Abstract This article focuses on a novel theoretical paradigm emerging in the study of human creativity: the cultural-psychological approach. It starts by differentiating between the long past of individualistic accounts of creativity (the lonely genius) and the short history of psychological understandings (the creative individual). The social and the cross-cultural psychology of creativity are both considered, together with their advantages and current limitations. Creativity is generally conceptualized as a process of artifact generation and five broad principles for a cultural psychology of creativity are presented. In clarifying the nature of creativity, a special consideration is given to the relationship between individuals, creativity, and culture. Finally, the role of the community in fostering and assessing creativity is suggested as a more realistic solution to the individual–society debate.

Key Words community, context, creativity, cultural psychology, culture, ecological research

Vlad-Petre Glăveanu
London School of Economics, UK

Principles for a Cultural Psychology of Creativity

> Much human creativity is social, arising from activities that take place in a context in which interaction with other people and the artifacts that embody collective knowledge are essential contributors. (Fischer, Giaccardi, Eden, Sugimoto, & Ye, 2005)

It is hard to imagine creativity outside of the creative person. Centuries of philosophical thinking and some decades of individualistic psychological theorizing have embedded creativity into persons or products that 'stand apart' from their social background. It is only recently that the need for new perspectives in conceptualizing creativity has become pressing and with this emerged a growing need for interdisciplinary collaboration (Runco, 2004). The present article, in line with this contemporary ethos, looks at creativity through the lens of cultural psychology and, in doing so, argues that creativity is not the product of a 'disconnection', but of deeply rooted 'connections' between person and environment, self and others, creator and culture.

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We start in this endeavour from a minimal definition of creativity, considering, as J.H. Mason (2003, p. 7) does, that 'to create is to act in the world, or on the world, in a new and significant way'. Besides conceptualizing creativity as a process leading to novel outcomes or action, the emphasis will fall in this article on the notions of 'world' and 'significant way' mentioned in the above definition. Therefore, central to our argument is to understand the relationship between creator and world and to study the 'significance' of creative outcomes: how, for whom and when is a creation significant?

Robert Sternberg (2006) argues that nowadays there is little research on creativity, and what we do find is poorly systematized. He believes that this situation is due to several factors: creative thinking is not encouraged by governments and selection mechanisms; creativity is hard to study; creativity studies are not part of the 'mainstream' of science; and creativity became a fashion with almost no scientific substance. Nevertheless, there is hope for the study of creativity, and this hope rests in the monumental *importance* of this subject not only for individual and organizational performance but also for achieving economic success and social development at a global level (Westwood & Low, 2003), a sufficient reason for which 'creativity stands out as an activity to be studied, cherished, cultivated' (Arieti, 1976, p. ix).

Since it is our strong belief that, despite recent concerns, creativity is and will continue to be a key domain for social and human sciences, this article will address the relationship between creativity and culture with a focus on the emergence of *a cultural psychology of creativity*. More than recognizing that creativity is embedded in a cultural context (Bilton, 2007, p. 6), the aim of the article is to propose and position this interdisciplinary field, to offer a possible theoretical framework for the study of creative endeavours, and to suggest a cultural-psychological definition of creativity.

Before developing these points and others in more detail, let us first turn to the two major '*revolutions*' that have shaped our contemporary understanding of creativity: the shift from the concept of the solitary genius (the 'He-paradigm') to that of the solitary normal and creative individual (the 'I-paradigm') and, further along, to the idea of ordinary individuals being creative only in their relation to one another (the 'We-paradigm'). These distinctions also resonate with ideas about the evolution of the Ego–Alter relationship in psychological epistemologies (Marková, 2003, pp. xii–xiii) and the individualization of the social in Western psychology (Farr, 1996).

From the Individual to the Social Psychology of Creativity

Nurturing individualistic accounts of creativity is the iconic image of *the solitary genius*. Such persons are described by several specific features: they are extremely rare and their existence and activity resembles nothing less than a miracle; their capacities cannot be explained by our common knowledge (because they are anything but common); and they are conceived as a symbol of divine inspiration or (later on) exceptional hereditary traits that allow them to revolutionize art, philosophy or science. This poetic vision, nevertheless still preserved in our collective imaginary, has been gradually challenged in the last century with the rise of psychology and its interest in human potential and performance. As concerns the history of science, this modern tendency is manifested in all the attempts to 'demystify' the process of invention and to analyze critically the image of the 'culture hero' (Schaffer, 1994).

Psychologists have tried to change the vision imposed by the 'He-paradigm' of creativity (the pronoun 'he' being used here as a symbol of otherness) into an 'I' type of paradigm—a much more adequate account of human creativity, asserting that: every person has a creative potential; this potential can be developed and is not purely innate; and creativity is specific to everyday life and not 'reserved' exclusively for artists or scientists. A landmark in this transformation remains Guilford's APA presidential address from 1950, when, in tone with the zeitgeist in psychology at that time, a call was made for psychologists to understand creativity as a resource and study it scientifically (Runco, 2004).

Unfortunately, this 'democratization' of creativity (Bilton, 2007, p. xiii) did not lead to a true 'socialization'. The individual-focused orientation is predominant in the main works on creativity from the '60s and '70s, as demonstrated by Vernon's (1970) collection of selected readings from eminent authors in the field of creativity—a book largely dedicated to the pioneer studies on genius, personality investigations and psychometric approaches. In the three decades that followed, the situation did not change much for researchers interested in creativity since, from the *person—process—product triad*, most decided to study solely the person or, better said, the personality of individual creators (see Amabile, 1996; Hennessey, 2003b).

Nowadays the I-paradigm is endorsed by several fields of creativity research that, at first glance, seem to have little in common: cognitive sciences/neurological approaches, psychometric investigations and

clinical/psychoanalytic perspectives (reviewed by Runco, 2004). The first field looks for creativity in the brain or in mental processes, the second in testing criteria for individuals' creative potential, while the third ventures to the subconscious for a glimpse into the dynamics of creativity. Although their utility for revealing certain aspects of the phenomenon cannot be altogether dismissed, the 'I' type of approaches reflect only half of the picture—the individual and his/her creative potential or expression—being unable to support a more comprehensive and systemic view.

A truly social account of creativity was needed, and several authors have repeatedly spoken against what we called the 'I-paradigm'. In the 1980s the Russian psychologist M. Yaroshevsky (cited in Stepanossova & Grigorenko, 2006) outlined the socio-historical determination of creativity in the development of scientific ideas and the relationship of the scientist with the scientific community. Recent publications are even more radical in affirming the 'We-paradigm' of creativity ('creativity has a fundamental social dimension'). The creative impulse is understood in relation to others, to the community (Montuori & Purser, 1995). Books like *Knowledge, Community and Creativity*, edited by Sals and Fournier (2007), start to focus on a sociological perspective on creativity rather than a traditional psychological one built around the solitary individual. What sets these socially oriented efforts apart is not the emphasis on how social factors condition creative processes (also found in more individualistic approaches) but *how they determine the nature of these processes*.

In this context a new field of study emerged, *the social psychology of creativity*, aiming to be altogether transactional, ecologic and systemic in putting the social back into the psychology of creativity (Hennessey, 2003a). Maybe the best-known approach in this direction is that of Teresa Amabile (1996) and her componential conceptualization of creativity, including domain-relevant skills, creativity-relevant processes and task motivation. By proposing the Intrinsic Motivation Principle of Creativity and investigating the impact of several social factors on motivation, Amabile intended to enrich the long-neglected social psychology of creativity. Unfortunately, in the work of both Amabile and Hennessey, the individual remains the major study unit (especially his/her motivation) and the social is frequently reduced to a set of external influences that simply constrain or facilitate. Undoubtedly much more has to be done in this direction in order to justify the name 'social' psychology of creativity.

The most recent 'revolution' in the study of creativity is associated with the revelation of the fact that no account of creativity can be satisfactory unless it is culture-inclusive. In the last decade this propensity to expose the cultural-dependent side of creativity has lead to a flourishing literature of *cross-cultural investigations*. One of the first concerns was to find out whether there are any cultural differences in creative potential or, in other words, whether persons from certain cultures are generally more creative than others. Numerous studies rejected the existence of such racial/ethnic differences in overall creativity (see Baer & Kaufman, 2006) and the main conclusion was that 'no one culture is best for innovation and no one culture can claim a superiority of ideas' (Westwood & Low, 2003, p. 253).

In spite of this, there are profound cultural differences in the way creativity is understood and manifested across cultures. Sternberg, in his introduction to *The International Handbook of Creativity* (2006), discusses how creativity research is culturally diverse: Chinese authors tend to emphasize social influences; some of the English-speaking countries' literature is dominated by the cognitive approach to creativity; while German-speaking countries tend to focus on creative processes, etc. Moreover, creativity has been studied in relation to individualistic–collectivistic values (Goncalo & Staw, 2005) in an attempt to see whether cooperation amplifies or diminishes group creativity. Evidence has shown that, when there are specific instructions to be creative, individualistic groups perform better than collectivistic ones. Trying to explain this result, the authors considered the possibility that individualistic groups reach conclusions differently, being more inclined then collectivistic groups to select multi-faceted ideas reflecting contributions from more members.

As a general conclusion, creativity is prized in almost all cultures, but while Western cultures emphasize the pragmatic, problem-solving outcome of creativity (product), Eastern ones highlight the personal fulfilment of creators (as a form of enlightenment) and see creativity as a form of rediscovery or revelation (Westwood & Low, 2003). Although quite consistent in their findings, most cross-cultural studies have been criticized for using a 'Western' (or American) framework in defining and measuring creativity, and there are still hardly any high quality *emic* approaches to creativity (Montuori & Purser, 1997; Westwood & Low, 2003). By comparing individuals within and between different cultures, cross-cultural studies can largely be considered as another 'masked' illustration of the I-paradigm.

From the Social to the Cultural Psychology of Creativity

The failure of cross-cultural psychological studies on creativity to offer a comprehensive account of the link between culture and creativity lays in the fact that simply considering culture as a 'dependent variable' is insufficient. Truly emic perspectives can be obtained only when culture is conceived as not being 'outside' but '*inside*' each creative act, as a constitutive part rather than as a type of 'standardized environment'. This is the objective of what we call here the *cultural psychology of creativity* (for more details about cultural psychology and its relation to cross-cultural psychology, see Cole, 1996; Shweder, 1990), a perspective that does not intend to obliterate valid conclusions from both social and cross-cultural research on creativity but to integrate them into a *tetradic framework* of Self (creator)—Others (community)—new 'artifact' (creative product/process)—existing 'artifacts' (previous knowledge and practices). This theoretical framework stresses the fact that creativity is relational in nature and is born of intersubjectivity, of explicit and implicit connections between an individual or collective creator and others (both from the same and different communities). Simultaneously, producing the 'new' requires a constant dialogue with the 'old', with the existing systems of artifacts, norms and knowledges that both Self and Other hold, share and, at times, contest.

In tune with the paradigmatic focus of cultural psychology on 'systemic, interactive, and mediated phenomena' (Zittoun et al., 2007, p. 208), this approach primarily considers *everyday life creativity* as it unfolds in social/community contexts in which symbolic or cultural resources are used to generate new processes and artifacts. Nonetheless, the four elements of the cultural framework are not restricted to forms of 'cultural creativity' but they can be identified and their interconnections studied in a variety of contexts, from scientific to artistic creativity, from individual to group creativity. It is important to note that from this perspective it is precisely the different types of resources and actors, the different relationships and configurations between the four elements in each particular creative expression and specific context that are to be studied.

In light of the above, what is distinctive about the cultural psychological approach is the fact that it is based on several principles guiding theoretical and empirical investigations:

- *A contextual understanding of creativity*. In underlining this aspect we may start with traditional definitions of creative products as described by novelty and appropriateness/usefulness (see Amabile, 1996) and problematize their meaning: novel compared to what?

Useful for whom? The act of contextualizing creativity is intrinsic to the cultural approach and has been vividly addressed by Montuori and Purser who argued that 'it is therefore important to develop an understanding of the "genealogy" of creativity and the contextual influences that lead us to consider works to be creative in our present period' (1995, p. 71). A product (material and/or conceptual) can be considered creative only in relation to a certain time and a certain group of reference. As radical as this statement may seem, it has long been acknowledged in many implicit or explicit ways by prestigious authors. It is this situational account in evaluating creative products that Stein (1962) and Gardner (1994) underline when mentioning the importance of the significant group of others or, respectively, the cultural group. This assumption is echoed in the work of Teresa Amabile, especially in the idea of a consensual definition for assessing creativity, which therefore 'must, ultimately, be culturally and historically bound' (Amabile, 1996, p. 37). Does this relativism ultimately imply that there is no creativity (since one can never formulate a definitive statement in this regard, much less a universal one)? No, any process or product can be evaluated as being more or less creative but always *in relation* to something (a group, a domain, a historical period). The fact that we usually don't 'bother' to offer these supplementary 'explanations' in our current evaluations of creative products should not mislead us about their generality.

- *A generative understanding of creativity*. Again, it has long been accepted that creativity does not come from nowhere (ex nihilo) but 'uses what is already existing and available and changes it in unpredictable ways' (Arieti, 1976, p. 4). From a cultural point of view, cultural artifacts (from objects to language and symbols, representations, schemas, scripts, models, values, algorithms, etc.) are the ones being 'available' and it is these 'culturally-impregnated resources' that constitute the foundation of creative products. That is not to say that individuals participate in the creative process with rigid and specific cultural preset values. Their biological endowment, personal life experiences and particular social setting, as well as their capacity to filter and modify cultural influences, make them valuable and distinctive *actors* in the act of innovation (see also the next section on creativity and culture).
- *A meaning-oriented understanding of creativity*. The cultural approach is highly interested in the subjective and inter-subjective ways in which individuals relate to their creations and in how they make sense of their own creativity. The value of a creative product must

never be assessed only on the bases of external groups of 'experts' but should be based on a form of '*multiple feedback*', taking primarily into account the perspective of the creators (informed by their 'creative identity') and 'significant others' introduced to or affected by the creation (different groups or communities). At a more general level of special interest should also be the meaning attached to creativity in itself (how it is defined, explained, treated, etc.) as developed not only by individuals but also by entire societies. In this sense we can speak of a *meta-creativity*, or the cultural differences in the conception, explanation and legitimization of creativity. Creativity is socially defined (Nijstad & Paulus, 2003) within communities as a result of a 'negotiation' of meaning between creators and the larger groups they are a part of in a continuous symbolic fight, war, revolution and dialogue with oneself and Others (Montuori & Purser, 1995).

- *A genetic understanding of creativity*. No cultural account would be complete without addressing the problem of 'geneses' or the birth and development of creativity. In this regard, one emblematic author who has offered an unrivalled perspective on how both creativity and cultural experience emerge is D.W. Winnicott. In his book *Playing and Reality* (1971), Winnicott elaborates further the concept of the potential/third space seen as flexible and variable among individuals (unlike the somewhat constant inner and outer spaces). The creation stands in this space, 'between the observer and the artist's creativity' (p. 69). The author, a psychoanalyst interested in child development, traces the origins of creative playing in the primal baby–mother relationship (separation vs. union, dependence vs. autonomy, trust vs. suspicion). It is within a supportive environment and in the context of a secure bond with the mother that the child, the future adult, initiates his/her first attempts to creatively understand and manipulate the 'world'. For Winnicott, the act of living as a cultural being is intrinsically intertwined with being able to play and create in the potential intersubjective space (for a discussion about the cultural genesis of creativity and the work of Winnicott, see Glăveanu, 2009).
- *Ecological creativity research*. Many creativity studies have been performed in artificial settings and using artificial tasks. Unfortunately, the need to control for confounding variables and to standardize the testing procedures has led to conclusions that ignore the usual socio-cultural 'real-life' contexts in which creativity takes place (see Schoon, 1992). For example, can a creativity test of word generation and creative associations be reliable for testing persons

from rural areas if it uses geometric forms when the participants are accustomed to natural (less regular) forms? Or how creative would a group of brainstorming participants be, knowing that they were being observed through a one-way mirror and that the discussion theme had nothing in common with their interests or knowledge? Such rhetorical questions may help increase awareness concerning the ecological validity of our studies and the particular challenge of preserving the spontaneous, informal and contextual nature of creativity. In terms of general methodology and because of the need to have an in-depth situational understanding of creativity, *qualitative methods* would probably be, in the first instance, more suitable than quantitative ones: from ethnographic research and case studies (gathering information about individual circumstances and the social and historical context of the creative act) to interviews and focus groups (on issues related to creative identities and creativity assessment). A preference, whenever possible, should be given to *process-observation*, meaning the detailed observation of the creative process as it takes place (and, in the case of group creativity, the creative dynamics of the group). Certainly, quantitative methods are not excluded, but quantifications in creativity research should be done with great care for the meaning of the constructs under study. For example, in his historiometric analyses, D.K. Simonton aimed at determining correlations and causal patterns between a series of social, political and cultural variables and the creative outcome of numerous recognized creators across history. Unfortunately, assigning scores to social or personal situations (like war or illness; see Simonton, 1977) does not lead to a more rigorous understanding of the historical context, but to a questionable standardization working to the exclusion of the subjective and idiosyncratic aspects of the creative process.

The five points presented above as fundamental for a cultural psychology of creativity are intended to constitute a general guide and not a definite or absolute set of principles. They are an invitation to dialogue and represent an open system of directions for those interested in creativity and its social and cultural mechanisms.

Finally, it is important not to end the presentation of how a cultural psychology perspective on creativity *is* (contextual, generative, meaning-oriented, genetic, ecological) without emphasizing *how it is not*, and that is anti-individual. Far from replacing the tyranny of the person with one of the collective, creativity in this case is located, as Buber (1992) suggested, in the 'in between', the intersubjective,

'where I and Thou meet' (p. 40). In the long-standing debate between psychological and socio-cultural accounts of creativity, both extremes have proven to be unproductive (Simonton, 2003). The systemic approach we support is not an anti-individual one and admits the role of both intra-personal and inter-personal factors in the creative process (see Stein, 1975). It is what Fischer et al. (2005) militate for: an attempt to go beyond 'binary choices', a comprehensive and integrative perspective where there is 'an "and" rather than a "versus" relationship between individual and social creativity' (p. 483). This does not diminish the role of the individual but gives a richer and more human picture of creativity (Montuori & Purser, 1995), able to account for persons, groups and situations and to articulate their contribution to the creative process. Consequently, our proposed framework includes the Self, but a Self that does not create alone but in dialogue with an Other, both embedded within existing socio-cultural systems.

Creativity and Culture: Types of Creativity

If previously we have discussed the general framework of a cultural psychology of creativity, it is now time to turn to its basis: understanding *the nature of the relationship between creativity and culture*. This discussion is relevant not only for cultural approaches to the phenomenon, since if culture is not considered (or is considered only partially as simply another factor) in the study of creativity it is because of a particular viewpoint of what culture means.

The account on culture supporting our position is a symbolic and inter-relational one based on the concept of *artifacts*. Following Cole (1996), artifacts are understood as objects 'manufactured' by human beings, both ideal (conceptual) and material, fundamental constituents of culture that mediate the relation between subject and object, between Self and Other. We humans live in a world of culturally constructed artifacts, from the material objects we rely on to the language we speak. Culture cannot be reduced to its material expression, nor can it be viewed exclusively as a set of values. Once socialized, culture works from '*within*' the individual rather than from the outside like a strange and coercive force. Drawing ideas from several sources, Cole asserts that culture expresses itself through schemata (knowledge of objects, situations and events) as well as scripts (internalized sequences of events) that become shared cultural models, secondary artifacts guiding our thinking and action. This view is anything but deterministic. The individual is never a passive recipient of culture or representations. Though s/he may be 'modelled'

by social and cultural influences as a child, s/he soon becomes an active agent in interpreting, selecting and modifying cultural artifacts.

In Piagetian terms, the available cultural models are never just assimilated automatically but also *accommodated*, modelling the inner structures of the individual, becoming adapted, 'personalized'. If we add to this the fact that culture in itself is always plural, then we have a picture of a very complex and dynamic relationship between individuals and culture. It is from this viewpoint that we can refer to creative outcomes as socio-cultural artifacts, and to *creativity as a complex phenomenon that leads to the generation of new and valuable artifacts by working with 'culturally impregnated' materials within an inter-subjective space*. In this context the term 'creative outcomes' is used in a broad sense to signify both creative products and processes, both material and ideal/conceptual outcomes, and the notion of artifact is preferred in order to designate the fact that creative outcomes are *generated from* and *mediate* the relationship between creator and the social and cultural world (see also Cole's observations about primary, secondary and tertiary artifacts; Cole, 1996).

Unfortunately the traditional view of culture and creativity has favored the idea of an implicit and artificial separation between individuals and culture and therefore has imagined creative individuals as *confronting* the society rather than working *from within* a certain culture. As a consequence, in discussing creativity, culture has either been ignored (by the individualistic and sometimes even by the social psychology of creativity), or 'objectified' (by the cross-cultural psychology of creativity).

Still, constant attempts have been made to overcome this monadic view, and among the earliest is that of Arieti, who describes in a few pages the problem of what he calls the 'individual-psychological versus the sociocultural origin of creativity' (Arieti, 1976, p. 303).

The schema he proposes (see Figure 1) suggests, 'for the sake of simplification' (p. 304), that culture (represented as a million threads) and the individual (represented by his/her biological part—the big dark dot) are separate entities. Culture is understood as something exterior, like a set of rules and symbols, instead of something that is embedded in the mind of the individual.

The arrow going from the individual to culture (arrow 1) represents the first contact (purely psychological) with culture, in which the individual exposes his/her biological potentialities (instincts, a priori forms of mind, etc.). The second contact is represented by acculturation (acquisition by the individual of what already exists in culture; see arrow 2). Arieti views this as *a dynamic circular process, in which man and*

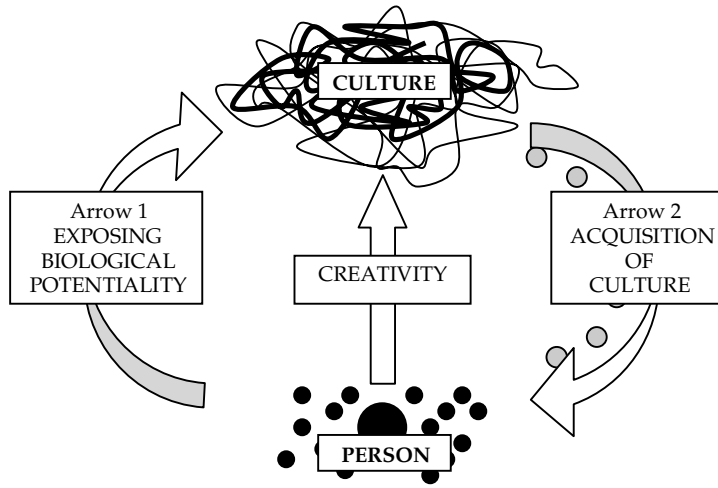

Figure 1. Culture, individuals and creativity after Arieti (1976, p. 309)

culture are in a mutual dependency. In his interpretation of culture the entire process begins and ends psychologically.

Creativity is an essential part of this relationship. Culture and the individual are both open systems. The small grey dots attached to arrow 2 are the particular ways offered by culture to be creative (cultures that encourage creative expression being considered creativogenic). The small black dots surrounding the individual are the 'receptors' persons possess for these creative impulses transmitted by culture. The existence of these two conditions allows for the 'magic synthesis' of creativity to take place. Through creativity the individual contributes to the million threads of culture and from this point of view this model reminds us of the genius within the He-paradigm, since Arieti suggests that the 'creativity' arrow is present only in the case of very few people who have the capacity to mould human culture.

Nonetheless, the model described above has the major advantages of recognizing the role of culture and proposing a mutual dependency between individual and culture in the creative process. Ever since, this kind of individual—society/culture distinction has been very common in the literature. Bhawuk (2003), for example (following Triandis & Simonton), postulates a framework in which ecological and historical conditions shape culture, and culture in turn provides the Zeitgeist (the 'spirit' of the time) for creative behaviours, especially in the area in which these will be mostly manifested, the domain that seems to be

most valued in a certain culture (an example being Indian creativity in the area of spirituality). In turn, geniuses influence the Zeitgeist and culture as a whole.

The same debate has been reintroduced in the study of creativity under slightly different terminologies by eminent contemporary authors such as Boden, Csikszentmihalyi, Paulus and Nijstad. One of the most prominent accounts in this respect is offered by Boden (1994), who distinguishes between the now-classical forms of '*P-creativity*' (creative for the individual) and '*H-creativity*' (new from the historical point of view of the entire society).

> A valuable idea is P-creative if the person in whose mind it arises could not have had it before; it does not matter how many times other people have already had the same idea. By contrast, a valuable idea is H-creative if it is P-creative *and* no one else, in all human history, has ever had it before. (Boden, 1994, p. 76)

Although popular, such accounts raise two important questions: 'How sharp is the differentiation between P and H forms of creativity?' and 'Who can assert that a creative product is H-creative?'.

The first question calls our attention to the artificial nature of all clear-cut divisions as far as levels of creativity are concerned. While useful in theory, these partitions fade in everyday life. Of course, one could argue that the work of Picasso is clearly H-creative, but unfortunately we do not live in a world of great artists but of ordinary people who nevertheless are creative in myriad ways. Therefore, we can totally agree with Amabile's (1996) assertion that there is a continuum in forms of creative expression. Even more, there are authors who pledge for a *universal* type of creativity, an *existential* one in the views of humanistic psychologists (see Schoon, 1992), one that is intrinsically related to our human nature (Winnicott, 1971). This understanding transcends P-creativity accounts and highlights our capacity to 'play' with cultural artifacts, to constantly combine and ingeniously modify them in the process of expressing ourselves and relating to the outside world of objects and persons. In conclusion, human creativity can take many forms and therefore can be defined both *intensively* (as P and H forms) and *extensively* (as intrinsic to the human self).

The second question focuses on the problem of evaluating H-creativity and has been addressed by Csikszentmihalyi (1996) in his systems model of creativity. In a nutshell, the author claims that the creative product is always related to a field and a general domain. For example, an Impressionist painting belongs to the general domain of art (particularly Impressionism) and is proposed to and evaluated by

the field (experts). How can our particular painting be considered creative and valuable to the artistic domain? First and foremost, it will have to be analyzed by 'groups of "intermediaries" who stand between the creative individual and the broader society' (Stein, 1962, p. 90) or the *gatekeepers* of the domain (Csikszentmihalyi, 1996). These persons are in our case influential art critics, recognized artists and curators. It is within these inter-dependent instances of individual—field—domain that creative products are continually generated and integrated in our historical and cultural experience.

Some Final Thoughts about the Role of the Community

As seen from above a raw distinction can be made between two levels of creativity: a historical one (contributions to the culture of a society) and an individual one (contributions to the person's own life sphere). Yet conceptualized as such, both forms end up individualizing creativity either by glorifying the H-creative genius (the He-paradigm) or focusing exclusively on the person's life horizon (the I-paradigm). What we would like to argue in the end is that a more ecological way of situating creativity is at the level of the *community* (what could be called *C-creativity*).

Even from within the tetradic framework of the cultural approach, community has been identified as a major factor in the analysis of any creative act. This concept has been chosen instead of 'group' or 'society' because of its broad theoretical implications. As noted by Jovchelovitch (2007, p. 71):

> Not as close to each one of us as our immediate family or the various small groups to which we belong, nor as distant as the general rules and codes of practice that govern and structure the larger societies in which we live, community is an intermediate space that offers both the symbolic and material resources within which the dialectics between individual subjects and the social world is lived and played out.

This line of thought goes back to the conception of Martin Buber, who considered community to be the basic social framework supporting human creativity (for details, see a collection of his work on intersubjectivity and cultural creativity edited by S. Eisenstadt: Buber, 1992) and emphasized a fundamental reality: humans live and create within communities and each community membership brings with it a distinctive set of resources and practices, a specific knowledge and identity. Placed between the P and H levels, C-creativity focuses on the vital role of *communities as social contexts* for both (1) the *production* of

creative outcomes and how the creator or creators engage with and use the 'symbolic and material resources' of their community, and (2) the *evaluation* of creativity, since 'communities produce a common stock of knowledge that endures over time and gives to community members the points of reference and the parameters against which individuals make sense of the world around them' (Jovchelovitch, 2007, p. 77), especially of the new artifacts entering this world.

Furthermore, it is often the case that creators hold *multiple* community memberships, and creations are of interest for several communities. For example, the creative work of a university professor is produced within, shared with and evaluated primarily by the community of scholars in the same field, but also becomes relevant to the community of academic colleagues from the same institution and students being introduced to it, then to the community of publishers aiming to disseminate it, and, depending on the practical relevance of the creative outcome, to different communities that are affected in one way or another by the 'creation'. As observed here, the notion of community goes beyond groups of persons populating the same life space to signify collectives sharing similar experiences and holding similar knowledge systems as well as a common identity. It is for this reason that by adopting a community perspective on creativity we can fully become aware of the significance of the social and cultural, of the contextual nature of creativity and its multifaceted subjective, inter-subjective and objective dynamics.

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Biography

VLAD-PETRE GLAVEANU is a PhD candidate in Social Psychology at the London School of Economics and Political Science. His current research explores creativity in community contexts and promotes a cultural psychological approach to this phenomenon. Also among his interests are issues related to knowledge and social representations, the psychology of art, child development and qualitative methodologies. He is currently Editor of Europe's Journal of Psychology and his most recent book investigated stereotype representations between Romanians and European Union citizens (published by Lumen, 2008). ADDRESS: Institute of Social Psychology, LSE, St Clements Building, Houghton Street, London, WC2A 2AE, UK. [email: v.p.glaveanu@lse.ac.uk]