” of sociocultural theory is distributed, expanded, co-evolving with others, objects, society, and nature. But “non-human realities,” on their own, are not creative. Just

as human realities, on their own, are not creative. It's the relationship between human and non-human actants that can attain this attribute (Glăveanu, 2015). Luckily, from a sociocultural standpoint—and I suspect a posthumanist one as well—any sharp distinctions between the human and non-human are ontologically misleading and pragmatically dangerous. This kind of de-coupling is specific for mainstream psychological accounts in which the mind can be studied separate from the body, the self separate from others, the person separate from spaces, places, objects, and culture.

And this takes me to the second point about the world which I don't take as the static, overpowering world for-humans but, once more, as what happens at the encounter between various actants and various agencies (May, 1959). The world, in my account, is not simply "there," to be interacted with, but emerges through the interaction—and this is why the person-world dynamic is so important for creativity. The "domain of creativity" is not the person or the world, on their own, it is the transformations of both taking place through action. In this sense, I am on board with the -ing forms of "crealing" and "worlding" that you suggest, Luis, as they are perhaps truer, linguistically, to the point I am also trying to make. We are of the world, in the world, and (co-)makers of the world. This relationship can be disbalanced, as noted, and experienced as "too much" (or "too little," especially in the context of the pandemic) and this is again one of the points of tension that calls for creativity as inherent to the human condition and to the condition of the worlding we make / are made of.

So to the crucial question of how personalism can be compatible with a critique of human exceptionalism, I say this: We need to rethink the notion of the person, not eliminate it from creativity studies, because talking about people doesn't mean we have to treat them as central, atemporal, disconnected, or exceptional. In fact, it would be exceptionally misguided if we did. What we need is the ability to zoom in and out of creative ecologies and be able to focus, when needed, on the person and his or her self-understanding and actions without losing side of the broader context this person is embedded in, a context he or she is not at a center of and yet fully participates in. A bit like in the case of figure and background visual illusions, by focusing on one element we could reach a completely different understanding of the situation than when we focus on another. Unlike our experience with these figures, however, we need to be able to "hold" these understandings—of person and context, of the human and non-human, of process and product, and so on—in dialogue with each other and, more than this, to consider one element in view of all others. This is how we will be able to truly think systemically, not by separating levels and stages within the creative ecology, but developing those conceptual and methodological tools that allow us to cut across the entire system and develop transversal looks, at once relational and developmental.

**Luis:** How are we to understand nature, culture, interactions, ecosystems, and creativity in a way that is performative in terms of care and regeneration, not only for and of the fellow human but also of non-human beings and collective *becomings*? In *The Three Ecologies* (Guattari, 2014, p. 28), first published in French in 1989, Guattari wrote, "Nature cannot be separated from culture; in order to comprehend the interactions between ecosystems, the mecano-sphere and the social and individual Universes of reference, we must learn to think 'transversally.'" In line with Deleuze's reading of process philosophers such as Nietzsche, Whitehead, and Bergson (Browning & Myers, 1998), a desirable answer to the above question may be found in an ecology of creation, a co-creative field of possible relationships or indeed creative ecologies which can be assimilated, nurtured, and even learned dynamically (de Bruin & Harris, 2017). Co-creation as an immanent and real "whole onflow" (Andrews & Duff, 2020) can be understood as a common denominator between nature and culture, not as the objective *result* of a productivist activity but as the common agentic *source* of becoming: "Living matter itself becomes the subject" rather than only an object of inquiry (Braidotti, 2010). This is a move away from anthropocentrism via an emphasis on the *infrahuman* (*ante* human rather than *post* it) mutual interdependence or "intra-action" (Barad, 2007) of material, biocultural, and semiotic forces—in other words an "ecophilosophical dimension" (Braidotti, 2010, p. 204).

This means that the ultimate ontological axiom to make sense of our living experience is not the Real, as Plato, Hegel, or Lacan would have it, but a Creative Real—a *Creal* (de Miranda, 2008, 2017). The immanent onflow called *Creal* is a constant, ubiquitous and multiversal production of ecstasies, that is, possibilizations, externalizations, outings, emanations, actualizations, significations, material phenomena which then constitute worlds as observable and felt reality. The *Creal* includes the outer-world as invisible influx of pre-ontic multiplicity, what the poet Gerard de Nerval called the limitless chain of creation unimpeded, a transparent network that covers the world (de Nerval, 1957, p. 167). The Creative Real is disparation, generative transversality, a virtual and spatiotemporal dispersion in all possible directions (Deleuze, 1988).

One consequence of a Real that is a *Creal* is the end of teleology with its moralistic or political imperatives: considered as a non-linear open whole, the universe or multiverse does not have a predetermined direction, it is disparate profusion and "self-enjoyment" (Whitehead, 1968, p. 150). The crealing wave function that is present infinitesimally at the heart of being-becoming does not privilege one direction over another to recapture itself as one (as in Hegel's Spirit); rather it enjoys all the possibilities of its creativity, beyond good and evil (Nietzsche, 1966). The *Creal* does not need, like Hegel believed, to aim at a grander realization of

freedom within a certain normative frame, since it diffracts its original freedom *ab initio*. From the point of view of Hegel's dialectics, "freedom [. . .] does not exist *as original and natural*. Rather must it be first sought out and won" (Hegel, 1956, p. 40). From the point of view of Creal, freedom is given as source of becoming, and what must be sought out and won by co-creative creatures is equality of access to the Creal, and some variety of eco-logical equilibrium.

The implications of a—meta-analytic, meta-dialectic—crealectic ontology in terms of care and politics means no mercantilist laissez-faire, but rather that we can help those who have been *teleologized* against their will into an unhealthy discourse to reconnect with their original and regenerative co-creative becoming, within a general frame of mutualistic respect for other forms of life and multiple creating ensemblances (de Miranda, 2019, 2020a). The togetherness of well-belonging to transversal possibilizing does not imply a conformative esprit de corps, rather it unveils an ethics of coeval experience between all forms of being (and not-yet-beings). We co-create, therefore we are.

**Vlad:** The Creal that transcends the Real and transforms our experience of ourselves and the world; a space of possibilizing in which the actual never "is" but constantly "becomes"—this is very much in line with the ontological basis of sociocultural accounts! The last line in particular captures, for me, the essence of how we exist as creative beings in an interdependent, creating world: "we co-create, therefore we are." Reminding me of Barron's notion that all creativity is collaboration (Barron, 1999), the framework proposed here goes beyond simply recognizing the role of co-creation and places it at the heart of what it means to exist in the world. Moreover, to co-create doesn't translate just into working with others to produce new and original ideas, which is an easy, reductionist way of including the social and cultural within the creative act. Co-creation as a way of being goes beyond the human or, rather, it makes us aware of the fact that human existence cannot be separated from its various ecologies (see also Barron, 1995).

I am intrigued here by two issues in particular. First, going deeper into the notion of possibilization that I also consider essential for a sociocultural approach to creativity and to psychology more generally (Glăveanu, 2020b). Beyond novelty, originality, and usefulness—some of the main concepts used in a product-focused psychology of creativity—I am concerned by the interplay between the actual and the possible in creative work and the way in which possibility can become an overarching frame that connects creativity to culture, to materiality, to society, and to ethics. How is the Creal a concept that pushes us forward in this direction?

Second, and related to the issue of ethics, I appreciate the remark that, while possibility is a fundamental marker of

our existence, "what must be sought out and won by co-creative creatures is equality of access to the Creal." This is an important point to make, especially in view of the inequality and exploitation embedded in most societies around the world, but it is also one that seems to suggest a distinction between the Creal as a universal principle, if you like, versus the Creal as experienced in practice (a creal with a lowercase *c*?). The former is a given, the latter is an achievement. And if this is indeed the case, how can we make individual and communities aware of their relation to and participation into a broader Creative Real, as they experience struggles to enact the creal in their everyday actions and interactions?

**Luis:** "Culture," "materiality," "society," "ethics": You are talking about ordered externalizations. In my view, the Creal is a reality that pushes us forward into exterior worlds, not just a transcendent abstract concept: We can collectively orient the Creal in performative intentional spaces. Externalization is not a new concept in philosophy, and can be traced back, for example, to Fichte, Hegel, and Schelling (*Entäußerung* in German). In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel understands this movement as a becoming-other, in which Spirit is actualized via a possibilizing dialectic into the sphere of space and time (Malabou, 1996). But the Creal is not Spirit in the dualistic sense that it would have matter as its archenemy. Crealectics is rather an "enchanted materialism" (de Fontenay, 1981), and its immanence resonates with what was called more recently "new materialisms" (Coole & Frost, 2010).

I don't make a dualistic distinction between a transcendent Creal and an immanent creal. Hegel is right in saying that "Spirit begins with a germ of infinite possibility" (Hegel, 1956, p. 57). But this is not a universal transcendence. The simultaneously immanent and transcendent—"transimmanent" (Nancy, 1996, p. 48)—intertwined natural-cultural ground of ever-emerging possibilization (*Ermöglichung*) is conceived as opening and not just ordering (Heidegger, 1995, 1996). Cosmopolitical struggles to enact diverse forms of creating in everyday actions and interactions is what Creal-Politik or *crealectics* (de Miranda, 2017) is about, and in this sense Hegel himself, Marx and before them Heraclitus were right in unveiling the agonistic aspect of historical becoming. Creating is generative, pragmatically empowering and not abstract. Creation is a transimmanent feeling that liberates agency or resistance. To co-create is to resist, to paraphrase Deleuze's famous slogan.

However, the Creal is not a moralizing notion. We do not need to institute the Creal into a human-like God with a table of commandments. Lacan once said that the only chance for the existence of God is that God is pure and absolute enjoyment, *jouissance* (Lacan, 1991, p. 75), a defraction of Whitehead's notion of self-enjoyment (Whitehead, 1968, p. 150). The multiverse's whole ecstasy

may be little preoccupied with the moral perception of its exhilaration. In my view (and it was also the view of Spinoza or Sade), this is politically empowering because it places us in front of our responsibility for our actions and modality of participation in the social contract. This is why I have written that the Creal is an Ethico-Political (anti-) absolute, toward a global social contract of creative agency (de Miranda, 2017). We can as humans decide of our deep orientation and code of conduct, precisely because the ontological ground on which we exist is absolute creative freedom, as understood by the existentialists.

Locally, each reality, you, me, this chair, reproduces a primary tension between unity and multiplicity. The engine of all there, giving movement to our and other realities, is the dance of the Multiple chasing the One, of the One trying to embrace the multiple in return, of both the Multiple and the One never really managing to become *really* identical and fused. This dynamic is alive in our concrete bodies, here and now. There is indeed a practicality of a crealectic theory for sociocultural beings. It is a practice of healing and care.

I have been practicing philosophical counseling with individuals and groups since 2018. Through individual dialogue based on elucidation, intellectual investigation, dialogic interaction, deep listening, and argumentation, I help people gain a clearer idea of what their highest creative destiny might be within a horizon of identity diversity, neurodiversity, and cognidiversity. Via a reconnection with the felt infinite possibility of creating, I help them co-define their personal calling despite the adversity of their social conditions. I observed that, in contexts of conversational care, the feeling of co-creation as higher power regenerates the sense of self-possibility while allowing for a progressive distancing from oppressive contexts of alienation. Your last remark about *struggles* reminds me of this man from India who was in crealectic dialogue with me in 2021. As a consequence of the Covid-19 pandemic, he lost about 20 people of close or distant family, including his father, while expressing the importance, in the midst of such adversity, of remaining connected to the creal feeling that *It is possible*.

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## PART 2: Practices

**Vlad:** As the first part of our dialogue highlighted, and as this special issue testifies, there is a lot of theoretical development around notions of distributed, sociomaterial and posthuman creativity (or, rather, creativities; Burnard, 2012). Luis, you and I seem to be in agreement that creativity and possibility don't exist within the person and cannot be reduced to isolated or "exceptional" human beings, detached from others, objects, places, and culture, outside scope of the Creal. The sociocultural approach in particular

claims that if we are to talk about a locus of creativity, then this locus is relational and dynamic, that it is the space of the encounter between person and world (not the world as is, but as it becomes), a space of actions and interactions, of acting and being acted upon by intertwined networks of human and non-human actors. So how does this anti-dualistic, anti-essentialist, and anti-exceptionalist stance look like in practice?

We don't have to look far to answer this question. In fact, all we need to do is reflect on our ongoing flow of experience and engagement. The "mark" of creativity and possibility can be found in everything we think, do, feel, and strive toward. It is found in the relationships we establish with each other, material actants, cultural resources, institutional structures, and so on. This is why socioculturalists are eager to start from everyday activities and experiences to grasp what creativity is and how it operates within a wider ecology. It is the mundane rather than the exceptional, the collective rather than the individual, the whole rather than the parts, that concern us as a scholarly community (Valsiner & Rosa, 2007). When applying these lenses to creativity, they encourage us to look for it in the most unlikely places and practices (unlikely from the standpoint of the dominant positivist research in psychology). Practices like Easter egg decoration and places like small rural communities in northern Romania.

This is the path I took as a doctoral student with the specific aim of troubling the usual discourses about creativity and shift them from the individual to the sociomaterial, from celebrated creative products to mundane objects, from revolutionary ideas to traditional practices, from separate elements to action-based relationships. I did not use at the time (or knew about) posthuman creativities, but I would have probably been both attracted to and deterred by the term itself. As I mentioned before, from a sociocultural perspective, we cannot leave the human out of our equation—including of creativity and possibility—as we are inescapably bound to this position in the world. Which doesn't mean that we can never de-center from it. This is how I personally understand posthumanist thought, as an effort to de-center the human rather than go "post" it (in the same way as postcolonialism can and is criticized, by decolonialists, for assuming one can go "post" the legacy of colonialism; Castro-Gómez, 2017).

In an eggshell, if I am allowed the pun, what a case study of egg decoration practices reveals about creativity is the fact that it is far from reducible to individuals, minds, and ideas (Glăveanu, 2013). To create means to be in an embodied dialogue with one's surroundings—material, social, cultural—and understand tradition as a living thing, as something that transforms in order to be maintained (tradition as "neo-tradition"; Negus & Pickering, 2004). Egg decoration, and craft more generally, involve sociomaterial dialogues and interdependencies of all kinds. There is first

the transmission of tradition that takes place through apprenticeships and forms of guided participation (Rogoff, 1995) binding self and other, self and community. Then there is the close connection between artisan, tool and egg, forming its own dynamic ecosystem in which the establishment of strict boundaries is difficult and ill-advised (similar to how Bateson, 2000, discussed the relation between the blind man and his stick). And there is the role of accidents and chance events. Crafts are often overlooked when it comes to creativity because there is an implicit and sometimes explicit assumption that they involve copying and repetition, normally seen as the antithesis of creativity (a point of view I criticize in Glăveanu, 2012). And yet, like any living person–world system, the activity of egg decorators is infused with the unexpected and with serendipitous encounters. And this intervention of the material world that comes so often to challenge the artisan’s intentions, and trouble his or her expectations, is of paramount importance when we think about distributed, “posthumanist” creativities. These creativities show us that the bounded mind that creates is a myth and that without being attuned to the dialogue of the human and the non-human we cannot understand the creative process, in this domain and all others.

Who is doing the (creative) decorating? It isn’t the decorator, nor the egg, nor the tool, not tradition itself. It is the mash of all these (Ingold, 2013) and more—it is the doing, re-doing, un-doing, and being done onto that “glue” objects and things together. This is why creativity and possibility are, for me, paradigmatic cases of much more than the generation of “novel and useful” outcomes. They truly give us an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be human in a new (posthumanist?) key. A human that could not do things, including creative things, without being in and of the world, sometimes at the center, sometimes at the periphery. A human that needs to understand this mobile positioning within a field of creative doing and living and use it to re-define itself for a new century, with new ethical demands.

**Luis:** When you write, Vlad, that you and I “seem to be in agreement that creativity and possibility don’t exist within the person” and then develop your example of the egg decoration, I read this as a metaphor about the chicken–egg causality dilemma. Creativity and possibility do exist in the person, but indeed not as objects in a container. Creativity and possibility exist in the person as joy and sense of participation. Here I would like to include a long but almost necessary quote from Bergson’s *Creative Mind*, which I believe resumes much of what I—we?—have been trying to say:

Philosophy stands to gain in finding some absolute in the moving world of phenomena. But we shall gain also in our feeling of greater joy and strength. Greater joy because the reality invented before our eyes will give each one of us,

unceasingly, certain of the satisfactions which art at rare intervals procures for the privileged; it will reveal to us, beyond the fixity and monotony which our senses, hypnotized by our constant needs, at first perceived in it, ever-recurring novelty, the moving originality of things. But above all we shall have greater strength, for we shall feel we are participating, creators of ourselves, in the great work of creation which is the origin of all things and which goes on before our eyes. By getting hold of itself, our faculty for acting will be intensified. Humbled heretofore in an attitude of obedience, slaves of certain vaguely-felt natural necessities, we shall once more stand erect, masters associated with a greater Master. [. . .]. In this speculation on the relation between the possible and the real. Let us guard against seeing a simple game. It can be a preparation for the art of living. (Bergson, 2007, p. 86)

What can this art of living become in contexts of care? I’d like here to develop two concrete examples taken from my practice as action-researcher and philosophical counselor.

The first example is collective. Vattenfall is a Swedish multinational with over 20,000 employees, producing power for several European regions and actively committed to fossil-free sources of energy and clean production. Recently, in April 2021, Vattenfall’s CEO Anna Borg was invited by U.S. President Joe Biden to speak at the White House Leaders summit on climate. I was first approached by the Human Resources unit of Vattenfall in June 2019 to provide philosophical counseling to the Head of Strategic Development. Six months later, Vattenfall decided to extend my practice to several leading managers in the Research & Development unit, and this protocol was called “philosophical health program.” By the summer of 2021, I had conducted regular individual sessions with more than 20 Vattenfall employees, many of them occupying decisional managerial positions, other being young engineers. While the first phase of my philosophical approach is about personal motivations and individual values, a sort of Socratic or epistemic form of active interviewing (Brinkmann, 2007), my work with the R&D and strategic units of Vattenfall slowly evolved to a second phase by the end of 2020, now dealing with the collective vision and future of the R&D unit in particular and of Vattenfall group in general.

In this stage, we worked on the distinction between analytic, dialectic, and crealectic intelligence (de Miranda, 2020b). In May 2021, I was asked to facilitate a collective discussion on what it would mean for Vattenfall to transition from a fossil-free mindset to the more holistic regenerative mindset that I had been advocating. A collective online workshop was organized in the spring of 2021 with about 20 leading managers of Vattenfall (men and women), one third of them having had more than five individual sessions with me previously. For this occasion, I generated six maxims for a regenerative mindset, and asked each participant to propose a seventh maxim (Maxim 1: Cherish Creative Power; Maxim 2: Facilitate Healthy Resilience;

Maxim 3: Curate Eudynamic Rebo[u]nds; Maxim 4: Co-Create Diversified Realities; Maxim 5: Nurture Mutualistic Ensembles; Maxim 6: Share Meaning-Making; Maxim 7: Write Your Own Regenerative Maxim).

While I am not at liberty at this stage of the process to reveal details of the company's strategy, I can testify of the active enthusiasm generated by the philosophical health program. Health-oriented philosophical dialogue based on crealectic assumptions may produce a mindset-expansion even within a multinational corporation, in the context of environmental care. Time (and I elsewhere) will tell how this ongoing process evolves, such that it is not a divertissement of the New Spirit of Capitalism (Boltanski & Chiapello, 2005).

The second example I will unfold is more individual. Sasha, one of my counselees (the name has been changed), was being followed by a psychiatrist and had been diagnosed with severe depression. Sasha turned to me out of curiosity for philosophical counseling, and also because previous psychiatrists were not discouraging Sasha to commit suicide: They were not only following rigidly the norms and discourse of pathologizing the person's experience (and imposing a chemical corset) rather than respecting their neurodiversity. Sasha is an intelligent and learned young person, more at ease in abstractions than in embodiment: Conceiving of the Creal as conceptual possibility *in abstracto* was not a problem, but *feeling* the Creal was at first unconceivable, an inaccessible strangeness. Sasha's body was a locus of pain, worry, and disbelief, and one of my tasks was to help to slowly reduce or replace this disease via a felt reconnection with infrahuman creativity and the freedom to become. Immanent faith in creation, an ontological *feeling* for *crealing* rather than the "painful void of Nothingness" (to use Sasha's words). This process also takes time.

Here I would like to connect Sasha's experience with Kristeva's book, *The Incredible Need to Believe*:

Faith holds the key to the act of speech itself, even should it be plaintive (I am afflicted, men lie, etc.). Because I believe, I speak; I would not speak if I didn't believe; believing in what I say, and persisting in saying it, comes from the capacity to believe in the Other and not at all from existential experience, necessarily disappointing. (Kristeva, 2011, p. x)

Crealectic counseling is a form of intellectual empathy that helps not only to think into the place of the other (Kant, 2007, p. 307), but also of the Other, the Creal. We humans have a need for ontological webs of belief—However, crealectic care attempts to avoid reifying ontology and instead display what Moten, in speaking of blackness, nothingness, and mysticism in the flesh, describes as *para-ontological* (Moten, 2013) or, we could say, trans-ontological. Fruitful parallels can be made between the *oceanic feeling* unfairly mocked by Freud (Wang, 2020), and the relation between

the Ocean paradigm and slavery. My crealing and hopefully healing practice of care, both with individuals and collectives, could be said, provocatively, to be based on the fact that the only slavery we should accept, as suggested by Bergson above, is slavery to the oceanic feeling of Creal. Remember the *Think Galactic!* of Samuel Delany, an active reverence to natural and infinite freedom. From there, the subject can slowly reinvent an agile quasi-self, and the collective mind can nurture its eudynamic growth.

**Vlad:** These are interesting mirroring cases that show how crealectic principles, informing the practice of philosophical counseling, can help both individuals and groups embrace their potential and the "natural and infinite freedom" we are condemned to. It was useful to learn a bit more about some of the concrete tools used in philosophical care and/or philosophical health—which are fascinating concepts. What is most interesting is the way in which creativity and possibility become the premise for health and growth. This resonates also with our initial discussion in which we both noted the limited and limiting value of creative work in neoliberal, individualistic discourses. And it also brings me back to your question about how personalism can co-exist with the negation of human exceptionality. It seems that the practices of care you describe here achieve this by focusing on the person or group without the assumption that creativity, possibility and, indeed, healing, take place at these levels alone.

It is paradoxical to state that "the only slavery we should accept is slavery to the oceanic feeling of Creal" but I understand the sentiment behind linking these highly contrasting notions. For me, the emphasis falls on the idea of acceptance which speaks of the need to realize and embrace human reality (or creality?) with its infinite possibilities and responsibilities. Creativity is usually seen in highly positive terms, even as we talk today about malevolent creativity and try to understand its causes, processes, and consequences (Cropley et al., 2008), but we rarely address the fact that it can be a burden for individuals and groups, the burden of unrealized, denied potential. Helping people understand and accept this potential emerges, undoubtedly, as a fundamental form of care.

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## Conclusion

**Vlad:** There is much to learn from a transdisciplinary dialogue about creativity, possibility, and crealectics. First and foremost, for me, is the fact that despite sometimes marked differences of vocabulary, there are many overlaps at the level of ideas between sociocultural psychology and process philosophy (in and of themselves traditions that are multifaceted and continuously evolving). We share a goal of theorizing creativity beyond the human while not leaving the human behind; in fact, we want to transform

our understanding of what it is to be human precisely by understanding the kind of creative and possibilizing forces that permeate person and world and bind them together. There is a lot to learn about creativity and the possible by considering them through the prism of posthumanist thought and, at the same time, the latter needs the former to build an ontology and epistemology suitable for the 21st century. Luis, you refer to the Creal in this regard and the generative processes associated with crealectics. I refer to the possible as a category that opens up human existence to what is beyond its immediate experience of the world (Glăveanu, 2020b). Creativity is crucial for both these projects, but it is a creativity that challenges 20th-century views with their neoliberal undertones and fascination for eminent (usually western and privileged) individual creators. We need more conceptual and methodological tools to think beyond creative individuals, creative minds, creative ideas, and toward human and non-human ecologies of the possible. One of these methodologies is represented by dialogue (Bakhtin, 1975) and, as we hopefully make the case here, its usefulness is revealed especially when we don't eagerly collapse differences into sameness, when we can listen to each other, keep the tension between our perspectives, and go on talking. This article might have come to an end, but I know that our conversation is far from over.

**Luis:** In this experiential article, we have manifested in content and form the transversal aspect of an enchanted, pluralist and creative view on the stuff of the world. Transversal, as suggested by Guattari (1984), means a diagonal line of flight that is neither the flat line of immanent realism, neither the vertical line of transcendent idealism, but rather the transimmanence of Creal, indeed a multiversal possibilizing influx. With our dialogic approach here, one that attempted to facilitate deep listening while respecting the singular orientation of each of the dialogists, we have not only performed a crealectic dance of incantation; we also have invited a third party to our theoretical-aesthetic dance floor, namely the reader, in its multitude. It is my hope, and Vlad's feeling, that the multiple reader will echo, comment, poke, and transversalize this then generative conversation. Our flight here may be not much more than a fragile butterfly with two asymmetric wings, yet such that the effects of its becoming can be a non-linear craft, since butterflies lay eggs for nature to decorate. The process of writing this article, for which I am grateful, fitted in the end, I hope, the crealectic principles of philosophical health (de Miranda, 2021), among which are mental heroism (the courage to think for oneself), deep orientation (the pursuit of a singular theoretical calling), critical creativity (a generous and generative form of theorization), deep listening (an opening to alterity), and the ultimate possibility of Creal, this possibility of the possible, this thought-feeling that liberates and fluidifies beings, humans and non-humans. These

principles are partly individual and collective, partly singular and partly multiple. Co-creation as we have defended it does not mean once more a dissolution of the subject in a collective esprit de corps that too often ends up being a groupthink, but rather a joyous moment of well-belonging between conversational lines of life.


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### ORCID iD

Vlad P. Glăveanu  <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-6029-6718>

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### Author Biographies

**Vlad P. Glăveanu** is Associate Professor and Head of the Department of Psychology and Counselling at Webster

University Geneva, founder and director of the Webster Center for Creativity and Innovation (WCCI), and Associate Professor II at the Centre for the Science of Learning and Technology (SALTE) at the University of Bergen. He is widely published in the fields of creativity, culture, imagination, collaboration, wonder and human possibility. In the latter area, he is the author of *The Possible: A Sociocultural Theory* (Oxford University Press, 2020), editor of the Palgrave Encyclopedia of the Possible, and founder and president of the Possibility Studies Network ([possibilitystudies.org](http://possibilitystudies.org)).

**Luis de Miranda** (<https://luisdemiranda.com>) is a researcher at the Center for Medical Humanities of Uppsala University and a philosophical counselor working upon the principles of crealectics and philosophical health (<https://philosophical.health>). He is the author of books of fiction and non-fiction translated into several languages, such as *Being and Neonness* (MIT Press) and *Who Killed the Poet?* (Snuggly Books).