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A Theoretical and Creative Life

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Introduction: Writing, Thinking

At first glance, art and philosophy might appear to be at odds.[1] Art revels in the singular, if not the extraordinary. It is a poetic exploration of an artist's unique voice and vision. Philosophers, on the other hand, pursue something different: They search for true principles that can apply broadly to many situations, if not all.

Yet this seeming conflict was absent from my mind when, at sixteen, I embraced my life's calling: I wanted to deepen my (and our) understanding of existence. Writing fiction seemed like a good way to understand the world.

Throughout my twenties and thirties, I dedicated my artistic life—which unfortunately was not my full-time life—to fiction writing. I wrote stories and created characters, progressively publishing several novels in French that were later, in some cases, translated into other languages: English, Chinese, Turkish, Swedish, and so on. Critics labeled my works as "philosophical fiction"—a description I accepted even though it wasn't always meant as praise.

My interest in fiction declined over time: After turning thirty, I found myself writing philosophical essays. Theory became essential to me, and truth more important than storytelling. Beyond just writing, I always wanted to think deeply and in an embodied fashion—this was, and remains, my greatest joy.

In my thirties, still living in Paris, I hadn't yet entered academia as a profession. I was what people called an "independent thinker." My essays, partly phenomenological, combined philosophical, literary, and poetic elements with a natural flow that pure logic lacks. Through writing and self-reflection, I realized that well-crafted philosophy and literary art aren't radically different. Both must in fact balance the specific with the universal.

Philosophy at its best isn't purely abstract; it connects with the thinker's personal experiences and subjective world. It starts from individual experience before growing into a broader worldview. Similarly, fiction works best when it helps us think through metaphors and analogies that carry a worldview. The world of story and fiction writing and the larger world of philosophical writing can mirror each other's interpretations.

For the ancient Greeks, *theoria* wasn't just abstract thought either; it was a way of life, an embodied coherence, a form of felt contemplation (Aristotle 1995: 441–2). To theorize with passion means creating order from chaos but also letting creative chaos emerge from order—it's an endless creative dialectic. Truth partly changes and evolves through its continuous collective creation.

Art, in its many forms, tries to capture the phenomenological truth of what we find remarkable and sublime—think of Cezanne painting the same Provençal hillside again and again. Sometimes art shows us society's hidden side, revealing our mistakes and flaws, calling us to seek wisdom, justice, or peace. Sometimes beauty and meaning are right in front of us, clear and visible, if we just take time to look carefully beyond our routines and conventions. Other times, they hide in remote spaces, estranged by corruption or decay. As Deleuze and Guattari (1996: 163–90) explain, our feelings and perceptions help us make sense of things just as much as our concepts do. There's a continuous connection between art's storytelling and philosophy's ideas; bringing them together can become a way of life.

We know that our body moves in the world through proprioception, a sense for its own presence in space-time. I believe that our mind moves in the world through what I call "proprioconception," a sense of its own felt cogitation in the space-time of symbols. Such is life in its existential flow, a dance between proprioception and *proprioconception*.

Creative Real

At age eight, I developed an unusual belief: I imagined I wasn't really my parents' child but came from another planet. I saw myself as an observer from space, sent to the earth to study humans and write reports about them. This

childhood fantasy became a preview of my future work of writing books and articles that sometimes feel like messages to a distant civilization.

My early writing often seemed strange, especially in first drafts, although I did not try to be different intentionally. Poetry—including philosophical poetry—isn't primarily about trying to be unusual; it's about expressing our natural uniqueness and desiring to be understood without being forced to fit standard rules. One publisher noted how often the word *normal* appears in one of my novels. Normal may indeed be the enemy of both art and philosophical practice.

Unlike physical or mental health, philosophical health shouldn't follow strict rules or offer the same solution for everyone. Instead, it's about expressing our unique form of life while helping create a shared world where diversity can unite (see de Miranda 2024).

I aim for my philosophical practice to be open rather than rigid, allowing some mystery, because it comes from lived experience rather than pure analysis. Embodied philosophy, like poetry, tries to understand how everything connects without destroying that connection. Theory shouldn't kill its subject through excessive analysis. The world isn't a puzzle of separate pieces but a flowing whole, a giant coral reef with parts moving together like fish.

In my books, I welcomed this idea of everything growing together in what I called "Creal," the Creative Real. I first introduced the term *Creal* in my novel *Paridaiza*. The story imagines a future where people leave behind a deteriorating earth to live in a sophisticated digital reality, similar to what we now call a metaverse. Through this fictional setting, I began exploring how humans create and inhabit new worlds, whether digital or physical. *Creal* is a portmanteau word combining *creation* and *real*: it means that our ultimate reality, the true Real, is a creative flux. This view is shared by most process philosophers, from Heraclitus to Deleuze, via Whitehead.

My exploration of the Creative Real or Creal didn't stop with fiction. I developed it into a philosophical framework called "crealectics"—literally, the study and practice of working and living with creative reality. Think of crealectics as a bridge between imagination and reality: it examines how we transform possibilities into compossible (compatible) worlds and experiences. For example, in my current action-research role at Vattenfall, a Swedish

energy company, I'm in the process of establishing a "crealectic laboratory" in partnership with their research and development unit. Here, we use philosophical practice to spark innovation by helping people tap into their creative and critical potential, both individually and in groups. We're showing how philosophical thinking can have practical applications in the engineering world (de Miranda 2025).

This work demonstrates one of my core beliefs: The boundary between imagination and reality isn't as firm as we may think. When we create anything—whether it's a story, business strategy, or scientific theory—we're engaging in "compossibilizing." This term means the art of bringing different possibilities together in ways that work harmoniously. It's like being a composer who must ensure all instruments in an orchestra play together or an architect who must ensure all elements of a building support each other in a way where the whole is greater than the sum of the parts.

When we create, we're not generating something from nothing. Instead, we're more like filters or channels for the Creal, the endless creative potential that already exists in the universe. Just as a sculptor doesn't create the marble's capacity for adopting shapes but reveals a form within it, artists and philosophers don't create raw possibilities but help shape or structure them into meaningful forms.

To understand this better, consider how a novelist works. They don't invent language or human emotions; rather, they filter and arrange these existing elements into new patterns that tell a story. Similarly, when scientists or philosophers develop new ideas, they're not creating fundamental truths but discovering and articulating patterns that were virtually possible within reality itself. As philosopher Alfred North Whitehead argued, creativity isn't something humans add to a static and passive universe; it's built into the very fabric of reality, the universe being deeply creative in itself (Whitehead 1978: 21). In other words, the universe is constantly generating possibilities and evolving, and human creativity is just one expression of this larger creative and perhaps unconscious force.

Art, in all its forms, shows that we can help build worlds, breathing creativity into everything we do. But we can only create effectively if we listen deeply to the creative flow that already exists in the cosmos. Creativity isn't just humans

imposing their will on chaos or nothingness; it's a fundamental feature of the universe, and humans are one local, perhaps privileged, expression of it.

A central principle of crealectics is indeed that creativity forms the fundamental essence of the universe. Just as energy and matter are the basic building blocks of reality, creative processes are equally elemental. If we understand the cosmos as a "Creal"—a Creative Real in flux—then our intelligence must work in harmony with this creative nature. Crealectic intelligence means learning to work with these natural creative forces to bring about harmonious realities that align with both what is possible and what can exist together more or less harmoniously—that is "compossibly."

This idea of compossibilization builds on the work of the philosopher Leibniz, who made a crucial observation in the seventeenth century: While many things might be possible in theory, not everything can exist together in the same world (Leibniz 1991). Some realities can coexist peacefully, while others clash. When two or more possibilities can exist together without contradiction, we call them "compossible"; they are compatible rather than conflicting. Our laws of physics, for instance, define what can coexist in our physical world. You can't have an object that is both completely still and in motion at the same time; these states aren't compossible. Our reality emerges from these compatible possibilities working together, creating what we might call "worlded structures"—organized patterns of existence that arise from the interplay of creative forces.

Beyond traditional logical analysis and dialectical reasoning, though both remain important philosophically, crealectic consciousness—indeed, the consciousness of the thoughtful artist—recognizes that we are constantly immersed in a flow of creative possibilities. These possibilities exist before we even begin to think about them, given to us through our fundamental connection to the original creative force of the universe. This perspective matters deeply for practical philosophy: When we cultivate a relationship with possibility and compossibility, it changes how we act and think.

Crealectic intelligence helps us see the world not as a collection of separate parts but as an interconnected, living whole. In this view, living well means embracing our role as artists of reality, consciously shaping our world through thoughtful, careful, long-term action. This is where art and philosophy converge: Both seek to discover and create the most harmonious combination of

possibilities—what we might call, echoing Leibniz, the best of all compossible worlds.

Philosophical Counseling

Born to Portuguese parents, I was brought to France as a toddler. This early migration left me in a kind of liminal space, often feeling out of place. I grew up in a Paris neighborhood dominated by brutalist architecture, living among gray structures that resembled Bentham's Panopticon—a prison designed so that inmates could be controlled from a central point of gaze while observing them continuously (Miller and Miller 1987). This was my territory, where horizons seemed limited and natural spaces were rare, making the vitality of freedom or nature seem like a distant promise.

During childhood, I struggled with a sense of disillusionment. Sitting at my desk, I would dream of colorful pyramids—perhaps a personal symbol for a better world. I felt fundamentally alienated, as if I couldn't fit into the complex puzzle of human society.

While it's common for children to use imagination to make sense of their world as part of normal development, some of us spend our first twenty years feeling profoundly out of place. The challenge isn't just that we feel misunderstood; more fundamentally, we struggle to understand other human beings, who are yet supposed to be "like us." Philosophy later taught me an important lesson: It's normal to feel abnormal and perhaps abnormal to be completely normal.

Undoubtedly, forming a shared world requires codes and structures. Without them, we would lack the patterns needed to create stable and common realities. These codes are like invisible threads that weave together our common existence. One may think of them as the grammar of reality; just as language needs rules to be meaningful, our shared world needs structures to be navigable.

However, in the crealectic view, these rules and codes play a secondary role compared to something more fundamental: what I call the "crealing emotion" within us. This is our living connection to the endless tide of creation that flows beyond all structured worlds since at least the Big Bang. This expanding force, the Creal, is not just the source of art's inspiration but the very essence

of thought itself. In other words, in *proprioconception*, conception is not only conceptualization but self-creation. We cocreate ourselves all the time.

As a philosophical counselor, my primary role isn't to force people into rigid logical frameworks but rather to help them reconnect with this fundamental creative sensation—their sense of what's possible and what should be compossible—before helping them elaborate and navigate their life's purpose or intersubjective worldview.

Since 2022, my preferred counseling method has been the SMILE_PH approach (sense-making interviews looking at elements of philosophical health), which I developed while working with individuals living with a tetraplegic condition and sitting most of the time in a wheelchair.

This structured dialogue process carefully explores six key dimensions of philosophical health: (1) the bodily sense; (2) the sense of self; (3) the sense of belonging; (4) the sense of the possible; (5) the sense of purpose; and (6) the philosophical sense. By methodically exploring these six aspects, starting from the most tangible—our physical experience of embodiment—counselees can gradually build a personal philosophy that authentically reflects their lived experience. The approach acknowledges that few, if any, individuals have ever achieved a perfectly consistent philosophical system, and this incompleteness is also what keeps philosophy alive and poetic. Even Hegel's *Phenomenology*, which is only roughly systematic, contains inherent ambiguities. This aligns with Merleau-Ponty's insight about the fundamental ambiguity of human existence (Sapontzis 1978). Subjects can never be as clear as objects.

This recognition of life's inherent complexity—a creative dialectic between order and chaos—is why I practice a semistructured approach like SMILE_PH. It provides a framework for meaningful dialogue while leaving room for personal interpretation and style. The method helps people discover their own philosophical voice without forcing them into rigid patterns of thought.

The etymology of *author* suggests something about our bodily nature: To author means to augment or grow, implying that a body engaged in creation naturally tends toward growth, especially in its most productive periods. This innate *joie de vivre* is a sentiment typically associated with artists, who are often described as "bon vivants" in French, or "enjoyers of life" in literal translation. As a young aspiring author, the theme of joy was so central to my existential

and philosophical exploration that it became the simple title of my first novel, *Joie* (de Miranda 1998). Written during my time in New York, in my twenties, its narrative weaves together music, nature, and philosophy, suggesting that composing music, contemplating nature, and engaging in deep thinking aren't mere luxuries but essential nourishment for a soul seeking vivid engagement with the world.

These themes—belonging, creativity, and joy—aren't separate elements but interconnected aspects of philosophical health. They remind us that philosophy isn't just about abstract thinking but about finding our purpose and place in the world and engaging with it fully. The SMILE_PH method of dialogue helps people explore these connections, moving from their immediate bodily experience to broader questions of meaning and purpose.

Sense-Making and Philosophical Practice

The first element of the SMILE_PH method focuses on the bodily sense. In my previous writings, I've argued that the body's ideal state is one of "joie de vivre"—a profound joy that emerges not from external circumstances but from the simple fact of being alive and participating in creation. This joy expresses itself as a desire for unity within diversity or, conversely, diversity within unity. Being truly alive means more than just avoiding death; it means embracing life's natural tendency toward growth, abundance, and playful interconnection.

The second element of philosophical health in SMILE_PH concerns the sense of self. In my case, developing this sense was crucial for survival: My first decades were marked by a father whose verbal abuse and incoherent cynicism created what Augusto Boal would call a "policeman in the head" (Boal and Epstein 1990)—an internal critical voice that took years to quiet. No artist can thrive with such an arbitrary internal critic, and in my experience, the very act of philosophical thinking became a way to escape this destructive influence. In the meantime, my mother was the silent accomplice of the oppressor, offering no alternative refuge. In fact, my father represented not just an internal policeman

but also acted as the "media in the head"—embodying a worldview that saw corruption, danger, and deviance everywhere while forgetting the capacity for wonder, gratefulness, and imagination.

Despite—or perhaps because of—this challenging beginning, I've spent years developing a healthier relationship with myself, remaining my own best friend. Through my writing and investigation, I've sought autonomy, not merely as a reaction against parental influence but as a quest for philosophical grounding—what artists might call finding one's unique style and overview.

Yet I must admit to a very slow pace in achieving a fixed sense of self, if any. My natural curiosity drives me to explore various styles and expressions. Moreover, I've come to understand that our existential selves, inspired by the Creal, are inherently fluid and ambiguous, more like wells of possibility than fixed essences. In my essay *Being and Neonness* (2019), I use neon lights as a metaphor to critique the self-help industry's tendency to push people toward constructing rigid identities—like neon signs that trap a free-flowing gas within inflexible glass structures.

The third element of philosophical health explores the sense of belonging. At age nine or ten, I encountered my first serious bout of existential questioning. My parents' constant arguments created a discordant backdrop to my life. I struggled to understand how these adults could be my guardians or how my schoolmates could be my friends. The communication patterns and mental habits of those around me, including at school, often felt mechanical, distant, or disconnected. Like many teenagers, I found myself in an emotional maze where making sense of the world seemed like an overwhelming challenge.

Today, people often discuss "well-being" but rarely consider what I called "well-belonging" in my book *Ensemblance* (de Miranda 2020a: 240). In an open society, we should be able to find communities that share our worldview actively—groups where we can belong while maintaining our individual perspective. Sometimes the worldview we share with our chosen community might be another form of ideology, but ideally, it's one we've consciously chosen and can critically examine rather than one that's been imposed upon us. We can and should be the authors of our lives, even in a community of interest.

The Sense of the Possible

The fourth element of philosophical health in the SMILE_PH method addresses our relationship with possibility itself. My deep understanding of this dimension came through personal experience. At thirty, I fell into a strong depression. For months, human society appeared to me as nothing more than a flimsy facade, and the earth seemed like a lonely rock drifting meaninglessly through space. Getting out of bed became a monumental task, and each day felt empty. Nothing seemed possible.

What helped me find my way back was channeling creative energy into action. With determined effort, I gathered a team of volunteers and directed my first (and last) short film, *Double or Quits*. We built a set that symbolized the interior of a mind. The story centered on a depressed man playing the board game Risk against his doppelganger—a playful reflection of himself wearing a multicolored Harlequin jacket, like a joker in a deck of cards who can represent all possible values. During production, something remarkable happened: A profound sense of connection flowed between everyone involved, from makeup artists to electricians. The experience of directing this collaborative effort filled me with love and pride, ultimately helping me emerge from my melancholy with a renewed sense of life's possibilities.[2]

We all know people who are physically healthy, mentally capable, and yet wake up feeling that the future is dull or hopeless, just as I once did. Every door seems painted on, an illusion not worth opening, and reality feels like a cardboard stage set. In medieval Europe, when religious thinking dominated, this state was sometimes called "The Dark Night of the Soul" (Barratt Brown 1923). This evocative term has come to represent a universal human experience: a profound spiritual and existential crisis where individuals feel completely disconnected from any sense of the divine or meaningful. They face overwhelming doubts about life's purpose. This desolation goes beyond mere absence of spiritual comfort; it's characterized by a deep sense of emptiness and spiritual drought.

However, connecting depression with spirituality doesn't mean every spiritual crisis indicates mental illness or that depression is always a spiritual journey. Yet the overlap is significant. Depression often triggers existential

questions like "Who am I?" or "What is my purpose?" These are fundamentally philosophical questions that require philosophical engagement to be addressed meaningfully.

Depression's duration and intensity vary greatly. For some, like my experience at thirty, it's intense but relatively brief. For others, it stretches across years like a chronic metaphysical discomfort, demanding endurance. Whether viewed through spiritual, psychological, or philosophical lenses, traversing a desert of depleted possibility tests our capacity to endure, transform, and ultimately transcend even the deepest despair into creative and meaningful action. People can emerge from depression feeling renewed, with a deeper connection to what they find sacred or meaningful, and a more profound sense of inner peace. Since I finished editing this short movie more than twenty years ago, I have experienced almost every day a high sense of the possible.

Within what feels like pure emptiness, there exists potential for profound transformation, provided we recognize that the Creal's abundance is more fundamental than nothingness. A depressive period can serve as a rite of passage, a purification process where the soul sheds unnecessary attachments, destructive illusions, and excessive preoccupation with mundane concerns. By enduring and eventually transcending this desolation, we often develop a clearer, more profound relationship with future possibilities. This can lead to a deeper understanding of our creative role in the cosmos.

I proposed to call "eudynamia" a good sense of the possible. It is a word derived from two Greek words: *eu*, meaning good or well, and *dynamis*, meaning potential, possibility, or empowerment. The term is of course inspired by Aristotle's concept of eudaimonia—often translated perhaps too reductively as "happiness" or "well-being"—which is the realization and fulfillment of one's human nature in a flourishing manner. It is not merely a transient emotion or a fleeting pleasure but a deep and enduring state that embodies the highest creative responsibility for a human being.

But what does "possible" mean exactly? As we have seen, Leibniz defined the possible as that which does not imply a contradiction within itself but also with the fundamental structure of the surrounding compossible world. The possible becomes dangerously limitless if it is not related to something else. Taken in isolation, in monadic bubbles of reality, there is an infinity of possibles,

even if we never see most of them actualized. There are many possible facts or worlds, but very often, they are not compatible with each other.

If this event or state is compatible with another event or state in the same world, then it is compossible, possible together. Compossibles are simply realities that are compatible rather than contradictory. Many people tend to think of possibilities in isolation without considering the articulation or consequences of their possibilities in a given world, environment, or society.

In fact, one might say that it is the most common mistake of humanity in the last two hundred years: to have a blinkered view of the possible, a monotropic mindset that can achieve great innovations or feats in specific fields, often designed without considering the general social and natural environment and the long-term global consequences. The past three centuries of industrialization celebrated the realm of possibility. Yet, now, our damaged planet yearns for the triumph of the "compossible"—a holistic, harmonious vision of what can be.

There again, art can teach us to live more meaningfully, because it is a tradition in which compossibility, as composition, has always been important. A work of art is a set of possibles that have been composed, *compossibilized,* to suggest a harmonious state in the piece or, by critical contrast, outside of it.

Similarly, for individuals, a true understanding of possibility must be an embrace of the compossible, wherein diverse realities converge and expand their potential through optimal consonance. Leibniz was often mocked for his idea of the best of possible worlds, but he did not mean that our world is perfect; rather, the world in which we live, although locally imperfect, is the one that maximizes the coexistence of as many possibles as it is compossible for the whole to incorporate.

For Leibniz, the best of all possible worlds maximizes the existence of its multiplicity of beings—that is, the full expression of their collective eudynamia in the long term. Of course, this can imply a local trauma for such and such individual being, like the premature death of a loved one, for instance. Voltaire, in his famous *Candide* (2006), mocked Leibniz by pointing to the many infants dead in the Lisbon earthquake of 1755: How could this be the best of possible worlds? A good sense of the possible is not enough: We also need a purpose, a garden to cultivate.

Purpose and Worldview

The fifth element of philosophical health is the sense of purpose. I discovered my life's purpose at sixteen, following a transformative solo journey to Africa. As a teenager, I was an avid reader, particularly drawn to nineteenth-century and existentialist novels that questioned conventional reality. But I also craved direct experience and discovery. In the summer of 1987, I convinced my parents to let me travel alone, supported by a Zellidja scholarship that perhaps helped ease their concerns about the risks involved. I spent a month exploring Guinea-Bissau, then a politically unstable military nation with one of the world's poorest economies.

The country had gained independence from Portuguese colonization during my early childhood. In a curious twist of fate, my mother had taught there briefly while pregnant with me, making my journey a symbolic and perhaps somewhat Freudian return to my origins. I traveled the country with a backpack, interviewing people about their daily lives and writing an essay about postcolonial lived experience interwoven with my personal observations—sixteen years after my prenatal connection to the place.

Guinea-Bissau's culture and way of life profoundly challenged my European assumptions. I realized how much of what I took for granted was actually contingent—that is, not necessary but merely one possible way of living. Time itself moved differently there; I could walk for hours on a jungle path, trying to reach the next village, with apparently nothing happening except monkeys throwing stones at me. When I returned to Paris, I would stand bewildered in supermarkets, questioning why they offered ten different kinds of toothpastes. The elemental simplicity of African life left a lasting impression, revealing by contrast the meaningless superficiality of Western consumerism.

My life's purpose crystallized during this period, shaped by both writing my African report and my deep appreciation for the great novels I had read and their wandering protagonists: I wanted to write books that not only would help me navigate the world meaningfully but might also help others do the same.

Many individuals who seek philosophical counseling are on a similar quest for purpose regardless of whether they live in Dhaka (Bangladesh) or Stockholm

(Sweden). They deeply desire clarity about their fundamental life orientation. They want to be more than just a cog or a ghost in the machine. Beyond questioning their place in the world, they seek to understand their unique value and perspective.

Their search goes beyond mere existential contemplation; they want help defining a set of guiding principles or values that can serve as an ethical and metaphysical compass, directing them toward realizing their personal ideals in the best possible world. Many of my counselees are curious about aligning their actions with fundamental principles to create some kind of a legacy, fostering environments that enhance both their own experiences and contribute to harmonious existence. Like writing a long novel, philosophical practice trains us in long-term thinking, encouraging us to consider the distant future consequences of our present decisions.

The sixth and last element of philosophical health is the philosophical sense itself. In 2007, I found myself again in my childhood apartment in Paris, living alone this time. I was deeply engaged in writing my speculative fiction novel *Paridaiza*, now translated into English (de Miranda 2020b).

Clara and Nuno, the main characters, discover a unique dimension harmonizing the private depths of a person's inner core with the outer world as if external reality reflected the inner realm. I initially called this nexus "Real-Real" (*Réel-Réel* in French). However, this name felt inadequate, more like an engine's stutter or a Platonic outburst than the lyrical term I sought. The Real seemed too reactive, not epic enough. While writing, I recalled Nietzsche's insight about active creative transformation of the Real versus mere reactive adaptation (Nietzsche 1974). This resonated deeply, and a new word emerged: *Créel* in French, combining indeed *creation* and *real* to form *Creal*. Despite my publisher's doubts, flirting with censorship, about this neologism, I insisted; the term not only found its place in my narrative but, as mentioned earlier, began to shape my own worldview, making implicit understanding explicit.

Over time, the Creal transcended its fictional origins. It evolved philosophically and existentially, painting a broader epistemic canvas. This is how I still view the world: The Creal is the often invisible field of creative becoming present all around us, working to generate unified compossibilities from infinite disparate possibilities, mixing both actualized reality and unactualized potentials.

Eventually, crealectics became for me the art of compossibilizing, referring to how humans and nonhumans build worlds. This, briefly described, is my philosophical sense of life. I see all of us as potential crealecticians, philosopher-artists.

Why does a world exist as it does and not in some other way? Most philosophers throughout history have tried to develop their philosophical sense into a system, seeking an abstract truth capable of explaining everything through universal conceptualization. This was called cosmology—a poetic description of the whole, its origin and dynamics—or ontology, a discourse on being.

We might not have a fully developed worldview, but we often have some sense of it—a vague intuition underlying our everyday choices, actions, or avoidances. Discussing this with a philosophical counselor is crucial because, retrospectively, all elements of philosophical health—body, self, belonging, possibility, and purpose—are influenced by our worldview or the lack of it. Whether we're conscious of it or not, it significantly impacts our behavior, decision-making, and interactions with others. It shapes our perception of reality, informs our moral and ethical beliefs, and influences our attitudes toward social and political issues.

When practicing philosophy, it's essential to consider whether embracing a particular life philosophy and its associated beliefs brings genuine fulfillment or merely serves as a coping mechanism for deeper insecurities and fears. The philosophies and beliefs we adopt aren't just abstract concepts; they become the very fabric of our reality, influencing our steps and paths, and reflect more or less well the shape of our destiny.

Conclusion: Deep Listening

I remember a pivotal moment in Paris when I was twenty-seven.

I had temporarily stepped away from philosophical reading, focusing instead on novels and books about society. At the time, I was writing novels and working as a journalist. One day, during a solitary lunch, I was reading an article about Hegel's philosophy between bites of pizza when I was suddenly overwhelmed with emotion. Tears came to my eyes as I reconnected with philosophy as a way of life. "Philosophy is sublime," I recalled.

Philosophy had been my oxygen, but somehow, in recent months or years, I had forgotten to breathe deeply. Within weeks, I resigned from journalism and, while unemployed, wrote my first philosophical essay, *Ego Trip* (2004), which was published during my master of philosophy studies at the Sorbonne. The book critiqued contemporary egocentrism and how individual claims can undermine universal thinking. It called for a shared cosmology beyond self-assertion and anthropocentrism. Above all, it defended deep listening and, once again, the cosmic sacredness of creation.

A philosophical counseling session is fundamentally an open conversation where the philosophical practitioner practices deep listening. This goes beyond mere hearing; it's an intentional immersion in the present moment, absorbing not only spoken words but also emotions, nuances, gestures, and underlying meanings. Philosophy, at its core, examines existential questions that emerge through dialogue: questions about our nature, purpose, and place in the cosmos. Through such conversations, we validate or challenge others' existence and narratives, indirectly affirming our shared presence in existence. In a world often dominated by solipsistic noise and selfish hurry, deep listening becomes a path to connection, understanding, and common ground.

But listening isn't limited to human voices; artists understand that the cosmos itself is a symphony deserving as much attention—if not more—than our neighbor's story or complaint. Listening isn't passive: It regenerates agency by fostering intercreation.

Philosophical practice helps people become active and intercreative rather than merely reactive. A higher purpose ideally manifests through affirmation rather than reaction or negativity. Through purpose's transcendence, people can embrace their circumstances, affirm their life's reality without bad faith, and actively create a space for meaning and encouragement rather than simply reacting to external events or seeking refuge in traditional moral systems.

I eventually stopped writing novels when I realized my most important work of fiction was my life itself and my role as a real-world shaper. The world is our artwork. We are constantly worlding our realities, and this should be a thoughtful process. Our life is theoretical and creative in that an active, performative desire for contemplation and understanding shapes it. Every day I am—we are—worlding with the Creal.

The crealectic music of the mundane spheres is about fostering symphony within apparent cacophony. In it, art and philosophical practice become one unified action: the process of composing our perceptions and thoughts into a shared world—perhaps, tomorrow, the best of all compossible worlds.

Notes

1 The time to write this chapter was possible through funding from the European Union's Horizon Europe research and innovation program under the Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions grant agreement No. 101081293.

2 The short movie *Double or Quits* can be seen on YouTube: https://youtu.be/PlPL4amSVv0.

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