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## Conceptual and Conditional (Im)possibilities of Creative Theorizing of Creativity and Culture: Critical Reflections from Turkey Toward Globally Transformative Praxis

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I accepted Vlad Glăveanu's invitation to contribute to this volume with pleasure for I was given the liberty 'to choose its focus depending on the issues that are most important from a Turkish perspective'. I thought I have something to say on the main topic of the Handbook that have been accumulated and transformed throughout my entire life as a person/academic-professional. Otherwise, I am not a known 'creativity expert'.

I will proceed by breaking my holistic thoughts into three main parts. In the next section, I expectedly will serve from within the assigned role of a 'local reporter' from Turkey. I will blend my accumulated observations responding to some questions that dominate the past/present empirical studies. In the following second section, I will offer some overall reflections by primarily focusing on theoretical efforts in the area of creativity and culture, including recent sociocultural critiques of the conventional/mainstream discourse. My *perspectival perspective* is inherently intertwined with my 'metatheoretical' positions and problematizations in transdisciplinary knowledge-practices (e.g., Gülerce 2013).

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So I think such dialogically distanced tone in both sections would prepare for my then foregrounding of the issue of *glocalization* (the simultaneously intertwined process of globalization and localization) of Psychology as (re)viewed from Turkish soils. I will further serve as a 'global interpreter' while negotiating various discursive voices heard throughout this writing. Thus, I expect that my reasons to show more interest in the creativity of and within Psychology in general than the psychology of and for creativity in particular will become clear.

## I-Pairs: Implicit Impossibilities

Decades ago, Sternberg (1985) differentiated implicit and explicit conceptualizations of creativity. Obviously, ethnographic inquiries are interested in the former. Some researchers focused on creative individuals (e.g., Barron 1969; Csikszentmihalyi 1996; Helsen 1996). Some looked at the definitions of creativity as an abstract notion (e.g., Runco and Bahleda 1987; Runco and Albert (1990)). My inquiry is concerned with both.

The quantitative and qualitative empirical material which provide the basis for my processed and holistic observations come from multiple sources: (i) Various surveys that I have conducted on everyday cognitions, or ethnotheories, of 'creativity' (but also of 'child development', 'child rearing', 'intelligence', 'psychological maladjustment', 'love', be(com)ing a 'good person' and of a 'good society') beginning in the late 1980s. I have repeated them with different groups and foci at irregular intervals. The informants consisted of literate people who were expected to have the vocabulary related to the modern word for creativity (*yaratıcılık*), but excluding psy-students and professionals; (ii) my own systematic observations of undergraduate and graduate (psy) students in specific experiential tasks which were directly related to creativity, performed in order to experience, role-play, practice and master various professional (clinical/counseling psychology) skills as individuals or in groups in my atelier classes and field practicum supervisions; (iii) both groups' self-reported categorizations of themselves as 'non/creative' and their descriptive (nonstructured) short essays and lists of freely associated and ranked correlates of 'non/creative' agents, creativity process and creative product; (iv) my own experiential training seminars on 'creative problem solving' with middle- and upper-level managers in various organizational settings; (v) several external observations of 'creative teams' at work in various advertising and marketing agencies, and ample cognitive–personality–projective assessments and interviews with a variety of populations; (vi) 'natural observations' of and 'lived

experiences' and 'conversations' with various personal friends whose professional creativity are publicly (and even internationally) acknowledged in the fields of fine arts, music, literature, architecture and science, as well as of ample number of anonymous people and everyday events in the society; (vii) prolonged introspective self-knowledge, and self-/other-reflective analyses on why I ('person'), what I did ('product'), how I did ('process'), when I did (temporality), where I did (situational context), why I did (intentional purpose) and so forth were considered 'creative' (judgment) in whatever context they were expressed ('performance') and appeared ('perception'), and (de)valued.

In what follows, far from being exhaustive and 'rigorously' quantified, I herein will list the main constructs as I-pairs, mimicking the common genre of creativity literature. So, let us quickly (re)view how (little-c/big-C) creativity, as an abstract notion as well as under concrete specific conditions, is understood in the minds of some people living in—that is, their implicit presuppositions, conceptualizations and evaluations—an inquiry directed toward fine-tuning the concept.

*Imitation and Ingenuity* A highly valued and significant marker of creativity is represented by originality and authenticity. Regardless of the sophistication level of the crafting skills displayed, or the talent of the individual/team, 'reproduction' is distinguished (conceptually and categorically, of course) from creativity. 'Imitation' is devalued for lacking ingenuity. Creativity judgments frequently are based on 'performance/product', not on the 'person/process' in terms of the 4Ps of creativity (Rhodes 1961).

*Improvisation and Immediacy* Another distinct marker of creativity concerns the time-space. Spontaneity functions almost as a confirmation of ingenuity of creative competence. On the spot and rapid action (i.e., 'reaction time') is frequently associated with and prioritized in defining creativity. If the product/performance occurs as practical problem solving and in public, its creativity value further increases in a positive relation with the moral and communal significance attributed to the problem.

*Imagination and Irrationality* In terms of the material availability, imagination is considered the Siamese twin of creativity by all informants. In a sense, they are Hobbesians as they believe that imagination is a necessary prerequisite of holistic thinking and planning. It is yet another characteristic that serves as a discriminative marker between the 'creators' and the 'noncreators': The 'noncreators' are described/defined as such for 'having weak imaginative power', or 'not having imagination at all'. There is a striking similar-

ity between the groups, on the other hand, as they consider expressions of irrational thoughts or surreal ideas as an indication of creativity. When the judgments are based on the product, the age (i.e., young children) or mental health (i.e., diagnosis of schizophrenia) of the creative actors does not seem to matter.

*Independence and Incongruence* Apparently, some participants rationalize their conceptual position on the previous point as being regardless of artistic judgment or taste. Put differently, they give credit to independence from normative patterns as a personality feature. The presumption is that, in a socio-cultural climate of pressure for compliance with traditional conventions, any conscious and purposeful act/person that breaks the norms must be 'creative'. Here the apperceptions of 'self-confidence' in terms of 'passing the auto-censorship in public' and/or 'swimming against the current' serve as *intervening variables* in defining and detecting the 'creative person'. They consider the possibility of the incongruent performance/product having more/less creative value as a separate matter (i.e., market, or taste).

*Inhibition and Impulse* As a matter of fact, another significant divide between the self-claimed, publicly acknowledged or observed 'creators' and the 'non-creators' is formed around the notions of 'freedom', 'openness' and 'psychic/erotic energy'. While the former is frequently described (especially by the other group) as 'relaxed', 'free of inhibitions', 'free in self-expression', 'energetic', 'enthusiastic' and so on, the latter is described (especially by themselves) as 'shy/socially anxious', 'inhibited', 'disinterested', 'conformist/conventional', 'lacking desire/energy' and so forth. While the former groups' self-descriptions in relation to inhibition (as a personality marker) vary tremendously between both ends of the spectrum, they almost unanimously point to an almost 'irresistible impulse' to create. Some compare this 'spiritual pulse/inner push' to create to a degree of 'impaired judgment' or the neglect of other rational/responsible self/other obligations, if not 'irreality'. It corresponds to something more like Bergson's *élan vital*, Freud's *eros* or Fromm's *existential meaning*, than an 'urge' or 'instinct'.

*Intrinsic Interest and Initiative* Regardless of whether it is seen as inherited or as an innate structural capacity, a significant number of people agree that creative activity is intrinsically motivated. This activity is seen as proactively initiated by the creative actors, rather than as a response to some order or external imposition. Indeed, most artists particularly describe lack of motivation and even strong emotional reaction to taking commercially concerned orders or

to other 'external interferences' such as competitive contests, deadlines and so on. Intrinsic motivation as a significant marker of creativity was Galton's (1869) original thesis.

*Identity and Integrity* Whether in the form of 'professional X' (i.e., painter, writer, composer, etc.) and in the case of few exceptions who comfortably identify themselves as creative, or not, creativity becomes an *identity* and serves as a *way of life*. Also, what my 'creative' informants talk about seem to be more about the issue of *free will* and agentic integrity than *locus of control* or *power*. This point is intertwined with the previous point of intrinsic motivation, which also finds its incentives built in the creative action itself rather than any other external rewards such as prize or praise.

*Intelligence and Idiosyncrasy* More frequently, creative people are believed to be intelligent more than intelligent people are considered creative. However, creativity did not rank among the associated implicit constructs of intelligence as high as quick comprehension, fluency, social compliance, good morals, respect and self-discipline. Meanwhile, intelligence ranked the second (after imagination) among the constructs related with creativity. Furthermore, on the Osgood's Semantic Differential, while intelligence was frequently 'favorable', it was not less frequent for creativity to be ranked between 'indifference' and 'unfavorable' as a personal quality that one would like to have. Idiosyncrasy, as a form of divergent thinking, is also associated with and is seen as a strong component of creativity. Thus, my informants' ideas support early views of James (1890) as well as Guilford (1967), but not of Gardner (1993).

*Innateness and Interiority* Overall, there is a consensus on the psychological premise of human potentials for creativity being different at birth. However, these are seen as neither 'evenly' nor 'normally' (as in the statistically supposed Bell curve) distributed among the individuals of the entire human population. Yet, people generally think that creative persons, families, other groups, institutions or societies are innately privileged and lucky only post hoc—that is, once their creativity is acknowledged. Notwithstanding, the majority in all groups including the (self-/other-defined) 'creative persons' themselves attributes more significance to 'innate' determinants and personal abilities more than skills acquired from, and opportunities provided by, the social environment. That is the case again when they retrospectively evaluate creative dispositions and productions.

*Intentionality and Invention* Speaking of *free will* and *agency*, creativity is generally understood as an intentional activity. It is judged by the attainment of its initial purpose. However, an unexpected invention, despite its heuristic or humanistic value, that resulted from serendipity, accidental discovery or an unintended (child-like) play, is also separated from creativity. So, what follows the ‘falling apple’ or the story of penicillin also is differentiated as invention/scientific achievement. Nevertheless, persons such as Newton and Fleming are recognized as ‘creative’ for the fact that they had already developed the competence to make expert connections with the opportunities provided by unanticipated environmental conditions.

*Idealization and Impersonalization* On the other hand, acknowledgment of cumulative knowledge in the history of humanity or the contributions of unknown human peers in any creative process is judged case by case. Leonardo da Vinci and Sinan (the Ottoman architect) with their lifetime achievements are not treated equally, for instance, as Imhotep (the architect of the Pyramid of Djoser) and the achievements of the anonymous groups of hundred thousand ‘Egyptian’ workers. ‘Creative’ people (especially if they are famous historical figures) are romanticized and ‘idealized’. For their ‘earned’ the fame creativity is believed to have, giving the benefit of the doubt, a good reason to be differentiated from the mass and be glorified as in Glăveanu’s (2010) He-creativity. All agree that creativity is an indispensable descriptive characteristic of humanity; in agreement with Rousseau, they also consider creativity as an important unique human quality which separates human beings from other creatures and makes human culture survive. Yet, they object to the idea of ‘ordinary creativity’ of ‘ordinary people’. Rather, ‘creativity’ is not an ordinary human activity, or ‘creative people’ have different characteristics that correlate with ‘creativity’, or make them ‘creative’. While gender, economic status, urbanization and age did not appear to take any significant place among these descriptions, ‘personality’ did.

*Immunity and Impediments* On the other hand, however, the sociocultural context and physical environment are more significantly emphasized, noticed or judged usually for their immanently constraining aspects of creativity. Put differently, these *ad hoc* and *locus of control* type evaluations typically appear as ‘blame’ for the individuals’ ‘failure’ rather than acknowledging the impact of the context on the actors’ achievements. Creativity, by definition, also included the mastering or bypassing these environmental ‘obstacles’. In other words, not being entrapped by, or being immune to, these seemed as an enabling asset. Meanwhile, in Psychology, what is frequently referred to

as *field-independent cognitive style* and *cognitive-set* are described as ‘external’ seductions and traps that hinder creativity and problem solving. At the same time, almost all peoples referred to the affective, motivational and interpersonal issues (i.e., exclusion, rejection, discrimination by the authority and/or peers) as the major impediments of their creative actualizations and withdrawals from creative participation.

*Individualism and Intersubjectivity* Creativity, defined as an ability or as a (life) style and attitude, is understood in personal(ity) terms. In the sense of accomplishment or outcome (be it individual or collective), creativity is viewed as a ‘byproduct’ of accumulated knowledge and collaborative experience or labor than an individual’s ‘solo’ accomplishment. The ‘locus of control’ for the enabling atmosphere is explained by the existence of creative leaders in groups, managers in organizations and so forth, or the individual group members themselves, rather than being attributed to contextual conditions, or being ‘externalized’. In rare cases, such as my observations and interviews in an (European franchised) advertising agency, where systematic team-work (rather than ‘casual brain-storming’) is an institutional *habitus*, the interpersonal work environment is given credit in terms of both affective support and intellectual complementarity. Nevertheless, the creative environment or milieu is described in terms of professional discipline, friendship, high achievement motivation, and the group being constituted by creative, inspiring, inquisitive, self-confident and humorous individual members who stay away from interpersonal conflicts, rather than its ‘systemic’ and ‘structurally relational’ qualities.

*Intuition and Immanence* Some of my early surveys with less urbanized, Westernized and less psychologized people, and more recent ones with all groups, point to intuitive knowledge (of *know-how*) and cultural insight as significant components in both the production and the evaluation of the creative activity or product. Most people agree that creativity highly benefits from good intuitive judgment. However, almost all presuppose the necessity of insight in the related area whether it is intuitively driven or gained by hard study and/or actual practice. In this particular meaning context, insight is understood as an ability to accurately judge the situation. That includes one’s own limitations, the available material to work with, and the sociocultural context where the process-product will be/is embedded. There is also almost a strong mystical quality expressed in aesthetic/creative appreciation/judgment in favor of immanence and spirituality aspects of creative products, particularly in the domains of music and poetry.



*Illiteracy and Involvement* Roughly summarizing, the groups show observable differences in terms of their rationales of the effects of schooling and education on creative abilities and performances. Yet, there is a tendency to view them as negatively correlated, in some cases even detrimental, if thought of as related at all. This was also the early thesis of Torrance (1966) at the time of the development of his test that recently received some supports (e.g., Robinson 2006). As such, education in general (i.e., schooling, the highest level of diploma obtained and the number of years in formal education) is seen as either irrelevant or a hindrance to creativity among the educated and the urbanized, especially by the group of 'creative' people. Reversely, both the less educated and 'noncreative' groups tend to idealize education more in this meaning context. Interestingly, however, all people believe in the importance of intense interest, specialized training or apprenticeship to increase domain-specific creativity. This is almost described as *cathexis*, and concentrated energy, focused involvement in the subject matter and selective attention and desire that invite possibly fruitful ideas generate and refine specialized knowledge and skills.

*Ignorance and Intellectualization* Some artists express intentional ignorance of the works of their contemporary peers, and show heightened sensitivity to the issue of inspiration and imitation by others' creations. Most also mention strong distaste and even display negative/defensive attitude toward the rationality-/recipe-oriented interests in their products and analyses/intellectualization of their experiences during the process of creation. Or, if 'cooperative' or not 'shy', most of them are inarticulate about the process, especially if they did not master the 'obscure' vocabulary and genre in fashion. Some enjoy talking about the technicalities of the process-product freely, yet most frequently they seem to prefer to listen to others' (i.e., 'ordinary people', not necessarily 'art critics' or other artists') comments, attributions and interpretations of their 'product' and themselves as 'creators'.

*Innovation and Industry* Novelty in the form of industrial and scientific innovation is conceptually differentiated from novelty in the form of creativity. While the former is described more or less by the press-product orientation, the latter is characterized on the basis of person-process relationships. The majority primarily reserves 'creativity' for the 'artistic/romantic' and personal domains that is seemingly subject to less external structural-systemic and material technological support or pressure.

*Importance and Investment* Although creativity is valued, and almost visibly demarcated from innovative productions and renewed reproductions, it is not necessarily given high importance by all groups. In other words, it is not



equally valued as a significant asset, something to be admired or longed for in general. Quite the contrary, only some of the educated and urbanized praise creativity as a personal feature to have not only for themselves or for their children, but also for social and political leaders (hoped to be) working toward solving societal problems and building a better future.

*Inter-Intra-National Investigations and In/Direct Illustrations* Academic interest in creativity has been growing in close parallel to the slow development of (mainstream) psychological and educational sciences in the society. Empirical research appeared so far in the form of psychometric adaptations of creativity tests, testing the effectivity of some pedagogic method to enhance some domain-specific creativity, and replication studies (e.g., Oral et al. 2007; Toğrol 2012).

Perhaps much higher enthusiasm is evident in the fields of business and marketing and industrial design and engineering in quick response to rapid cultural *psychologization*. There is an increasing (institutional) press for innovation in some competitive industries in technology-centered and consumption-based socioeconomic change. That is also seen to a much lesser degree in the fields of science, education, arts and medicine. The ethical, legal, institutional, bureaucratic and personal issues concerning ‘copyright’, ‘patent’ and ‘trademark’ are still ignored/neglected notions, in spite of generativity and even richer creative human potentials.

On the other hand, some scholarly observations strikingly would come forward in the background of the society’s historical trajectories and the ‘encounters of third kind’ with modern/Western psychological culture diffused around the globe, something I will return to. These first and foremost signify prolonged plurality, diverse cultural arteries, rich traditional resources and their dynamic transformations in multiple directions, including extinction and renewal. Without any cultural essentialization, it is possible to caricature creativity in this land marked by extreme plasticity and paradoxical flexibility. Further contouring would depict intuitive wisdom and transcendental competence, desire for radical novelty/discontinuity as well as sentimental resistance to change/continuity, sarcastic expression/witty humor as social critique, risk taking and prompt responses to environmental opportunities, breaking normative rules/forbidding regulations, practical/instant problem solutions which are triggered by frustration toward freedom or crisis resolution, lack of premeditation/good planning and of disciplined patience/systematic persistence, weaker interest in or motivation by productivity/product than personal expression/satisfaction and interpersonal process, emotional sensitivity to approval/trust and withdrawal/discouragement in its absence and so forth.

*Interpretative Impressions and Implications* Although the list can be longer, for there is more that can be said, it should be sufficient to give the reader a general idea of how creativity is understood and exhibited in Turkey. In sum, nonexperts' views of creativity showed similarities to expert conceptions in Psychology, which are more diverse and usually polarized. Both the judgments and the typical appearances of creativity seem to increase in parallel to the intensity of frustration that stems from individual/collective problems to be solved in everyday life.

Ample evidence ranges widely from inventing local means of transportation, housing and energy production in rural/remote areas to saving lives in 'accidents' in the absence of instant institutional/professional aids and legitimate/technological tools even in urban/modernized areas. They usually are exhibited as using the immediately available material in the environment for different functions and purposes than they are 'assigned/designed for'. The human body is frequently included as the primary tool (without any 'mediating' device) even though 'modern technology' is 'consumed' and may be present in the (high-/low-risk) environment. Not surprisingly, therefore, *'top-down' and/or 'external' 'modernization' 'demands' for 'creativity' by the rapidly transforming societal/institutional surface structure-system are met with 'bottom-up' and/or 'internal' 'resistance' as deep traditional/cultural 'supplies'*. These frequently are perceived as artificial in both senses of the term—that is, artifact orientation, and insincerity/superficiality.

So let me conclude this section by highlighting some other I-words. In general, judgment of creativity increased in positive relation to high moral and heuristic valuations of its *impact*, and decreased in negative relation to its social *insignificance* and *instrumentalization*. My *insider-outsider's insight* points to the *impenetrability*, *immeasurability* and *individuality* (in the senses of 'singularity', 'synthesis' and 'synchronicity', not *individualism*). Hence, I would like to accentuate the *irreducibility* of the complex creative phenomena that do not make it a suitable subject for *intrusive* and manipulative positivist psychological *investigations* or *interrogations* that lose or destroy its *indivisibility* and *invisibility*.

The interdisciplinary *inquiry*, *interpretive interpretations* and *implicit implications* suggest the strong *interpellation* of majority of creativity scholars in the rigidity of disciplinary discourse in contrast to the *impermanency* of this fluid phenomenon. Thus, they call for novel ('creative?') mentality viewed from this 'traditionally (post)modern' sociocultural context that is in equally dynamic flux itself beyond the pronounced social scientific categories that should feed-forward to global knowledge-praxis.

## Double Ps: Puzzling Possibilities

We have taken a glimpse at the ('cultural') conceptualizations and appearances of creativity and its fragility to, or 'impossibilities', so to speak, for scientism in psychological research. Let us now question some resilient knowledge habits and look for recently signaled 'possibilities' for conceptual generalizations in the deliberate effort of theorizing creativity and culture in Psychology. Rather than elaborating various mini- or medium-size theories of creativity, I will rapidly draw another sampling list of some axiological themes. Thus, without engaging in in-depth discussions, I will make explicit some of the closely intertwined depictions/positions, which often are in tension with one another or are paradoxical.

*Paradigmatic Phases* Not only it is the case that what qualifies as 'creative' and what characteristics creative people are believed to have change temporally and contextually, but theories of creativity themselves change as well. The genealogy of the concept of 'creativity' has been gradually changing in Psychology since Guilford's (1950) use of the term. Thus, for some, creativity is a universal concept regardless of the possibility of reaching a universal definition. What change are the social/discursive representations of the phenomenon.

*Past Presumptions* For example, creativity is traditionally understood as dependent on the originality and novelty of the product. If the outcome is nothing 'new', or a copy as in imitation or duplication, it is not considered creative. Psychometrics and personality characteristics of the creative individuals (*traits*) were given significant research attention (e.g., Amabile 1982; Barron and Harrington 1981). Andy Warhol would probably score high in a hypothetical creative personality assessment in his time, but his pop-art (in the sense the duplication) is still a controversial example of artistic creativity among art critiques.

*Present Presentations* Recent challenges to 'mainstream' presuppositions take an opposite position almost as a prerequisite of theorizing creativity. Therefore, continuity in cultural traditions from calligraphy to basket weaving, for example, are considered creative acts. They are not seen as just skillful copying behaviors of the predecessor's acts and models. But for some, these creative activities are possible because of prototypical schemas or *memes* that already got into the minds (e.g., Sperber 1996). For others, who are distant to, or nervous about, any

‘evolutionary’ position, creativity is ‘socio-culturally distributed’ (e.g., Glăveanu 2014; Tanggaard 2014). It is not the *I* or the *He* who creates, but the *We* (against the conventional individualistic position as well as mentalist and interiorist standpoints). Glăveanu (2013) also proposes the 5As (actor, audience, action, artifact, affordance) of creativity to replace the 4Ps in order to further emphasize dynamic and interactive qualities of this phenomenon.

*Plural Principles* As a recent example to the latter, Glăveanu (2010) states five principles of cultural psychology of creativity as: (1) *contextual*, (2) *generative*, (3) *meaning-oriented*, (4) *developmental* and (5) *ecological* understandings of creativity. Notwithstanding, *pluralism* and *perspectivalism* (that incorporate these five principles and more) are not included among these principles. From my *perspectival perspective*, these are some necessary conceptual conditions of possibility for creativity as well as the cultural psychology of creativity (e.g., Gülerce 2013, 2015).

*Polysemic Predicates* Undoubtedly, not only both of the primary constructs—culture and creativity—but also ample axiological principles committed to them have gained/lost numerous meanings in the philosophy of science and even within Psychology. Thus, they have numerous other related assertions, logical or otherwise, for a meaning-oriented approach to creativity to keep in mind. Also, all of these affirmations inherently have their own generative connotations. Thus, any disciplinary or interdisciplinary knowledge-practice must take them into account *all at once* if it does not wish to sacrifice conceptual and ecological validity.

*Problematic Paradoxes* In fact, any close reading of past/present creativity and culture literature easily would reveal numerous definitions for both constructs. A preference for any explicit/implicit definition is not just a simple matter of conceptual taste, of course, but also suggests a certain methodology. A typical and frequently repeated methodological error is the ignorance of the cross-disciplinary, cross-cultural, cross-theoretical and cross-logical levels in inquiry and analysis (e.g., Shiu 2014).

*Process Philosophy* Rather recently, claims against non-developmental and static mainstream psychology are frequently heard. They revitalize the process philosophy understanding which is typically represented by Heraclitus’s premise of the dynamic universe in opposition to Parmenides’s premise of a static universe. As its descriptive marker, both creativity and culture are seen not as ‘noun’, but ‘process/activity’ phenomena though ‘swimming against the linguistic and commonsensical currents’.

*Physics of Presence* Regardless of lip service being paid to process philosophy, however, psychological scientism with its methodological *habitus* has deep-seated commitments in the physics of presence, concrete, tangible and the visible material in order to reduce and measure (without necessarily sound inferences and interpretive limitations) the invisible mental constructs. Recently inactivated interests in *embodiment* in order to demystify creativity also fall into positivist scientism.

*Poetic Palpability* Creative wisdom, however, ‘locates’ and ‘captures’ creativity in the ‘physics of absence’—that is, ‘dark matter’, ‘dark energy’. Hence the Higgs boson, recently discovered at CERN, is called the ‘God particle’. The point here has to do not only with a commitment to a romanticist/mysterious or religious orientations to creativity. Rather, it speaks to the limitations of human knowledge even in physics (the ‘hardest’ science ever), which has been the prime role model for Psychology. Ontologically valid understandings of any complex human phenomena such as creativity require complex human orientations including poetics.

*Pseudoempirical Psychology* In the meantime, Psychology’s empiricism is nothing but pseudoempirical (Smedslund 1991). The meanings and (cultural) connotations of the terms used in Psychology should not be, but frequently are, ignored. Particularly from a historical standpoint, what is presumably discovered ‘out there’ is constructed by the very scientific terms we use, which are theoretically invented as in the *looping effect* (Hacking 2002). Thus, desperately sought rigor and a prestigious identity cannot be found by fishing for empirical data in pseudoscientific waters either.

*Precious ‘Pathology’* Freud did not only personally illustrate human creative imagination and productivity, but also gave one of the most comprehensive accounts of creativity and culture-making. Although any search in his texts—including ‘The Moses of Michelangelo’ that he first published anonymously in *Imago* in 1914—using these two ‘keywords’ might disappoint the reader, psychoanalytic theory building, including Jung, Kriss and Winnicott, offers profound insights that take into account all 4P and 5A components of creativity. All people, in principle, have the capacity to act creatively. Again, the differential judgment between genius/creativity and madness/pathology is not based on the quality of the product, but the personality structures and the dynamic processes within their relational and historical/developmental contexts.

*Purposeful Preconscious* The positivist and empirical psychological approach to creativity flourished following the early biographical studies of people who

were considered geniuses by Galton (1869, 1874) and Terman (1906) and Cox (1926) who further developed the former's ('racist') work. Rousseau's antielitist philosophical views, on the other hand, were reflected in the anti-positivist and antirationalist psychological positions developed by critical figures such as Bergson and Freud, both of whom championed the role of the *preconscious* and the subjective in their accounts of creativity.

*Phenomenological Primacy* In fact, from an existential and self-psychological point of view, creativity is a necessity for the self-actualization of possibilities in life. As such, creativity has both negative/destructive/regressive and positive/constructive/progressive features that make one's meaningful life possible. Following Kierkegaard, May (1975) further discussed how the guilt and anxiety associated with breaking the status quo, or 'killing something in the past', is necessarily related to creativity and the actualization of possibility, so that 'something new in the present may be born'. Hence, the title of his book: *The courage to create*, where a particular kind of courage is seen as essential for creativity.

*Proper Pragmatism* Re-readings of early American pragmatists (i.e., James, Dewey, Mead, Peirce), or Russian sociohistorical/sociocultural theorists (i.e., Bakhtin, Leontiev, Luria, Vygotsky) appear as (ap)propriation of their approach to the present-day popular and/or proper psychology. Popular psychology invites the study of relationships as a reaction to the autonomous and bounded individual described by mainstream Western psychology. Proper pragmatist psychology, however, does not seem to show the courage to create novel knowledge and/or keep those early giants alive. What seems to be the primary obstacle is that the theoretical concepts are tweeted out of the entire theory's ethos/spirit and *intertextuality* as well as societal contexts of their own historical time, and are treated with pragmatic anxieties and *presentism*. Revisions of the questions attuned to present problems would be more proper.

This might be a good place, I suppose, to pause. So, let us quickly conclude and summarize this section by foregrounding some other double Ps. Psychology's *profound plasticity* as historically and contextually situated body of knowledge exhibited itself as adaptation to the status quo of a particular societal order in which it has flourished. Creativity and culture scholarship in psychology cannot be thought of separate from this, or as an exception. The *postmodern puzzle* as demonstrated by the rhetorics of 'the death of the author', 'the end of history' and so on is also reflected in the psychology of creativity and culture literature. Take, for instance, confusions between whether creativity is a *personal possession* or *public property*, a *peaceful passion* or *panned*

*pessimism*. What would be the *powerful probing* to encourage *parsimonious preservation* of the tradition on the one hand, and renewed knowledge with *permanent popularity* and *predictive power* on the other? It is not yet clear how to develop *permutational perception* and *persistent persuasion* to foster creativity. Also, minds are not made up yet between searching *pedagogic procedures* or *promising prodigies* in order to enhance creativity in (which?) society. And what for? Regardless of lacking disciplinary courage or not, at present, Psychology in general, unable to confront many worldly questions, seems to be caught up in ‘developmental arrest’—*perpetuating populism*. Creativity standards and conceptual quality of knowledge, in particular, seem to be lowered every other day and apparently paves the way to *plausible plagiarism*. Thus, at the end of the day, the psychology (of creativity) has been ‘regressive’, ‘obese’ and ‘infantile’, but not ‘creative’. From where I stand, if anything is missing, that might be *progressive politics* and sufficiently inclusive *perspectival positions* toward radical reflexivity in a critically global *psychological praxis*.

## T-Triplets: Thesaurus of Transformative Trajectories

In this final section, I turn to my specific concerns to various meta-theoretical and meta-psychological issues directly relating to creativity and culture, the Turkish context being the illustrative case in point. Notwithstanding, I will continue the style/word-play with some T-words in order to highlight the main points of my argument for this chapter within the rigid disciplinary genre and traditionally linear narrative style of Western thought. I expect that an ardent reader would easily notice many implications of this meta/theoretical orientation toward creativity and culture for broader concerns with psychology’s global/local cultivation and historical contextuality. So, let me draw some conceptual differentiations via a descriptive selection of T-triplets for the sake of *intertextuality*.

*Turk–Turkey–Turkishness* Marked by the loss of Byzantine Constantinople in 1453 to the Ottoman rule, any Muslim, regardless of racial, ethnic origin and language, was called ‘Turk’ in Christian Europe. Putting aside a political historical analysis of the mystifications of Islam, misconceptions of the constitution of the Ottoman state and Islamophobia then and today, this is not just a trivial historical detail from a sociocultural and critical psychological perspective. As well documented by the Western historians (e.g., Brown 1996), the ‘West’ has persistently refused to pronounce the Ottoman Empire labeling it ‘Turkey’ and its ruler ‘Turks’, and un/consciously imposing their



ethnolinguistic rubric upon this multireligious, multilingual and multiethnic polity which has been the very opposite of (modern) nation-state. Ironically, the word 'Turkey' and its corresponding geography (Asia Minor) did not exist in the Ottoman-Turkish vocabulary until the twentieth century. Also, to the Ottomans themselves, the term 'Turk' referred to the peoples of central Anatolia over whom they had come to rule. In the fifteenth century, neither have they been aware and/or identified themselves with their pejorative representations of the (terrible) Turk in the West, which has not become the 'West' then. Nor, characteristically known as 'oral culture', were they interested in documenting their own representations and (scientific/creative) achievements.

So, people referred to as 'Turks' were not necessarily/exclusively Turks (whose ethnic origins go back to Oğuz Turks of Central Asia) in any sense, but rather diverse Muslims, converts and any person from just about anywhere who behaved in certain ways (*alla Turchesca*). Despite the variability—that is, extreme admirations, envy and devaluations, animosity—of social representations between the European texts (including Shakespeare's *Othello*), these descriptions, however, always pointed to radical difference, (self/other) contradictions, resistance and so forth and meant projected otherness (whatever is disliked/disowned by the Judeo-Christian West).

Another irony is that the political reform movement of the early twentieth century to replace the monarchy of the Ottoman Empire with constitution and multi-party democracy is called the *Young Turks*. As is well known in the English readership, the term 'young Turk' is used to describe 'progressive or insurgent member of an institution, movement, or political party' or a 'person who resists against authority or societal expectations'.

The Turkish Republic was established in 1923 following World War I and the Turkish War of Independence, and the country in question was called Turkey (among the other nation-states peoples of which constituted the Ottoman Empire for centuries). The word 'Turk' in the constitution was used in reference to the national citizenship of all the inhabitants of modern Turkey (without any racial/racist reference) who are ethnically and religiously diverse but have been living together and intermingling for 1000 years in Anatolia. However, the issue of ethnicity became a highly contested and reified real political and bloody topic in particular relation to the essentialist *postmodern identity politics* since the 1980s. Thus, the scope of diversity of ethnicities is worth mentioning. Andrews (2002), for instance, offered four major groupings on the basis of spoken languages: (1) *Turkic*: Turks, Azerbaijanis, Tatars, Karapapak, Uzbeks, Crimean Tatars and Uyghurs; (2) *Indo-European*: Kurds, Yazidis (Kurmanj and Zazas), Bosniaks, Albanians, Pomaks, Armenians, Hamshenis, Gorani and Greeks; (3) *Semitic*: Arabs, Assyrians/Syriacs and

Jews; (4) *Caucasian*: Circassians, Georgians, Laz and Chechens. Modern Turkish language also has many words and expressions appropriated from various other languages of different origins.

As it is frequently worded in a national(ist) narrative, the modern Turkish nation-state ‘was created from the ashes of the Ottoman Empire’ under the world-famous creative leadership of Mustafa Kemal, who is known by his later given surname ‘Ataturk’ (meaning the father of Turks). His rapid and radical revolutionary philosophical, political, legal, economic and social institutional reforms followed one another to design the new secular modern nation-state in Western fashion. These included the abolition of Ottoman Caliphate and Sheikh ul-Islam (established in 1517) and the adoption of Latin alphabet that invoked animosity in the Islamist world.

Elsewhere, I have given several accounts of diverse modernization/Westernization/democratization narratives of Turkey (Gülerce 2007) and, in the foreground, of historical trajectories of psychology, the absence of any indigenization movement (Gülerce 2006, 2011), psychoanalysis (Gülerce 2008), as well as where/how I see the ‘place’ of ‘culture’ in (cultural) psychology in general (Gergen et al. 1996, Gülerce 1996, 2015). So, the relevance of this historical ‘detour’ in this text is not only to stress that Turkey by itself is a historical example of a *creative emergence*. The point I would like to make briefly also has to do with conventional compartmentalization of knowledge and hegemonic practices as reflected on, for example, the organizations of handbooks, discourses of textbooks and so forth in academia.

*Transculturality—Transnationality—Transdisciplinarity* Indeed, mainstream (acultural) psychology is frequently taken for granted as being a universal science. This, of course, includes meta-theoretical presuppositions, theories, research questions, scientific metaphors, methods, measures and so on. Or, culturally sensitive (pseudocultural) psychology treats them all the same as being indigenously Western by claiming its own differentiation from it. It reproduces, however false, overgeneralized and dichotomic clichés of the tradition such as *individualistic versus collectivistic*, *authoritarian versus democratic*, *emic versus etic*, *independent versus interdependent* and so forth, by looking elsewhere as disguised/‘sterile’ laboratories of ‘different cultures’, hence ignoring the diversity within and further postponing self-reflectivity.

Culture creates illusory boundaries of meaning potentials that, by definition, includes/excludes and resists symbolization—that is, ‘lost in translation’. This may be a good place to insert a ‘translator’s note’ in the text as an example: Although the implicit conceptualizations of creativity might appear as person-focused (i.e., individualist and mentalist), this is primarily due to

the language use. It would be a serious error, however, to dismiss in ‘reading/interpreting’ that the (cultural) notion of the person is other-centered and relational/communal to begin with, is not atomist and individualist or isolated from the historical—material, social and cultural transformations. The individual with all Western connotations of the term/concept is rather a recent import in Turkey’s alternative modernization journey.

It might be worth an effort, perhaps, for creativity and culture scholarship to divert its interest a little bit toward historically situating the (post)modern scientific disciplinary demarcations in conjunction with the sociopolitical cartography of our (post)modern world (Gülerce, 2009). Just as the hypothetical scientific constructs of anthropology’s ‘culture’, sociology’s ‘society’, political science’s ‘democracy’, psychology’s ‘identity’, ‘creativity’ and so on that are invented and exported categories serving as multi-disciplinary (i.e., psycho-analytical, psychological, political, economic, sociological, anthropological, etc.) technologies, ‘Turk’, ‘West’, ‘East’, ‘North’, ‘South’ and so on are not only fictive, descriptive rhetorical devices but also essentialize and unwittingly reify scholarly un/conscious projections.

It is ironic that Psychology is allured by the category of ‘culture’ when anthropology is ‘dumping’ it in our global times as the clothes of an older sibling that are old, too small or useless. Notwithstanding, for the sake of *transformative transformations*, we could retailor the concepts of creativity and culture with epistemological—ontological—ethical—aesthetical—pragmatic concerns. Many scientific—philosophical presuppositions such as *absolutism* and *universalism*, therefore, need careful reexaminations in relation to *relativism* and *universalization* in global praxis (Gülerce 2014).

Furthermore, not only are the establishments of the modern secular Turkish state-nation and of modern secular psychological science historically synchronized events, but the same can be said about their international and interdisciplinary geopolitical locations; hence, their paradoxical identification possibilities and developmental trajectories are categorically identical. That is to say that Psychology neither is a natural science, social science, humanities discipline, nor part of the arts. Just as Turkey neither is West, East, North, nor South, by all connotations of the terms. For instance, while the West is characterized by *either/or* Cartesian mentality, the East is signified by *both-and* mentality of Yin and Yang. Space limits do not allow me to engage in a discussion on views of creativity in Islamic philosophies. Nor is it necessary for my present purpose and conceptual position which cautions against indigenization and essentialization of any psychological identity category.

As a matter of fact, what I am offering is a third, *borderline/transformative sphere*, orientation as a differentiated category from a dynamic land of deeply

seated traditions and the cross-roads of diverse philosophies for thousands of years. I describe *in-betweenness* as a *neither/nor (non)identification* trajectory, but also *transcendence beyond* (Gülerce 2012). Its *relational* patterns can be traced in any time-space of humanity independent of scientific categorical designations. That is also why I am more, or at least equally, interested in the creation and creativity of Psychology and its diffusing praxis in the global context as seen from Turkey than in the psychology of creativity in Turkish contexts, and how these issues are organically intertwined.

Hence, I opted for offering some authentically distantiated reflections from within/without the double-sided sociohistorical–politicocultural mirror of Turkey, if I were to humbly ‘contribute’ with anything at all. Otherwise, a rather recent chapter in *The International Handbook on Creativity* edited by Kaufman and Sternberg is devoted to ‘Creativity in Turkey and Turkish-speaking countries’, where the author apparently included just about everything she could find relevant (Oral 2006). On the other hand, the chaotic diversity, methodological insufficiency and conceptual confusion of the so-called Western creativity research itself with a head start of a half of a century were also revealed in other comprehensive handbooks (e.g., Sternberg 2004). Research travels around the world with its philosophical/conceptual/methodological technology and various time lags, but unexamined questions.

*Triopus—Transformational Trialectics—Transformative Triangulation* Not surprisingly, therefore, I have been interested in participatory observations of creatively *transformative* (personal, familial, organizational, societal, cultural) *transformations*. Hence, I am grounded in these observations and experiences and, departing from psychological–psychoanalytic-systems theoretic approaches, in radical reconstructions of conventional knowledge-practices. From the meta/theoretical perspective that I have been developing, both ‘culture’ and ‘creativity’ have indeed seen as functional conceptual categories to keep once redefined and modified as they belong to the *critical third sphere*. Thus, I found necessary particularly to draw further conceptual, ontological, epistemological, ethical, practical and aesthetical distinctions to differentiate them from their conceptual kinships or affiliations, which in my view have been interchangeably and imprecisely used in the dichotomized and polarized Cartesian scholarship.

Since I discussed the (potentially) self-reflexive coordinations of the psychological and the core notions of my conceptual matrix elsewhere (e.g., Gülerce 2010), I here will mention only briefly a few that are in direct relation to creativity and culture. For example, as the generic ‘unit of analysis’ for any scholarly endeavor from psychology to political science, I proposed a meta-

phor, namely *triopus*, where the *Imaginary* realm/register of ‘culture’ forms its ‘third eye/leg’ (e.g., Gülerce 1997). Its sustainable development depends on creativity. *Transformational trialectics* refers to the triadic and multi-level, multi-directional, multi-dimensional mechanisms of ontological changes involving the other two differentiated realms/registers than the *Imaginary*, namely the *Material* and the *Symbolic*.

Taking creativity *outside the box* of the ‘individual’, for example, and placing it *inside the box* of ‘culture’ or ‘distributing’ creativity between the symbolic and the material context just does not seem to solve the problem of Psychology’s acculturation and/or creative cultivation. That is, *culture* is either contoured by some national/regional borders and often is presumed static and homogeneous entity (i.e., *cross-cultural* or *indigenous* psychologies), or unwittingly is reduced and decomposed into abstract preemptive principles, social representations, societal structures, social roles, identity positions, normative systems and socialization activities (i.e., cultural or sociohistorical psychologies) as the disciplinary *habitus*.

Indeed, by *transformative triangulation*, I described intentional epistemological and collaborative acts of knowledge-practice communities. So, prior to running out of historical-material time-space of this text, I think it would be at least ‘aesthetically correct’ to conclude this section toward the end with one more T-triplet in order to fully justify my tittle.

*Teleologicality–Temporality–Timelessness* Studying creativity and culture not as static, or noun, phenomena but as dynamic, or process, phenomena also necessitates a commensurable theory of time. As mentioned earlier, almost the entire psychological research or our commonsensical theory of time rests on the old presumptions of *linear* and *teleological* time. Its religious translation would be the Judeo-Christian belief in Creation out of *ex nihilo* and divine prime mover. In physics, that would be the pre-Einsteinium notion of ‘spaceless time’. Thus, historical/developmental analyses need to master *temporality* in which every bit of real time is connected with a real slice of space. In relativist psychological discourse, this is what we supposedly mean when we talk about situated knowledge, contextualized activity and so on, perhaps with a minor exception that, even in micro-analytic rhetorics, our bits and slices are much too big and broad.

In brief, in my multitudinal and pluralist *style of thinking*, plural notions of time are also conceptualized in triadic relations—that is, linear–curvilinear–cyclical; synchronic–diachronic–anachronic. By *timelessness*, I refer to a post-Einsteinian and post-quantum views of reality where cosmic space is not actually ‘timeless’ but the probability of the bits are infinite. In my definitions

and radically pluralistic, sufficiently inclusive (ontologically egalitarian) theorizing, the concepts of creativity and culture and their mutually constructive relations belong to this 'timeless' third realm of the *Imaginary*. That is why 'our' projective meaning potentials are never lost, expand and continuously recycle throughout humanity's cosmic history.

## Ending

I expect to have made clear in this chapter that whether the understanding of concept of creativity is universal (e.g., Csikszentmihalyi 1997; Guilford 1968, 1975; Plucker and Runco 1998) or different cultural perceptions are possible (e.g., Albert and Runco 1999; Lubart and Sternberg 1998; Rudowicz and Hui 1997; Sternberg and Lubart (1995)), a debate which has seemingly preoccupied/exhausted psychologists' creative energies, is a different question than whether creativity is a uniquely human (questionable) and universal (if it wants to be humane) phenomenon. Needless to mention that all these positions do not exclude or invalidate one another from a multi-level and multi-paradigmatic perspective that seeks transcendence like the one I employ.

In brief, from within such *critically glocal* (i.e., 'universal'-'Turkish'-'singular') and perspectival perspective, and in the foreground of cultural transformations from romanticist idealizations to (post)modernist technologizations that pave the way to cut-and-paste or template reproductions, political economic/academic institutional pressures 'to create' do not happily seem to lead to reflective creativity in psychological sciences. This might be because an increased interest in creativity, as a sign and result of its scarcity, serves mainly in the interest of the epistemic market and the rapid production lines of neoliberal economy.

Any talk of 'creativity and culture' cannot be convincing without genuine examinations of whose and what ideas and practices are included/excluded and why by this production line of our present academic culture. It is particularly important to deliberate and reflect on what the psychology of creativity and culture discourse wants, attempts to and might be creating within the broader and paradoxical culture and discourse of Psychology. Yet, let me end this chapter with a line from Rod Stewart's old hit called *Young Turk* which might also capture the typical attitude/motivation toward creativity of peoples in Turkey before the 'novel' sociopolitical-cultural psychological problems in our present era of *glocalization*: 'There ain't no point in talking when there's nobody listening'.



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