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Creativity as Dissent and Resistance: Transformative Approach Premised on Social Justice Agenda

Anna Stetsenko

“Freedom is always the freedom of the dissenter”
Rosa Luxemburg

In this chapter I suggest that creativity, like freedom, is always about dissent, that is, about resistance, discord, challenge, critique, and ultimately, about the acts of questioning and moving beyond what is given, a process that transcends (or deconstructs) the status quo and its entrenched structures, phenomena, and elements. Creativity is thus akin to defiance and disobedience, even rebellion, on a par with the revolutionary energy of transformative agency that furnishes our world and is the province not of the select few but of all human beings. The rationale and conceptual support for this claim will be elaborated in what follows.

Creativity is an important and popular yet complicated and illusive topic for psychology and other fields that use this term in their conceptual apparatus. Despite some points of agreement, definitions of creativity vary greatly across time and frameworks and no full consensus on its core characteristics and mechanisms is presently in sight. This is not a problem in and of itself because a unified and universal definition is neither desirable nor likely in conceptualizing most (perhaps any) of the categories in social sciences where

A. Stetsenko (✉)

Programs in Psychology/Human Development and in Urban Education, The Graduate Center of The City University of New York, New York, NY, USA
e-mail: astetsenko@gc.cuny.edu

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what we study is a highly peculiar realm of phenomena and processes, unlike those in natural sciences such as chemical compounds and biological cells. This realm is closely entangled with research practices, discourses, languages, folklore, common sense, and conceptual traditions of professional subcultures, which are themselves parts of the larger sociopolitical and cultural contexts including complex networks of terms and categories within which particular concepts uniquely find their meaning through relations to others. The highly and inordinately complex character of the subject matter, phenomena and categories in psychology and neighboring disciplines renders diversification of viewpoints and multiplicity of positions legitimate and valuable while establishing the futility of searching for a single answer. Paraphrasing Gergen's words about the concept of the self, one can say that "the argument is not that our descriptions of [creativity] are objectively shaky, but that the very attempt to render accurate understanding is itself bankrupt... Whatever [creativity is] is beyond telling" (1991, p. 82). Danziger (1997, p. 5) has astutely commented on this topic, writing that a substantial body of evidence

throws doubt on the universal validity of many of the categories with which the discipline of Psychology has been operating. ... There is a certain arrogance in taking it for granted that, alone among a myriad alternative ways of speaking about individual action and experience [including creativity], the language of twentieth-century American Psychology accurately reflects the natural and universal structure of the phenomena we call 'psychological'.

In my earlier works, I developed similar arguments that psychological constructs describe objects that differ markedly from those in natural sciences because these "objects" are more intimately dependent on research practices and therefore, change as a result of claims and questions posed about them (Stetsenko, 1990; see extensions in Stetsenko, 2016). With this complexity in mind, what is possible and desirable is to situate the concept of creativity within investigative projects that attempt to account for certain significant aspects and dimensions of human conduct and functioning, while paying attention to the specific tasks that "creativity" is meant to achieve within these projects and inquiries. Leaving aside the difficult task of exploring the uses of the "creativity" construct across cultures—an important endeavor that is beyond the scope of this chapter (for vivid surprises that await researchers undertaking such tasks, see Danziger, 1997)—the goal in the present analysis is different. It is to expand the applicability for the construct of creativity within an expanded range of investigative projects than is typically the case, to more fully bring about its explanatory potential.

The idea is to lodge the construct of creativity in the project of addressing the main constitutive features of human development and conduct as having to do, at the very core, with their essentially non-adaptive and non-conformist nature. This project is also, and non-coincidentally, about acknowledging and ascertaining fundamental equality of all human beings. Creativity in this project is used to highlight something we all share as human beings—the formative dimension of what is commonly referred to as the human condition, what being human means. The critical point is that no human action is possible without a significant degree of creativity and ingenuity even in the so-called everyday situations when we face putatively common tasks in our presumably ordinary lives, because no situation and task is ever completely common and no life is ever totally ordinary. In this sense, studies of outstanding individuals, rather than affording a glimpse into the exceptional processes and regularities that are beyond the typical range of human functioning, can instead be understood to illuminate the workings of the mind that in fact all humans can be credited with, revealing their amazing, yet at the same time quite common, features shared by *all* people.

It is important to explicitly include creativity among the most basic, formative constituents of human development, in acknowledging that development is agentive and innovative through and through, instead of seeing it as an exclusive property of only uniquely gifted individuals. This importance has to do with the need to make steps forward in developing non-elitist, anti-racist, and empowering attitudes, discourses and practices including in nurturing creativity through an academic curriculum for *all*. As is well known, presently a very small proportion of students are afforded opportunities to develop their creativity and, even more problematically, there is a marked inequity in that students from historically disadvantaged populations have been left particularly vulnerable to this lack of opportunities (Beghetto, 2010). This worrisome trend is part of the larger dynamics in which racial segregation in the US schools and neighborhoods is a driver of growing inequality and social division. These dynamics are reversing previous gains and exacerbating inequalities through policies that disenfranchise populations of color and the poor (Darling-Hammond, 2007) so that “the children who most depend on the public schools for any chance in life are concentrated in schools struggling with all the dimensions of family and neighborhood poverty and isolation” (Kucsera & Orfield, 2014, p. iii).

It is to mitigate this and similar gaps, as part of “a new civil rights agenda” (Orfield, 2014, p. 276), that I am offering steps towards a concept of creativity compatible with the tenets of fundamental equality and social justice, for this concept to be used as part of a critical-practical project of social

transformation and change. The effort is to provide conditions for making the assumption of equality true, including at the level of supportive theoretical constructions, as one of the steps in the overall project of creating equality in society and education (for a related though not identical approach, see Rancière, 1991). This approach does not take the ideal of equality as an abstract notion, nor tests it in some detached, neutral way. Instead, it *takes a stand* on and commits to matters of equality as an analytical step that leads all other methodological strategies, conceptual turns, and theoretical choices, all while attempting *to realize* equality in the process of theory- and knowledge-building. This is consistent with the gist of Vygotsky's Marxist project that can be seen as laying grounds for a novel type of research devoted not to a pursuit of knowledge per se but to creating knowledge as part and parcel of a larger-scale social transformation that self-consciously contributes to creating new forms of social life and practices based in principles of social justice and equality. Along these lines, creativity studies can be revolutionized to challenge the many myths of its own creation.

The Present Landscape in Creativity Research: Discerning Research Agendas

Traditionally, the construct of creativity comes about in research and theories attempting to account for novelty including as it encompasses originality, uniqueness, transgression, innovation, and departure from established norms and accepted standards. Yet further specifications typically limit creativity to the creation of novelty in problem solving—finding specific solutions while most often tapping into the quality of resulting products such as in the arts, sciences, and technologies. In this emphasis, apart from some caveats, a long-standing consensus in psychology and other fields is that “creativity is defined as a novel yet appropriate solution to a problem or response to a situation” (Moran, 2008, p. 74).

In this emphasis on problem-solving and its products, there is perhaps inevitably a certain managerial, commercial taste to the studies of creativity associated with instrumental business interests and other market-driven motivations. That some of the popular approaches such as the investment theory of creativity (Sternberg, 2012) define creative people in explicitly market terms, as those who are willing and able to metaphorically “buy low and sell high” is an expression of this trend. Further, as noted by Craft (2005), the globalized market approach can be discerned even within education policy

initiatives that acknowledge the need to include creativity in the school curriculum, with potentially destructive and ethically questionable ecological and cultural consequences (Beghetto, 2010). Even more critically, the motivation behind many studies of creativity has been to diagnose qualities of unique individuals capable of outstanding performance in producing novelty and innovation. This is especially the case in psychometric, historiometric, and management approaches to creativity that for decades have dominated research on this topic and continue to do so. The more or less explicitly present goal (or at least its non-coincidental corollary) to establish certain hierarchies among society members in their basic capacities to produce results is embedded within the market-based ideology of unequal societies that are premised at their very core on exactly such hierarchies. This emphasis follows with the trend of free market ideology to concentrate on the agency of human beings in augmenting production possibilities. The question of *how* and *why* certain products and corresponding capacities should or could be valued over others is rarely raised in this kind of approach. The typical consideration is that it is society that will make judgements of this kind in some sort of a consensus.

The combined emphasis in both research and theories of creativity on problem-solving and corresponding “productivity” (in connotations of commodities and commercial values), on hierarchy among society members in their capacities for creativity, and on the role of social consensus in valuing creativity, are all quite ironic because this overall position is conspicuously in sync with the ethos of global capitalism with its neoliberal economies and corresponding sociopolitical policies and, more generally, with the currently reigning status quo. It is also quite in sync with the long-standing focus on individual capacities within mainstream approaches in psychology that since its inception has been quintessentially a psychology of the individual. Moreover, as decades of critical works have convincingly demonstrated, not only do psychologists rarely challenge the existing order of things including prevailing social attitudes, beliefs, and discriminatory biases, but they actively endorse and facilitate the reproduction of the status quo (cf. Cushman, 2012). In creativity research this is expressed, for example, in that “despite all of this creativity-related discourse and activity among practitioners, policymakers, and scholars, surprisingly little attention has been paid to the question of *why*. Why value creativity? What is the role of creativity in society?” (Moran, 2010).

That creativity research does not significantly deviate from the overall ethos prescribed by the presently dominant ideological, sociopolitical, and disciplinary status quo is a reason for all of us to pause and reconsider the roads not yet fully taken, that is, the roads of “pushing the envelope” more through

critiquing the canons, transcending the accepted rules, interrogating achieved consensus, and otherwise moving beyond the status quo in all of its dimensions and aspects including research and extant mainstream approaches. Given that creativity is admittedly about novelty, innovation and transgression, the field and we all as a research community arguably would benefit from positioning ourselves more as outsiders vis-a-vis the mainstream psychology and the broader reigning ideologies, even perhaps as rebels who are not prepared to settle with what presently exists and instead, strive for what could be in an open and daring challenge to the status quo. This is a call, if you like, for creativity research to become more in sync with its own topic, that is, to become more creative and thus, more daring.

There have been several positive changes in research on creativity in recent decades in this direction. One of these changes has been a transition from a traditional focus on isolated individuals to a focus on groups, interactions, and social and cultural contexts of creativity including the resulting attention to its situated, distributed and collaborative nature (e.g., Connery, John-Steiner, & Marjanovic-Shane, 2018; Sawyer, 2015; for elaborations, see Glăveanu, 2010). This shift has been part of a broader “sociocultural turn” in the social sciences that occurred especially from the mid-1980s through the 1990s, though it can be traced back to seminal works by a range of scholars including Dewey, Piaget, Vygotsky and Mead (cf. Kirschner and Martin 2010). The second positive development in the field of creativity away from accepted and entrenched canons of mainstream psychology has been the emerging focus on the ethical and moral (normative) issues. For example, the recent works have sought to merge the realm of creativity with the imperative of responsibility (Gardner, 2007; cf. Moran, 2010). This same shift can be discerned in works that draw attention to the need to explore the “why” of creativity, the roles it plays in society in interaction with the distribution of power, and the relationship of creativity to the future (Moran, 2010).

The third notable shift has drawn attention to a whole range of creative acts and expressions that are not confined to the forms of “eminent creativity” only. In addition to a traditional focus on “creative greatness” (so called *Big-C* creativity), current studies also explore everyday creativity of the “average” persons (so called *little-c* creativity; Kaufman & Beghetto, 2009). In addition, Kaufman and Beghetto (2009) expand this line of research by adding yet another construct to the inventory of creativity descriptors—that of the “mini-c” creativity that highlights the personal (cf. Vygotsky, 2004) and developmental aspects including openness to new experiences, active observation, and willingness to be surprised and explore the unknown.

All of these shifts represent much needed expansions on the notion of creativity that help to dispel its traditional mythology. Yet more work needs to be done to consolidate, advance and warrant alternative approaches, especially along the lines that challenge assumptions of inequality and natural hierarchy (for some parallels, see Glăveanu, 2017). For example, this pertains to the “mini-c” approach, with its premise that the creative potential of the *many* should not be overshadowed by the creative accomplishments of the *few*, still preserving some hierarchy separating those who are deemed to be creators (albeit admittedly numerous) from the rest of us.

What is needed, in my view, to develop theories of creativity in consonance with and as part of the critical-theoretical project of advancing radical notions of democracy and equality, is no less than a philosophically grounded revision, indeed an overhaul, of the major assumptions about human development, mind, the nature of knowledge and, ultimately, reality itself—away from assumptions of passivity, accommodation, quietism and adaptation to the status quo. This task is especially urgent given the current situation marked, I suggest, by a transition away from the past several decades permeated with the guiding ethos of presumed stability and belief in the global free-market fundamentalism (brought about by the exuberant optimism after the end of the cold war reflecting the “end of history” zeitgeist) and towards nascent social movements fueled by social justice agendas that are challenging the status quo while searching for theoretical supports needed to sustain them.

Moving Beyond: The Transformative Activist Stance

Many entry points for a theory of creativity steeped in the ethos of equality and social change are provided by Marxism and by Vygotsky’s works that were developed in continuation of this philosophical system. These works were developed as part of “revolutionising the existing world, of practically attacking and changing existing things” (Marx, 1978, p. 169), laying grounds for linking particular understandings of phenomena and processes such as creativity with value-laden conceptions of a *desired* formation of both self and society. Their approach was also aimed against the notions, still prevalent today, that have their basis in the ethos of passive adaptation and “the romance with fixedness” (to use Gergen’s, 1991, expression)—the idea that human action is determined by a relatively fixed set of internal dispositions and an equally fixed set of external structures and influences. The alternative outlined

in Marxism was to attend to what Bakhtin later termed the radical “ungiveness” of human experience and, it is important to add, the radical ungiveness of the world itself. It is this ethos of dynamism and transformation, coupled with the passionate commitment to human equality and social justice, that permeated Vygotsky’s works.

One way to further advance this approach at the level of ethics, ontology, and epistemology, while overcoming some of its gaps and contradictions by capitalizing on activism and creativity enacted in transformative agency, has been suggested in my works on transformative activist stance (TAS). To give a brief account (for details, see Stetsenko, 2008, 2010, 2012, 2015, 2016), the TAS builds on Vygotsky’s ideas about collaborative practice as the key grounding for human development, Bakhtin’s notion of ethical becoming (or *postuplenie*; for elaboration, see Stetsenko, 2007; Stetsenko & Ho, 2015), and Freire’s critical pedagogy—as these are further integrated with insights from contemporary works in ecological, dynamic, feminist, sociocultural, and critical approaches. On this foundation, the following expansions are suggested.

First, in this approach, the world is understood to be a constantly shifting and continuously evolving terrain of social practices enacted and reenacted by people acting together in their joint struggles and strivings. That is, the world is posited to be an ongoing and ceaselessly changing process, or a collective forum, composed of dynamic and ever-changing communal practices stretching across generations yet always enacted anew. These practices continuously evolve in history as one dynamic and ceaseless flow of a *cultural-historical praxis* that connects all individuals and all generations in one unified, ongoing, open-ended pursuit—the pursuit of humanness, including its individually unique expressions, as a project of collaborative becoming. Each person entering this collective forum as a flowing terrain of collaborative social practices, and joining in with its dynamics, right from birth, is the core condition and foundation for personal becoming and development as a member of the human species and agent of human civilization in its historical unfolding.

Second, these collective and open-ended collaborative practices, although social through and through, are understood to be realized through unique contributions by individuals (themselves social to the core, in light of the previous point), each acting from one’s own irreplaceable position and stance though always in an ineluctable interaction and reliance upon, as well as an inextricable alliance and coordination with, other community members (both immediately present and long gone). Each person not only enters these social practices, but enacts and brings them into *realization* (literally, makes them *real*), gradually co-authoring these practices by making a difference (however slight or large) in them.

Third, by entering these social practices and realizing them, each person *thereby* also realizes oneself in the *same* process of a joint and collective becoming. That is, each person comes into being by co-authoring social practices through enacting, realizing, and transforming them by individually contributing to and thus, mattering in them. It is within creative processes of co-authoring the world by contributing to its collective dynamics that people simultaneously *co-author themselves* in becoming individually unique and irreplaceable within the communal world shared with others, in one bidirectional spiral of self- and world-creation. Note how the juxtaposition of the social versus the individual is transcended in this approach: The personal becoming turns out to be contingent on mattering in profoundly social processes, while the social-collaborative practices are acknowledged to be contingent on individual contributions to them (hence the notion of the “collectividual” as one composite process in which the social and the individual are indivisibly merged; see Stetsenko, 2013, 2016).

Fourth, because the world is understood to be composed of collective practices that involve complex social dynamics needed to coordinate shared activities—and thus inevitably entail dimensions of power, conflict, and struggle—the primary emphasis is on people *en-countering*, *con-fronting*, and *overcoming* the circumstances and conditions that are not so much given as *taken up* by people within the processes of actively grappling with them and thus, realizing and bringing them forth in an active and agentive striving to change and transcend them. Finally, the relevance of the *forward-looking* activist positioning vis-à-vis the future is highlighted—what we imagine, deem important, strive for, and seek—along with a commitment to bringing this future into reality. The core constituent of human development consists in taking stands and staking claims—the process of *making up one’s mind* as literally a process through which human subjectivity comes about. These are processes of *authorially and creatively taking up* social practices, via contributing to changing them, by individuals qua actors of society and history in always creative, novel, agentive, and transformative ways.

The resulting view suggests that it is directly through and within the dynamic process of transforming and co-creating the world that people simultaneously come to be, to know and to act, as active agents of their own lives and society, that is, as agentive and responsible actors of social practices. We do not passively dwell in the world, but instead co-create and co-author it together with other people, while inevitably changing it. Based on these broad premises, the processes of knowing, being, and doing are acts of creative transformation contingent on how each person contributes to the social, communal practices by changing their dynamics, creating novelty, and leaving one’s

own indelible traces in them. This understanding contrasts with explanations that premise human development on passive processes of people being simply situated in context while merely experiencing what is “given” or passively and obediently reacting to influences coming from the outside. A focus instead is on creativity and novelty, suggesting that our acts and deeds do not just take place in the world; instead, we simultaneously bring forth the world and ourselves in a spiral of a mutual, bidirectional becoming.

Creativity and Transformative Agency

Because all major ontological and epistemological positions on both human development and the nature of reality are radically shifted from the notion of adaptation to transformation, the TAS opens ways to understand the centrality of creativity in human development. In this approach, because *reality itself is in the making*—our own creative and imaginative making—a rigid opposition between creativity and imagination on one hand, and the world of “ordinary” life on the other, is eliminated. This is achieved by reintegrating these two realms through the ontological treatment of human life and development as a creative work (or a project) of a simultaneous self- and world-formation. The apparently great contrast between some putatively “brute” reality of what is taken to be the “real” world (somehow purged of human dimensions and “disenchanted”) versus the world of imagination and creativity relies on an inadequate phenomenology of ordinary experience. The alternative conceptualization is accomplished through direct problematization of the notion of reality “as it is” in its status quo, which is replaced with the notion of reality as a contested terrain of social practices that are about struggles and strivings of becoming. This is a radical position even by Marxist standards because the world is taken to be profoundly humanized and inherently, at its core, imbued with human values, positions, interests, commitments and goals, all entailing creativity and transformative agency in place of passive adaptation. These dimensions are not considered to be added as a separate realm onto human conduct, nor onto the world in which this conduct takes place. Instead, communal and individual subjectivity and creativity are posited right at the epicenter of reality—the world in which we exist and which we come to know as we ourselves create it, *in the process of creating it*. The world is fully enmeshed with our collective strivings and collaborative projects, in a spiral of mutual historical becoming, wherein each individual act of being, knowing, and doing—unique, authorial, and irreplaceable as it is—matters.

The radical import of this approach is that it operates with the notion of creativity (and other expressions of human subjectivity such as agency, imagination, goals, hopes, desires, strivings and purposes) as fully legitimate, and indeed central, dimensions of reality. Although not directly present in Marx's writings, this approach is consistent with some of their creative readings such as by Bloch (1986, p. 7) who wrote: "Expectation, hope, intention towards possibility that has still not become: this is not only a basic feature of human consciousness but, ... a basic determination within objective reality as a whole."

The TAS approach highlights that even our apparently mundane circumstances and activities in the course of the so called everyday life entail a de facto *infinite* spectrum of interactions, relations, dynamics, and circumstances that stretch across time with *immeasurable* and inherently *indeterminable* consequences, within a *boundless* variety of overlapping and multifaceted contexts that are *endlessly* complex, fluid, ever-changing, unpredictable, uncertain, contested, and shifting every step of the way.

Imagine a teacher entering an urban school in New York city today. What this teacher is encountering is typically a highly complex, ambiguous and uncertain terrain composed of activities across a wide spectrum of contexts and time scales, in relations with innumerable other people, both present and long gone and those yet to come, across immediate environments and the far stretches of the world. This teacher likely encounters students who come from various parts of the world, speak diverse languages, carry and embody complicated legacies of dislocation, immigration, disadvantage and discrimination that stretch back into history and across the globe. No less importantly, these students are not only inheritors of the past but also actors of their own lives and our common history projecting far beyond the present, who are making new realities and new histories in the future that is unknown yet is already in the making in each and every classroom. What the students and teachers encounter and realize in their classrooms matters greatly in infinite ways and is no less complicated, challenging and creative than any human endeavor anywhere in the world.

As is especially the case in a context like this, every act by each person is contingent and relies upon, as well as affects, innumerable others and has endless consequences, reverberating practically through the universe and across the ages. That is, even seemingly routine deeds by so called common people in what we are used to see as their supposedly utmost ordinary lives are *always* creative, often innovative, and not infrequently daring—all implying that actually *no* deed is completely routine, *no* person completely common, and *no* life completely ordinary. Indeed—truly *in deed*—no instance of human life,

activity and interaction is exactly like any other and no circumstance of life exactly repeats those in the past, never meaning the same thing nor carrying the same implications depending on when, why, how, what for, and for whom these meanings and implications apply. Just as language cannot be and in fact never is used in copying or repeating what others have said in the past, with every sentence being creative, original and unique, so is every human encounter and action always novel, unrepeatable, and creative.

Conclusions

There has been hitherto no theoretical perspective which unambiguously assigns creativity with a truly primary and constitutive (formative) role *simultaneously* in human development and in the dynamics of reality and social life. In drawing especially on Marx and Vygotsky and also Bakhtin, Freire, and other critical sociocultural scholars, the TAS begins to make up for this gap in highlighting agentic capacities for transformative change and creative agency by human beings as actors of self- and world/history-making. Some interesting parallels can be noted with other positions on creativity, for example, with Ryle's point that "it is part of intelligence to seize new opportunities and to face new hazards; to be, in short, 'not a tram, but a bus'. What I am describing is not something that is peculiar to a few distinguished persons" (quoted in Costall, 2015). Costall expands this insight suggesting to zoom in on "the human gift of not staying on the rails, and not *even* keeping to the same bus route" (p. 54). However, I would take this expansion even further to suggest that not only do we ride a bus rather than a tram while also not even keeping to the same bus route, as formulated by Ryle and Costall. In my view, we do not simply ride a bus or any other vehicle for that matter, on whatever route. Instead, we *drive* our lives in the directions we ourselves create, through contributions to the social world and in relying on its tools and supports, *while creating the route itself, along the way, for ourselves and others*. As I wrote in an earlier work (Stetsenko, 2016, p. 18),

we all are not just passengers on ... the train [or any other vehicle] of history—as if we were just gazing outside at the rapidly changing landscape while merely observing, coping with, and adapting to it. Instead, the train [or another vehicle] itself is made to move, and to move in a concrete though fluid and ever-changing direction, by the collective efforts of people who act together yet with each person mattering, in individually unique ways, at every step of the way, at every move of history. We are all actors who contribute to social practices, bring

about their historical realization, and contribute to the future that is to come and, moreover, a future that is always already in the making, by us, *now*.

I would augment this quote now by insisting that we are in fact members of the crew. And to return to the goal of connecting creativity construct with the ethos of social justice and equality, which is the main purpose of this chapter: In the perspective outlined herein, there is no impenetrable walls separating any one person from the most prolific and creative “giants” history has ever known. In fact, many perceptive teachers have long since known that any child is a genius, if perhaps still in the making. To quote one teacher, John Taylor Gatto (2001, p. xxiii), “genius is as common as dirt. We suppress genius because we haven’t figured out how to manage a population of educated men and women.” Vygotsky is right on board with this approach, writing that

There is a widespread opinion that creativity is the province of a select few ... This is not true. If we understand creativity in its true psychological sense as the creation of something new, then this implies that creation is the province of *everyone to one degree or another...* (2004, p. 33; emphasis added)

The creativity myth that puts some men (indeed, typically white men) high on pedestals—as ostensibly exceptional, extraordinary individuals “out of this world” presumed to possess almost divine qualities and mystical access to some transcendental truths—erects barriers between them and the rest of us while diminishing equality and squashing incentives for innovating, creating and daring. This is an elitist and disempowering approach that belittles the accomplishments that *all* humans can be credited with in their seemingly—only seemingly! - mundane and ordinary lives. Such a challenge to the myths of creativity is not meant to diminish achievements by our predecessors (and contemporaries) or to equalize all accomplishments with no regard to their social significance, beauty, import, and value. Rather, it is meant to call attention to the otherwise overlooked yet truly extraordinary complexity of what we tend to dismiss as the so-called mundane dynamics of the “everyday” and the “ordinary”. It is important to *first* emphasize the amazingly creative, transformative agency that *all* human beings share and need to gain sociocultural support for. The next critical step should be about how society provides conditions for and supports creativity in all people, especially those who are historically disadvantaged, or fails to do so in putting limits on creativity, at its own great loss and detriment, as unfortunately happens too often today.

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