

# Good essay about culture and creativity

[Art & Culture](#), [Artists](#)



## **First Essay**

### **The San People**

The San people is a cultural tribe living in southern Africa. Scientists conducted a study of this group's DNA and discovered that the San people may be the oldest population on Earth descending from fourteen different populations. Scientists discovered genetic variation in their DNA, making the San people the most genetically diverse population in the world. The San people relate to the history of creativity because this population illustrates the outcomes of cultural fusion, so to speak, and therefore, represent the creative construction of culture based on traditional and contemporary influences. The development of the San people's culture also illustrate creativity that takes place when two or more cultures intersect and bring about change or transformation in the traditional culture. The San people's culture is an amalgamation of earlier cultures, and later on modern influences.

### **The San People and Phases of Creativity**

Based on discussions about the San people, I believe that this group does not follow similar phases of creativity. Phases of creativity begin during preparation and elaboration. It appears that the San people's culture has not undergone evaluation or elaboration, nor did the San people find an issue about their culture that motivated them to change it. The San people's creativity is largely influenced by ancestors and cultural influences.

## **Modern vs. Traditional Views about Creativity**

Traditional views about creativity focus on the influence of long-standing beliefs, customs and traditions, ideas, and values on creativity. Hence, people aim to sustain tradition through the continued perpetration of traditional culture or values. When faced with change or progress, groups in society find creative ways to maintain or observe their beliefs and traditions despite the pressure of modern society. Negotiation is an important aspect of this traditional view because groups find a way to adapt to changes while still sustaining values and traditions.

Modern views about creativity, on the other hand, frame the creative process primarily as a response to modern society. Modern society undergoes constant change or transformation. Consequently, these changes stimulate creativity as people observe or practice creativity to respond and adapt the aforementioned changes. The difference between traditional and modern views is that the former is concerned with the preservation of tradition despite change while modern views aim for continuous growth and development through creative processes that further modernity in society.

## **Ethical Problems of Modern Anthropologists helping Traditional Cultures**

One ethical issue concerning the involvement of modern anthropologists in helping traditional cultures, however, is that they run the risk of influencing people's culture. Anthropologists could be in a position of imposing contemporary or foreign beliefs and traditions on cultural groups. In addition, anthropologists' biases may influence how they view and treat cultures.

## **Traditional or Modern Cultures and Creative Approaches**

Exposure to modern medicine expanded the creative approaches of traditional cultures because the people learn how to effectively manage illness or disease. Due to modern medicine, traditional cultures need not merely rely on herbal medicine or rituals to take care of the sick as they learned the importance of consulting with health care professionals and using pharmaceutical drugs to cure illness.

For modern cultures, the prevalent use of various technologies to improve efficiency in the workplace or in accomplishing daily tasks and responsibilities reflects the expansion of creative approaches. Due to technological development, modern culture continuously find ways to improve communication and productivity with the invention of devices and software or application.

## **Second Writing**

Artists and Scientists in Michael Apted's Documentaries

Documentary filmmaker Michael Apted explored the creative process of artists in the film *Inspirations* (1997). Apted interviewed prominent people in the arts and architecture including glass sculptor Dale Chihully, musician David Bowie, choreographer Edouard Lock, dancer Louise LeCavalier, poet Nora Naranjo-Morse, artist Roy Lichtenstein, and architect Tadao Ando. In *Me & Isaac Newton* (1999), Apted explored developments in the field of science. Apted interviewed several prominent figures from various scientific fields including environmental physicist Ashok Gadgil, pharmaceutical chemist Gertrude Belle Elion, physician Karol Sikora, computer scientist Maja Mataric,

theoretical physicist Michio Kaku, conservationist and primatologist Patricia Chapple Wright, and linguist and psychologist Steven Arthur Pinker.

## **Artists and Scientists**

Based on the interviews with artists and scientists, although art and science are significantly different disciplines, both groups share the same drives and purpose. A common theme in the documentaries is that artists and scientists share an inner sense of desire and purpose to create and contribute, whether it is in the form of music for artists or cure for diseases. Creativity among artists and scientists interviewed in the documentaries reflect their yearning and ability to 'do' and 'move', a desire that commonly began during childhood or their early years. The scientists from *Me & Isaac Newton* were primarily influenced by modern approaches such that new knowledge, developments, and inventions influence their work and contribute to their progress. Artists in *Inspirations*, on the other hand, follow traditional approaches since their creative process is internal and is not mainly influenced by modern factors.

## **Individual Creative Process**

Some artists and scientists begin during the 'insight' stage when they have a 'Eureka!' moment or conceive of a plan for their vision or a solution to an identified problem. Scientists more likely go through all the phases of creativity that begins during incubation. Scientists are more discerning of problems and shortcomings and they view their craft, whether they are in the field of medicine such as Sikora or in computer science such as Mataric, as a means to an end. Hence, they practice creativity to address problems

and come up with solutions or alternatives to existing conditions. Artists, on the other hand, particularly the ones that work in the entertainment industry such as Bowie, LeCavalier, and Chihully, often begin as a result of insight or realization of what they feel they need to express through their music or their art work. Creativity for these people is instinctive rather than a conscious means to accomplish specific objectives, which is the norm for scientists.

## **Gender Differences**

In terms of gender, women are more likely to talk about instinct as a primary motivator in their creative process whereas only a few men in both documentaries mention instinct. In addition, gender differences is palpable in society's expectation of men and women. For instance, Kaku shared that his parents expected him to behave like other boys who were more interested in playing basketball. Hence, societal expectations influence the gendered views of individuals' interest and work or craft.

## **Thematic Similarities or Differences**

A common theme in artists and scientists' experiences is that their process of creativity does not strictly follow the phases, although scientists are more inclined to follow the phases of creativity than artists. Another common theme in both documentaries is the definition of creativity as something that is innate and activated by an individual's inner interest as well as learning over the years. This was interesting for me because it sparks the debate between the ideas that creativity is innate or creativity could be cultivated through learning.

## **Works Cited**

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