Songs in the Key of Life:
Cultivating the Student qua Artist to Empower Authentic Becoming

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Twenty-first century uncertainties privilege creative action. Creativity is an emergent property of dynamic relationships between individuals and their environment. Adopting a structured uncertainty curriculum design embodying the student qua artist and classroom qua creative recording studio, students experience actionable uncertainty. Such experiences foster intrapersonal insights. Giving expression to emerging self-concepts cultivates students' authentic voices, nurturing investment in care for who they are, who they are endeavouring to become, and to perceive their potentiality as they transition from university.

STRANGE DAYS HAVE FOUND US: NURTURING CARE FOR AN UNCERTAIN WORLD

If there is a dark within and without
And there is a light. Don't let it go out
"Song for Someone" (U2, 2014, track 4).

The world is increasingly interwoven with uncertainty manifesting in ruptures such as resurgent nationalism, increasing inequality, alienation, environmental foreboding, dissolving trust in institutions and post Covid 19 ambiguities (Beghetto, 2016; 2020). These are postnormal times "…[an] inbetween period where old orthodoxies are dying, new ones not yet emerged, and nothing really makes sense" (Sardar, 2010, p. 435). To effectively navigate postnormality, uncertainty must be welcomed as an "…animating force, [opening up] new states of awareness, new possibilities for thought and action…" (Beghetto, 2020, p.2). Supporting future change ready graduates requires nurturing students' care for ideas, others

and critically, themselves (Dall' Alba, 2012). Encouraging students' authenticity stimulates agency that *there is a light* to effectively navigate uncertainty. For curricula to support students' effective transition from university a question arises:

Can Curricula Be Designed So Students Experience Creatively Navigating Uncertainty?

This chapter outlines a curriculum experiment: *Graduate Assessment Centre Simulations* (GACS hereafter) spanning the *Transition to Professional Life* module suite (TPL hereafter) in the *BA (Hons) Economics (through Transformational Learning)* (BAECN hereafter) programme, University College Cork. These classroom activities and assessment (called *performances)[1]* nurture students' investment in their ability, motivation, and willingness to invite *actionable uncertainty* (Beghetto, 2020). Encouraging students' engagement with who they are, concomitantly invites the excavation of ingrained psychological obstacles to who they are becoming. Through intrapersonal insights, Kaufmann & Beghetto's *mini-c creativity* (2007), students (individually and collaboratively) may "progress to interpersonally judged novel and meaningful contributions" (Beghetto & Kaufman, 2007, p. 59).

This chapter's prolegomenon highlights salient aspects of U2's recording process prefacing GACS's metaphorical frame. The significance of explicitly integrating students' epistemological and ontological development is outlined. The experiment's underpinning *Structured Uncertainty* design and student *qua* artist/classroom *qua* creative recording studio as performative metaphors are then considered. Specific GACS designs and students' reflective expressions unfolding from their experiences are then detailed.

ACROBAT: A MUSICIAL PROLEGOMENON

And you can dream
So dream out loud
And you can find
Your own way out
"Acrobat" (U2,1991, track 11).

During a 1989 concert Bono (U2's singer) announced "…we have to go away and dream it all up again" (cited in Leonard, 2021, section 1, para 2) foreshadowing U2's creative musical shift first expressed in 1991's *Achtung Baby*. Creativity is an emergent property of dynamic relationships between actor(s) and their cultural and material world (Glăveanu, 2013). Employing Glăveanu's *Five A's Framework of Creativity* (2013), the recording *(action)* of *Achtung Baby (artifact)* illustrates creativity as a dialogue between *actor(s)* (U2), perceived *affordances* and *audience* (others assisting, contributing, critiquing or using an artifact (including actor(s) as their own audience)).

To arrive at *Achtung Baby*'s creative plateau U2 had to *let go* their artistic certainties and *let come* uncertainty. U2 were facilitated through this liminality by Brian Eno (producer as *audience*) "[my role was] to come in and erase anything that sounded too much like U2" (cited in Leonard, 2021, section 3, para 2). Eno's role designing generative spaces was pivotal. Features such as his *Oblique Strategy cards* (aphorisms and gnomic suggestions e.g., *'Honour the error as a hidden intention'; 'Trust in the you of*

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