

## Creativity and Society

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## Tolerance for Creativity

- Societies differ in
  - Degree of tolerance
  - Domains of tolerance
- Tolerance depends on degree
  - to which culture is traditional
  - of belief in individuality and individual rights
  - to which creativity furthers society's goals

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## Traditional Culture and Creativity

- Group cultural identity
  - Common belief and customs persisting over time
- Traditional cultures
  - Commitment of each generation to inherited customs and beliefs
- The more traditional a culture
  - The more resistance to creativity

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## “Traditional” vs. “Modern”

- Social roles prescribed
- Good & evil are distinct
- Truth is not debatable
- Individual choices restricted to social prescriptions
- Social roles achieved
- Good & evil are relative
- Competition of ideas
- Individual choices aren't restricted to social prescriptions

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## Traditional Culture and Creativity

- Innovate over time
  - Put value on old ways of doing things
  - Limit contemporary behavior
- Determines conditions for creativity
  - How things are done
  - Traditions serve as models
  - Tradition used to comprehend novelty
  - Repetition and Reinterpretation



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## Middle Ages: Judith Slaying Holofernes



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## Current Themes: Romeo & Juliet



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## Modern Societies with Traditional Elements

- Threatened by and resist changes to traditional elements
  - Gender roles
  - Puritanism: Nudity, sexuality



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## Robert Mapplethorpe

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## Robert Mapplethorpe

- Private funding
  - With loss of government funding (NEA)
- Contemporary Arts Center of Cincinnati prosecuted
  - “Pandering obscenity”

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## Tradition and Obscenity

- Based on tradition
- Depend on individual experience
  - More familiar = less obscene
- Result of historical/cultural conditioning

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## Traditional Culture and Creativity

- Western “modern” culture has evolved
- Modern idea of creativity rooted in Western tradition
  - Self made man
  - Innovation and entrepreneurship
  - Creativity as problem solving
  - Individualism
- “Creativity is an important American value”

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## Belief in the Individual and Creativity

- Tolerance of creativity influences by belief in individual as well as individual rights and freedoms
- More individualistic cultures
  - More tolerant of creativity

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## Belief in the Individual and Creativity

- As belief in individual gained prominence
  - Increased value of creativity and creative achievement
- Middle ages
  - Identity was social role
- Renaissance
  - Creative genius
  - Respect for what made them different

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## Individualism vs. Collectivism

- Individualism (West)
  - Identity = personal attributes
  - Own goals more important than group goals
- Collectivism (East)
  - Identity = group identifications
  - Goals of one's group more important than own goals

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## Individualism vs. Collectivism

- Individualistic cultures
  - Admired
    - Uniqueness, personality, individual strengths
- Collectivist cultures
  - Admired
    - “Team player,” not attracting attention from others

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## Eastern Creativity: Japanese Fashion

- Japanese fashion
  - Borrowed and adapted Western Fashion
  - Current uniquely Japanese creations
    - Valued by West

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Kogal



Cosplay



Goth/Lolita

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h.NAOTO

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### Eastern Creativity: Japanese Fashion

- Limits to tolerance
  - For the young
  - Females: makes dating difficult

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### Western Creativity: Discourage Extremes

- Possible to be too individualistic

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## Eastern Creativity: Japanese Manga

- Almost entirely a Japanese medium
- Substituted for TV after WW2
  - Most popular form of entertainment in '40s
- Appeals to all sectors of population

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## Eastern Creativity: Japanese Manga

- Popularity in U.S. began in late 90s
  - Replacing graphic novel sales
  - Promotion by books stores, familiarity with style
- Popularity in Japan is waning

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## Japanese Manga: Dojinshi

- Self published manga
  - Sold at dojinshi conventions
  - 90% based on other creator's works
    - Flagrant copyright violations
- Creation of "Anmoku no ryokai" business model
  - Unspoken agreement
- Revitalizing industry

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## Japanese Manga/Anime

- Large contributor to GNP
  - Failing popularity cause for concern
  - Recovering from a recession
- Government & business
  - See necessity of support
    - Foster growth
    - Prevent stagnation

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## Society's Goals and Creativity

- Degree to which creativity furthers society's goals
  - Creativity will be supported
- If creativity threatens power structure
  - Creativity will not be tolerated

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## Society and Creativity

- Society support allows creativity to flourish
  - Great advances in technology, arts, and sciences
- Creative advances benefit society
  - Power and wealth

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## Society Support: Renaissance



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## Society Support: Princeton

- Backwater teaching institution
- Donations by Rockefeller foundation
  - Recruit best mathematicians
- Attained power and influence
  - Attracted best students
  - Developed new technologies
    - Helped win WW2
- Current top U.S. university

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## Society Support: Cold War

- Space race
  - Financing lunar exploration
- Study of creativity
  - Guilford's APA address
    - Identify creative individuals
    - Protect and foster creativity

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## Society Repression of Creativity

- New regimes destroying creative works of past regimes
  - Iconoclasm
- Only sanction works supporting society goals

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## Cultural Revolution

- Mao- Political revolution follows cultural revolution
  - “Four Olds” should be smashed
  - Red Guards did the smashing

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## Creativity and Current Power Structure

- Creativity that threatens current power structure will be stifled
  - Vested interest in status quo

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## Creativity and Current Power Structure

- “Paradigm shift” in science
  - Anomalies unexplained by accepted paradigm
  - Throws science into crisis
  - New paradigm is formed
- New paradigm vigorously resisted
  - “Gatekeepers” may prevent publication
  - Employment may be difficult

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## Threats to Current Power Structure

- Position in organization affects
  - Earning potential
  - Position in society
  - Investment in maintaining rank inequalities
- Restricts organizational creativity

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