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Dialogic Authorial Approach to Creativity in Education: Transforming a Deadly Homework into a Creative Activity

Eugene Matusov and Ana Marjanovic-Shane

Introduction

Recently, we started to explore a possibility to cast “creativity” in a dialogic light. Currently, most existing approaches to creativity known to us have been monologic, authoritative, objectivist, and positivist—that is, looking at creativity as a phenomenon that exists in itself, independently from the understanding, evaluation, and dialogic positions of people who participate in creative practices and those who study them. In these monologic approaches to creativity, the goal is to find the universal and the final truth about what this phenomenon—creativity—in itself. Because of that, creativity is often seen as a particular human ability (e.g., divergent thinking) or a personality trait that can be more or less developed or present in some individuals. Or it is seen as a quality of human experience, that is, a particular psychological state that can be achieved by some individuals when participating in some practices individually or together (Csikszentmihalyi 1979, 1996; Gardner 1982; Moran 2009; Moran and John-Steiner 2003; Sawyer et al. 2003; Sternberg

E. Matusov (✉)

School of Education, University of Delaware, Newark DE19716, USA
e-mail: ematusov@udel.edu

A. Marjanovic-Shane

Chestnut Hill College, Philadelphia, USA
e-mail: shaneam@chc.edu

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2010; Vygotsky 2004). Thus, we argue that these conventional conceptual frameworks to creativity do not fit the phenomenon of creativity itself because they focus mostly on producing something very new, out-of-box that has not existed before.

In contrast, based on Bakhtin's (1999) dialogic framework, we try to develop an approach to creativity from the perspective of creativity's dialogic significance—that is, what creativity means to the participants in meaningful social practices. We look at the significance of creativity in the context of the relationship among the participants in dialogue, for dialogically testing participants' ideas, positions, and desires in light of personal, social, and cultural values and in terms of transcendence and transformation of the relationships in the meaning-making process (cf., the notion of “internally persuasive discourse,” Bakhtin 1991; Matusov and von Duyke 2010).

In particular, we study creativity as one of the central qualities of learning and teaching in the authorial approach to education “that actively recognizes, values, and actively promotes the authorial nature of teaching and learning” (Matusov 2011b, p. 31). The authorial nature of a human activity reveals itself in the recognition of personal unique contribution and responsibility reflecting the true, authentic personality of the contributor. In the authorial approach to education, learning and teaching are “about human, unique, irreproducible, irreplaceable and ‘here-and-now’ agency that is based on improvisation, creativity, originality, diversity, and uniqueness” (Matusov 2011b, p. 26).

We abstract four dialogic aspects of creativity:

- a) The *addressivity* aspect of creativity—We claim that anything that people do have an aspect of a dialogic addressivity and responsivity transcending the given. Every utterance addressing the other is aimed to change something in the dialogic relationships among the participants—that is, it is aimed at transforming and transcending the existing state of affairs, knowledge, perspectives, opinions, desires, relationships, and so on. The very act of addressing someone has a creative motivation—to bring up something new and relevant into the relationships.
- b) The *existential* aspect of creativity—is about recognition and acknowledgement or withdrawal of recognition and acknowledgement by others (and/or self) of someone's act as creative, that is, giving or denying an act a “creative existence.” It is a direct dialogic recognition of the creativity of someone's dialogic act—that is, it is a recognition and acknowledgement that this bid for creativity can and has transformed the existing relationships, meanings, knowledge, desires, or ways of doing something in some

- meaningful and innovative enough way (i.e., recognition of meaningful innovation). It is a recognition of the power of someone's act to transcend the existing desires and experiences, and it is author and the others' selves.
- c) The *axiological* aspect of creativity—is about evaluating a creative act as pragmatically good or bad, ethical or unethical, constructive or destructive, and so on. In conventional approaches, this evaluative process is usually preset through “an internal dialogue” of the designers of activity or test, “Very early on in the process, evaluation standards are constructed that serve as benchmarks throughout the process. They are not binary (acceptable vs. unacceptable), but rather form a latitude of acceptance and are regularly questioned by the mechanism of ‘the internal dialogues’” (Fourquet-Courbet et al. 2008, p. 10). A creative act does not necessarily have to be evaluated as good, ethical, constructive, beautiful, and so on. It can be seen in an opposite light. For example, one can say that Hitler was very creative with his violent, aggressive policies, ways that he devised for the Nazi party to gain power, or in his speeches that definitely fired huge numbers of people, bringing them a new vision of who they are and/or how to become who they dream to be, and in creatively and authorially redefining the politics at that time, and so on. At the same time, many people had condemned Hitler's creative acts as bad, evil, utterly destructive, and so on. While it is hard to deny the creativity of many different aspects of Hitler and the Nazi party's activities and acts, a passionate, critical, and dramatic dialogue about the values of Hitler and Nazi party's acts, policies, ideology, treating others, and so on still continues on the worldwide scale.¹
- d) The *cultural (meta-axiological)* aspect of creativity—is about culturally valuing creativity itself over preservation of tradition or vice versa. Are particular creative aspects of acts (offered and recognized) culturally valuable because they are seen as strengthening and promoting a particular culture, or are they culturally insignificant, or even running against some vital and culturally defining traditions, customs, and norms? Meta-axiology, that is, the cultural aspect of creativity, is the big dialogue on whether or not creativity itself is good or bad.

These four dialogic authorial aspects of creativity are creative acts and creative dialogues in their own right, promoting examination, and new insights about creativity from each of their points of view. Recognizing someone else's

¹ It may feel surprising and unbelievable now that the Nazi values were problematic for so many people then (both in Europe and in the USA) (Olson 2013).

creativity is a creative act in itself. Debating axiological and meta-axiological values of a creative act is an act of authorial judgment, which creates new meanings and transforms existing relationships. In our chapter, we will criticize existing approaches to creativity; provide an ethnographic case, through which we will define ontologic dialogic creativity; and discuss its implications for education.

Critique of the Existing Non-Dialogic and Non-Ontological Approaches to Creativity

Both of us were subjects (or victims) of psychological testing on creativity in our childhood. I (the first author) experienced creativity testing in my high school when my physics teacher, then graduate student of famous Soviet psychologist Vasily Davydov, developed his test based on “theoretical thinking” that involves use of dialectical contradictions (Davydov and Kilpatrick 1990). The test involved manipulation with several ring magnets, prediction, and explanation of their interaction. I miserably failed the test demonstrating a non-creative formal logic thinking.

When I (the second author) was about ten-year-old, my mother, Sanda Marjanović, was doing her doctoral dissertation in child development psychology about creativity (Marjanović, 1965). She applied many tests on divergent thinking. For example, how many words I can associate with a prompt word, for example, “brick”—“house,” “brick”—“obstacle.” This test probably followed Guilford’s test on creativity measuring creativity by fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration (Guilford 1962).

The common aspect of all these tests on creativity is that the experimenter defines (in some arbitrary way) in advance what creativity is and expects a research participant to conform to this definition. This contradicts the intuitive idea that creativity involves unpredictability, surprise, and acting/thinking/feeling out-of-box. Using Aristotelian terminology, it is possible to claim that traditional psychological measurement-based approaches to creativity define creativity as *poiesis* and not as *praxis*. Aristotle coined the notion of *praxis* as activity, in which its goal and definition of its quality of the activity emerge in the activity itself and are not preset or do they pre-exist it as it is the case in *poiesis* (Aristotle 2000). Creativity-as-*praxis* cannot be predefined before it occurs, “Excellent creative thinking is much easier to recognize when you see it than it is to define or explain” (Wegerif 2010, p. 3). Moreover, the recognition of creativity is creative in itself and, thus, always a subjective and contested process, embedded in a dialogue about this (non-)recognition as

well. We criticized the traditional approaches to creativity as essentializing it—treating creativity as a given. In contrast, we argue that creativity involves transcendence of the given (and the participants) recognized by others and/or the self, and thus its definition cannot pre-exist the creative act (Buchanan 1979; Matusov 2011a; Matusov and Brobst 2013).

Creativity has emergent, subjective, contested, and dialogic properties. It is emergent because creativity is *praxis* and not *poiesis*. It is subjective because it is in the eyes of the beholder. Creativity is always a co-construction between an actor transcending the given and an observer who recognizes this transcendence as such. It is always contested because of the creative act of recognition of creativity. Different people may not recognize it or may recognize differently: what is exactly creative and what is not; they may have different evaluation of creativity; and so on. We contend that creativity is not consensus-based and not consensus-oriented as many psychologists assume (e.g., Gruber 1998). Thus, conventional psychological research methods of objectivity (e.g., inter-coder reliability) cannot be applied to assess creativity. Finally, creativity is dialogic because the meaning-making process is essentially dialogic (Bakhtin 1986, 1999)—the point that we will develop in this paper.

Another important characteristic of the traditional approaches to creativity is the assumption of creativity as being involved in self-contained problem-solving rather than being open to diverse contexts and problem-, goal-, and value-defining processes. The traditional approaches often involved the demonstration of creativity on-demand in the controlled lab conditions. These rather rigid constrains may not necessarily preclude creativity themselves, if these constrains were viewed by the researchers as a material for the research participants' creativity. For example, research participants may creatively reject the presented problem or creatively redefine it. For instance, in Vygotsky's description of mediation involved in problem solving, little children use imagination to try to solve a presented problem in the realm of fantasy (e.g., getting an object outside of their possible reach). Vygotsky did not reject this imaginary approach as failure to solve the problem but rather he *creatively* recognized the children's creativity, where other psychologists might see the children's problem-solving failure (Vygotsky 1987).

Many sociocultural scholars influenced by the work of Hegel, German gestalt psychologists (e.g., Köhler 1973), Vygotsky, and Leont'ev view creativity as a mere production of new mediation: symbolic or physical (e.g., tools, signs, and psychological functions). In our view, this approach to creativity (and beyond) is reductionist and instrumental. It is reductionist because it reduces dialogic meaning—the relationship between addressivity of one person's consciousness and responsivity of another person's consciousness—to

monologic mediation that exists in the universal consciousness, approximated by a consensus, or even objectively outside of any consciousness (e.g., Cole 1996; Vygotsky 2004). It is instrumental because creativity is seen narrowly, only within the scope of accomplishing goals, however emergent these goals may be, rather than also on an axiological activity of evaluation of values and self-actualization. What for a dialogic scholar is a personal point of view addressing and responding to other personal points of view in a dialogue; for a cultural-historical activity, scholar is merely an impersonal mediation—objectified and finalized subjectivity.

Finally, emerging dialogic approaches to creativity often still focus on consensus as the basis of creativity, “Dialogue is the meeting ground on which new questions are raised, the mating ground on which new combinations are found, and the testing ground in which novelties are critically evaluated and *assimilated into the body of shared knowledge and thought*” (Gruber 1998, p. 139, the emphasis is ours). Dialogue, nicely described in the first part of the quote, is viewed instrumentally here as a vehicle for arriving at a shared meaning (knowledge) rather than as a medium where any meaning lives. Sidorkin (1999) and Matusov (2009) called this dialogic approach “epistemological” in contrast to “ontological” Bakhtinian dialogism (http://diaped.soe.udel.edu/dp-map/?page_id=18). In an ontological approach to dialogism, dialogue is viewed as the essence of human *being*,

Notion of dialogue is treated (in an ontological understanding of dialogue—the authors) as central for defining human existence, not merely a form of communication. To experience what it means to be human, one needs to engage in dialogical relations. We are human in the fullest sense when we engage in dialogue. This ontological understanding of dialogue has its implications for education. I argue that schools should focus on helping children experience and learn what it means to be human. Therefore, the entire social arrangement called “school” should be designed around this purpose of introducing children to the life of dialogue (Sidorkin 1999, p. 4).

The word ontological does not refer to just any kind of being, neither does it deal with the existence of dialogue; it refers specifically to human existence. This may not be the most conventional use of the term, but from my point of view, it is the most accurate one. The ontological concept of dialogue explores the place of dialogue in the human way of being. One of the reasons for using the adjective ontological is a need to distinguish between what I propose and a number of non-ontological concepts of dialogue. In the context of this book, the very existence of a human being in his or her human quality is a result of dialogue. In the non-ontological conception of dialogue, this relation between dialogue and human existence is reversed: dialogue is treated as secondary to human existence, mainly as a form of communication (Sidorkin 1999, p. 7).

Below we will consider our dialogic approach to creativity based on the Bakhtinian framework of ontological dialogism. We will start with an ethnographic case involving creativity and abstract a dialogic definition of creativity and its implications for education.

From Boring Homework to Creative Exploration of the Morphemic Structure of Language and Complexity of Human Relations

We describe and ethnographically analyze the four dialogic aspects of creativity in an educational event that took place in an urban afterschool program—a Latin American Community Center (see the full description of the case here: Matusov 2011a). In this episode, a third-grade boy, Zion, was having trouble working on his homework—copying new words as part of his English language assignment. We will describe how this tedious, decontextualized school assignment was transformed for Zion by the first author, who at that time was taking his undergraduate students—education majors to this urban afterschool center, as part of their learning how to create relationships with minority children. We will analyze creative addressivity in the creative offers of the professor, Zion and one more child Maria, a Latina girl of similar age as Zion. We discuss their mutual recognition of their mutual creative bids and then their evaluative transformations.

On that day, I (here and further, the first author) was called by one of my students to help them with a boy, Zion, who was reluctantly doing his homework. Zion had to copy new words but he was very reluctant to do that and did not pay much attention to his (mis)spellings, which defeated the whole purpose of this rather meaningless homework drill. He clearly wanted to finish his homework as soon as possible, so he can go to play computer games. One of my undergraduate students asked me if I could do something to turn the situation around for the better. I said that I would try but I could not guarantee that I could do anything good.

Four Dialogic Aspects of Creativity

Addressivity Aspect of Creativity (by the Professor and Zion)

My challenge in addressing Zion was to design an activity that would combine the following characteristics: (1) to make the activity interesting, meaningful, and challenging for Zion, (2) to preserve the structure of homework,

and (3) to deepen his learning spelling of new words. I approached the problem by trying to turn the meaningless activity for Zion of copying words into a Scramble-like game of finding as many shorter words as possible within the targeted word that Zion had to copy three times. Zion enthusiastically accepted my creative bid. My addressive success with this new activity was in the following: the activity was entertaining and Zion liked it; he started making fewer spelling mistakes; it focused him on exploring morphological patterns within the word and eventually led him to discover morphemes of words. Let me illustrate it with an example within this activity.

One word Zion had to copy in his homework was “exit.” Zion looked at the word and said, “I see ‘IT’” (exIT). And then he exclaimed, “And ‘EX’” (EXit). I asked him what “ex” meant. Zion replied, “‘Ex’, like in ‘ex-boyfriend.’ My mom has an ex-boyfriend.” And he added, “I hate him.” By this comment, Zion made a bid for me—for transforming the activity one more time—and I followed it. In our judgment, this was another instance of the addressivity aspect of creativity, but this time it was done by Zion and responded by the professor.

I asked him, “Why?” Zion replied, “Because he constantly fought my mom.” I asked, “Fought?!” “They constantly yelled at each other,” explained Zion. “But how did he treat *you*?” I asked him. “OK. He took me to sports games and bowling. He read me books and gave me presents.” I asked, “Do you think he liked you?” Zion replied with hesitation, “I guess... But why did he fight my mom?” I thought for a moment and said, “Sometimes two good people can’t live well with each other and it can be better for them to live separately.” Zion agreed, “Yeah, it’s like me and my cousin—we like to play but we also fight a lot.”

Existential Aspect of Creativity (by Maria, Zion, the Professor, Katherine, and Beyond)

There was yet another creative transformation of the activity made by Zion. Suddenly, he interrupted himself, “I know how this word is called!” “How? What word?” I asked. Zion exclaimed with excitement, “This one, ‘exit’. It is a *compound*. We studied it in school!” “How come?” I asked. “Because it made out of two words ‘ex’ and ‘it’! It’s a compound!”

“No, it’s not!” said Maria, a girl working next to us on her homework on another computer. She was probably the same age as Zion. Maria publicly challenged Zion’s creative move as legitimate, and thus she challenged his creativity of labeling the word “exit” as a compound word. Thus, she did not

recognize that his move of bringing the compound category to the word “exit” was creative, but rather thought of it as a mistake. Maria denied Zion’s bid for creativity here.

“Yes, IT IS!” yelled Zion. He tried to reaffirm his bid for creativity as he, himself, recognized it.

“Why do you say that it is not?” I asked Maria.

“Just because. I feel it,” she replied, without even looking in my direction being glued to the computer screen.

“What makes you feel that way?” asked I.

The professor now transformed the activity one more time introducing the theme of justification in the existential evaluation of creativity.

“I don’t know, but it does not feel it’s right,” Maria replied, still without turning her head.

“‘Exit’ consists of two words, like ‘ex-boyfriend,’—it’s a compound!” exclaimed Zion. Maria could not justify her position but Zion could.

I felt that the girl was up to something important—thus, validating her creativity (i.e., another existential evaluation)—but she did not have terminology to explain it clearly, so I helped her. “Are you trying to say that ‘ex’ and ‘it’ don’t have anything to do with ‘exit’?” She turned her head to me, smiled, and nodded, as if acknowledging my presence, as a living person, for the first time (i.e., another existential evaluation). “So, are you trying to say that a compound should consist of not just any words but words that contribute to its meaning, right?” She smiled at me and nodded again. I continued, “Such parts of the word that constitute meaning are called ‘morphemes.’ For example, a compound ‘ex-boyfriend’ consists of three-word morphemes: ‘boy’, ‘friend’, and ‘ex’—all of which contribute to the meaning of being a former boyfriend. But, morphemes might be not whole words but meaningful parts of the word.”

However, as my colleague, Katherine von Duyke, pointed out in her feedback to an earlier version of my 2011 manuscript (Matusov 2011a), both Maria and I were wrong, insisting that the words “ex” and “it” have nothing to do with the word “exit.” I checked the Oxford English Dictionary and confirmed Katherine’s objection as the English word “exit” has Latin origin “exitus” where morpheme “ex” means “out.” I wonder if this Latin word has actually the Greek origin from “exodus”—a true compound meaning “a way out”: “ex”—out, “odus” way, road (cf. “odyssey”). It is still probably true that “exit” is not a compound in English because of “it” is not a recognizable morpheme in English but rather phonetic transformation of the Greek word “odus.” I wish I knew this complexity before and introduced it to the children (who may find it later on, hopefully). But, on the other hand, this is an inherent nature of inexhaustible and bottomless learning in any curricular topic.

Axiological Aspect of Creativity (The Professor and His Undergraduate Students)

When my undergraduate student and I shared this case in our class, all students seemed to recognize that my approach was creative and interesting. They liked that I managed to make the homework useful for Zion, that he took his homework seriously and finished it, and my lessons on morphemes, compounds, and complex human family relations. However, a few students raised issue about questioning if my creativity was good. For example, they raised issue that I created dependency in Zion on me because he could not do his homework without me. Another objection was that education should be a serious business and not entertainment or a game. And finally, some objected many times Zion was not on-task as he was distracted by talking about his mom's ex-boyfriend too much, beyond putting the word into a sentence. That led us to discuss and test our educational values—what we meant by “good education.” The class split around issues of what it means to learn spelling and language. Should it include a web of meaning: both on the micro level of studying morphemes and on the global levels of understanding troublesome aspects of the students' lives? Another big issue was about individualistic or dialogic values of learning.

Cultural Aspect of Creativity (The Professor, His Undergraduate Students, and Institutions)

Some students raised an issue about a poor-quality homework that was assigned to Zion. This was another explosive issue because some other students started to argue that homework is not negotiable in the era of the high-stake assessment and accountability. This brought a cultural meta-axiology evaluation of whether deviation from the norms set by the national educational policies is a good or a bad thing. Some students—future teachers—felt that teachers are servants of the state and must follow whatever values the educational authorities and politicians prescribe. In their view, teacher professionalism is about conforming to the authority's preset demands and deviation from that should be viewed as insubordination, unprofessionalism, and undermining educational well-being of the students. In contrast, some other students view teachers as students' advocates who, as professional educators, have to define educational values and practices. The goal of school administrations and politicians should be to help and to serve the teachers (and not the other way around). These students viewed teachers' experimentation and creativity as a necessary part of their professional activity that should be evaluated by other educators.

Discussion

We have found in this event that creativity, as a phenomenon, is constituted, for the participants of the event and us as observers, by the four dialogic authorial aspects we described above. Based on our ethnographic analysis, we argue that creativity remains always immeasurable, problematic, subjective, authorial, contested, cultural, axiological, involving risk taking, calling for responsibility, and ethical in its nature revealing itself on small and big scales. Our coding and analysis are subjective for several reasons.

First, we projected the data into the ongoing academic dialogue on creativity rather than dialogue on agency, which was the first author's theme when he analyzed the same pedagogical event in 2011 (Matusov 2011a). Second, we have developed a dialogic view of creativity. With some other concept of creativity, this same case could have been coded differently, or may have not even be coded at all as a case of creativity. Third, scholars who may subscribe to a dialogic approach to creativity may subscribe to some other dialogic approach (e.g., not Bakhtinian) and, thus, see the case differently. Fourth, we have our own authorial sensitivities, rooted in our cultural histories and our own creativity, that prompt us to creatively notice or not notice the participants' creativity. In other words, we want to stress that creativity is not a thing out there, existing independently on its own, but it is itself a dialogic phenomenon. This does not necessarily mean that our coding and analysis are arbitrary, owing to the fact that it enters a dialogue of testing ideas—in our case an academic discourse—in which our analysis may or may not survive this testing. Still, our dialogic analysis of creativity will remain contested and forever contestable as new challenges may emerge. At the same time, as soon as creativity emerges through its recognition, it immediately undergoes a process of objectification, reification, and finalization by becoming a new given and, thus, a potential for new creativity through its transcendence. Creativity is objectified in new material or symbolic objects (e.g., a new smartphone), new practices, new discourses, new knowledge, new coding, and new truth. Nevertheless, the objectification of creativity does not resolve its contested nature because a dialogue about it continues forever.

Although the concept of creativity is akin to the concept of agency, it is also somewhat different from it. We have defined the notion of (authorial) agency as authorial transcendence of the given, recognized, and evaluated by others and/or by the author him/her/themselves (Matusov 2011a; Matusov and Brobst 2013). Creativity is an aspect of this authorial agency that is specifically about sudden and surprising novelty in the authorial agency. In other words, creativity is a special discourse on the authorial agency focusing on

the surprising novelty. This discourse involves transformation of the audience perception of the world, their ontological relationship with the world, and the awareness of this transformation, as by-products. Thus, as a result of this creativity discourse, the world becomes new and unfamiliar for the audience (including the author as self-audience). That is why creativity (and authorial agency) is always co-constructive. For example, after the professor introduced the Scramble-like game to Zion, Zion's vision of the homework activity and his ontological relationship with the immediate world have changed (cf. Bakhtin's notion of chronotope, Bakhtin 1991). Instead of being in the midst of the painfully boring, meaningless, and tedious homework, he suddenly found himself in the middle of the exciting playful competitive adventure. Similarly, when he introduced the theme of hating his mom's ex-boyfriend, the professor's world changed as well: instead of being in the midst of the playful investigation of the morphemic structure of language and facilitating guidance, the professor found himself in the midst of the human drama involving Zion with the ethic call for help. In both cases, the transition was abrupt and surprising.

Recognition of creativity is different from recognition of agency. Recognition of agency involves responsive actions—for example, support of an actor bid in improvisational play. In our case, Zion recognized the professor's authorial agency by engaging in the Scramble-like game offered by the professor. Maria recognized the authorial agency of Zion, who claimed that the word "exit" is a compound by challenging his claim. In both instances, the authorial agency is recognized through engagement in a new course of the activity. Non-recognition of the authorial agency involves ignoring the authorial bid for the transcendence of the given. In contrast, creativity requires a special reflective discourse. Creativity is the discursive appreciation of agency. The discourse of creativity requires refocusing from the world and activity to the author and the audience themselves. The discourse of creativity transforms the actors into audience—"estrangement" (the term "отстранение" was coined by Russian literary formalist Viktor Shklovsky, Shklovskii and Sher 1990; it means a person becoming an audience of his/her own or somebody else's action or events looking from outside, where *I* becomes *me*). In our case described above, it stays unclear how much Zion or Maria would use the discourse of creativity for the described events involving the participants' authorial agency, if they told it. The professors and his undergraduate students clearly did. However, we argue that all the participants of the event recognized each other's authorial agency.

Thus, discourse on creativity is always subjective and cultural. In some cultures, the discourse on creativity is valued (as in the modern "Western" cul-

ture), but in some cultures, it is not. For example, in the Medieval Christian Europe, creativity was not valued. The only legitimate creator, and thus, the source of the creativity discourse, was God. The role of a human was to literally record, accurately transmit, and correctly interpret the Word of God. In the Medieval Europe, novelty was under suspicion of Devil's contamination and temptation,

...authoring has not always been related to writing and responsibility: inspired by God, the writer could be just the *scriptor* of a sacred word that did not belong to him; and being original was not a value *per se*, since the written text, inscribed in tradition, was supposed to repeat or reiterate what had been already said. Indeed, on a further etymologic search, we find that *auctor* comes from the Latin *augere* (to increase, to improve), meaning instigator, promoter. Thus the author does not create anything new; he has just to improve what already exists (Smolka 2005, p. 360).

Dialogism of the creativity discourse is schematically reflected in the following imaginary dialogue:

- [bid for creativity]
- Wow, this is so creative!
- Why do you think so?
- Because so and so...
- I agree/disagree [the dialogue continues].
- Has somebody done it before?
- [Reply]
- But is it good?
- [Reply]
- Why do you think so?
- [Reply]
- So what? Why do we need to have new things? What is wrong with old things and traditions?
- [Reply]

This dialogue is embedded in diverse contexts and spheres: political, economic, educational, industrial, governmental, religious, and so on. It generates new inquiries and contests. It creates new alliances and breaks old ones. For example, Zion's introduction of the compound notion creates an alliance between Maria and the professor, who believed that the word "exit" was not a compound, against Zion who believed it was. Also, the professor's creative introduction of the Scramble-like game in Zion's homework created new alliances and polarizations among his undergraduate students (and other edu-

cators) who agree or disagree with his move as educationally legitimate or illegitimate. Thus, creativity spurs dialogues and alliances, while being born from dialogues as well.

The creativity discourse has its organization by sociocultural genres. For example, one current genre of creativity is discourse on intellectual property mediated by patents, legal contracts, trademarks, copyrights, credits, and court decisions, the “commodity-creativity”² genre. Another current historical genre is a discourse about extraordinary, unique, and innate geniuses who from time to time change the history of humanity, the “he-creativity” genre (Glăveanu 2010). Yet, another common genre of creativity is a discourse of innovations, focusing on the qualitative discontinuity between the past and the present, “revolution-creativity” genre. For example, Bakhtin described Dostoevsky’s literary contribution as revolutionary, “Dostoevsky is the creator of the polyphonic novel. He created a fundamentally new novelistic genre. Therefore his work does not fit any of the preconceived frameworks or historico-literary schemes that we usually apply to various species of the European novel” (Bakhtin 1999, p. 7). However, this breakdown with the past may not be always so dramatic. A less prominent but also old genre of creativity is discourse on stable elements that can be combined in some creative ways, the “combinatory-creativity” genre (Vygotsky 2004):

All human activity of this type, activity that results not in the reproduction of previously experienced impressions or actions but in the creation of new images or actions is an example of this second type of creative or combinatorial behavior (p. 9).

The first type of association between imagination and reality stems from the fact that everything the imagination creates is always based on elements taken from reality, from a person’s previous experience. It would be a miracle indeed if imagination could create something out of nothing or if it had other sources than past experience for its creations (p. 13).

A hut on chicken legs exists, of course, only in fairy tales, but the elements from which this fairy tale image is constructed are taken from real human experience, and only their combination bears traces of the fantastic, that is, does not correspond to reality (p.13).

This combinatory-creativity genre probably goes back to the Ancient Greeks.

Another genre is religious discourse on creativity, focusing on God as the source of everything in the world, “creator-creativity” genre. Another genre of

²We want to credit Vlad Glăveanu (2010) for introduction of metaphoric description of creativity paradigms. We extended his metaphoric description to the creativity genres.

creativity is a discourse on playfulness, freedom, spontaneity, improvisation, and openness, regardless of whether the result is productive or not,

...a view of creativity as a kind of freedom to play around and on the other a focus on ideas that are not only original but also valuable and influential. If asked for examples of creativity most people suggest things like Van Gogh's "sunflower", Einstein's "theory of relativity" or Apple's "i-pod", ignoring all the countless pictures ideas and products that never made it to iconic status. Meanwhile we still say that children mucking around with paint and paper are "being creative" even if the outcome is of no value and goes into the dustbin (only when the children's attention has moved on of course, as we don't want to discourage them with adult value judgements!). (Wegerif 2010, p. 37)

Finally, we want to attract attention to an ethic creativity genre focusing on anti-conformism, the "breaking rules-creativity" genre, "Majority decisions tend to be made without engaging the systematic thought and critical thinking skills of the individuals in the group. Given the force of the group's normative power to shape the opinions of the followers who conform without thinking things through, they are often taken at face value. The persistent minority forces the others to process the relevant information more mindfully. Research shows that the decisions of a group as a whole are more thoughtful and creative when there is minority dissent than when it is absent" (Zimbardo 2007, p. 266).

There are also anti-creativity genres. For example, discourse about religious prophets or clairvoyance focuses on the medium of other higher forces, and any "creativity" can only make it worse. And, there is another anti-genre of creativity well expressed by Ecclesiastes (1:9), "What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun." A more recent and widespread anti-creativity genre is a discourse on "common sense," "My success was not based so much on any great intelligence but on great common sense" (Helen Gurley Brown, <http://thinkexist.com/quotation/my-success-was-not-based-so-much-on-any-great/362901.html>).

Implications for Education: The Dialogic Pedagogy Creativity Genre

From our point of view, conventional education discourse is anti-creativity. It defines education as a measurable reproduction of culture. Creativity is expected to be postponed until students are out of education. Creativity is

not encouraged even in teachers as curriculum is prescribed by the state (e.g., educational standards, “common core”) and instruction is defined by the research-based “best practices” or “evidence-based teaching.” Even in teaching “creativity,” it is viewed as objective and predictable way of problem-solving.

In contrast, dialogic authorial education is pro-creativity. It defines education as culture-making, production of culture, and transcendence of the given (Berlyand 2009; Bibler 2009). Creativity is viewed as the basis of education; it is encouraged in students and teachers rather than postponed. From this point of view, creativity is immeasurable because it is always dialogically contested and in the eye of the beholder.

The dialogic authorial pedagogy creativity genre involves four pedagogical dialogic moves—elements. The first one is *ontological dialogic provocation*—provocation for creativity. In the case described above, we see many of ontological dialogic provocations: the introduction of the Scramble-like game by the professor, Zion’s introduction of his troublesome and puzzling relations with his mom’s ex-boyfriend, his introduction of the notion of compound, the professor’s introduction of the notion of morpheme, the professor’s sharing the case with his undergraduate students, the students’ raising diverse issues and problems with the professor’s approach, and so on.

The second move is *responsive authorship*. In the case, it involved the professor’s finding the Scramble-like game satisfying the three demands, listed above, in response to his student’s request for help and Zion’s boredom with his homework, Zion’s finding many “little words” in the targeted word, Maria’s disagreement with Zion’s claim that “exit” was a compound word, and so on. The responsive authorship—creativity in response—can be an ontological dialogic provocation for other participations.

The third move is *axiological, critical evaluation of the value of the creativity*—critical creativity. In the case, it involved Maria’s evaluation of Zion’s claim and undergraduate students’ evaluation of the professor’s pedagogy with Zion and Maria.

Finally, we call the fourth move “*praxis of praxis*” (Matusov and Marjanovic-Shane 2012). It is critical examination of the practice and its values as the whole: its limitations, desirability, and testing against alternative values. In the case above, the professor and his undergraduate students were engaged in *praxis of praxis* when they discussed whether students are for the school or the school for the students.

In developing our dialogic approach to creativity, we examine an actual educational event testing our theoretical categories, and simultaneously trying to compare them to other contemporary existing conceptual and theoretical interpretations of creativity. Furthermore, we address different educational

implications that contemporary approaches to creativity have in comparison to the authorial dialogic approach we are developing. We show that a dialogic approach to creativity promotes and gives rise to different educational conditions for both the teachers and the students, and that in itself it promotes creative authorial agency, thereby changing the educational process and outcomes.

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