

Kurs: EG1017 Examensarbete, kandidat, musik- och medieproduktion, 15 hp  
2018

Konstnärlig kandidatexamen i musik, 180 hp

Institutionen för Musik- och medieproduktion

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# The Paradox of Creativity

Skriftlig reflektion inom självständigt arbete



## **Abstract**

Interviews with Swedish and Ugandan creatives are the main data sources of this work, as well as my own reflections while spending eight weeks in Uganda. The purpose of this project was to compare and resonate on cultural differences between my own previous experiences and what I experienced in Uganda during my stay and how such cultural differences may affect creativity. The results show that abundance and scarcity have a direct connection to creative thinking. The creative process is dependent on a large knowledge base, but also on the ability to think outside the box. The colonization of Africa still affects the way Ugandans experience their capability to control their lives and future, and thereby the development of the country. Artistic individuals, no matter religious or not, are all experiencing spiritual, or magical, connections when creating. Religion and culture have a large impact on creativity. The creative personality is based on a complex mind of paradoxical traits. Blocked creatives can be un-blocked by learning how to nurture their artist.

Keywords: Creativity; Uganda; Colonization; Creative's block; Religion; Abundance; Spirituality

Nyckelord: Kreativitet; Uganda; Kolonisering; Religion; Skaparsvacka; Överflöd; Andlighet

# List of contents

<b>Introduction.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Method .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Results .....</b>	<b>2</b>
Competition and teamwork.....	4
Creativity and the comfort-zone .....	4
Creativity and schooling .....	5
Creativity as a spiritual matter .....	7
<b>Discussion .....</b>	<b>8</b>
Abundance and creativity .....	8
Abundance, flow and efficiency .....	10
The difference between skill, creative expression and creativity.....	10
The paradox .....	12
Creativity - a matter of luxury .....	13
<b>Conclusions.....</b>	<b>14</b>
Being a blocked creative .....	14
<b>References.....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Annex .....</b>	<b>16</b>

# Introduction

In this essay I will give an account for and reflect on my exploration of creativity. Leaving my home in Sweden for an eight-week field trip to visit Uganda I have been able to compare and resonate on cultural differences and how it affects creativity. I have tried to understand the many paradoxes that seem to be a part of the creative personality, the yin and yang captured in the same persona.

My interest in creativity was captured as I was made aware of a commonly occurring phenomena amongst artists; the creative's block. I wanted to learn more about the experience, what might cause it, and if it could be a result of lifestyle.

The purpose of this project is to compare and resonate on cultural differences between my own previous experiences and what I experienced in Uganda during my stay and how such cultural, as well as religious, differences may affect creativity.

The theoretical starting point for this work is that, from what I have observed among my peers, there is a common belief that in order to be creative one must be set free of frames and limitations. Being taught how things are supposed to be and having an endless supply of stimulating impressions from music and arts could be seen as just that type of limitation. Assignments that require a certain amount of words or being kept to a specific subject is another type of task often associated as less creative. I wanted to answer the questions: Is knowledge limiting us? Or is it rather setting us free?

Creativity is a process in which we combine knowledge we already have into new knowledge. In the book "Imagination and Creativity in Childhood"<sup>1</sup> we learn about two different functions of our brain, the reproductive function and the combinatorial or creative function. Our creative process is merely a combinatorial process in which we freely link together information, pictures and thoughts.

## Method

In Uganda my main method of collecting information was interviewing people working in creative professions. In total I interviewed fifteen persons of different backgrounds, ages, professions and genders. I used a model of

<sup>1</sup> Lev S Vygotskij (1930), *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Diadlos, 1995.

creative chargers and blockers from the book "Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv"<sup>2</sup> to formulate the questions used in the interviews. I found the people to interview through contacts that I had in Uganda, but also through travelling. They all allowed me to use their answers for this essay. Their professions varied between musicians and producers, photographers and craftsmen, to entrepreneurs.

Aside from these interviews I also held interviews with students at the Institute of Music in Kampala, Uganda and at the Royal College of Music in Stockholm, Sweden to compare the different experiences that students have on creativity and the school environment. I chose the students that I interviewed based on my own idea of who might be well oriented on the subject and also on recommendations from others. All of the interviewed have agreed that I can use their answers in this essay, but I've decided to omit their names and I will not use the material for any other purpose.

Another part of my study was performed with a group of children between the ages of six and seventeen outside of Jinja town. I formed an exercise to examine how different amounts of instructions might promote creative thinking. In the exercise I had the children draw several drawings and before each I gave them more or less instructions. I also let them compare working in groups and on their own. After each task I had a form prepared that they filled in answering simple questions about their experience of the task.

At last I have been working in the book "The Artist's Way" by Julia Cameron<sup>3</sup> to explore how her techniques on artistic creativity might apply to my own creative process. This workbook contains a weekly schedule of exercises that are meant to help you recover and discover your artistic expression. This is directly connected to the artistic part of my project which is accounted for in the annex part of this essay. They took form both in the exercises in the workbook, but mainly the lyrics and poems that I wrote during my time in Uganda, and the photographs that I've taken and edited.

## Results

The results and the discussion parts of this essay are closely connected due to the reflecting nature of this project; however, I have divided them into different sections to make it clearer what reflections are a result of the literature read and my interviews or what is merely based on my own observations.

<sup>2</sup> Brodin, E., & Carlsson, I.(2014). *Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv*. Stockholm: Liber AB.

<sup>3</sup>Cameron, J. (2002). *The artist's way- A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Penguin Group.

It is easy to assume that we are limited when we adjust to the things we know to be true about e.g. songwriting, or whatever our creative outflow might be. The idea that knowledge is limiting might be a result of this belief. This would be one reason to believe that in Uganda, a country where a big part of the population still has not been able to complete basic education would be more creative due to freedom in fewer “do’s and don’ts”. However, our agency is dependent on our knowledge. If you are standing in a room, and in experience know that the door will let you out of the room, you will not try and walk through the walls, because you know that it will not work. Nevertheless, you are still making a conscious decision to walk through the door. If you have the ability to make a decision, you are free. All the books we read, conversations we have and music we listen to add up to our bank of decisions that we are able to make when creating. One of the most repeated advice from highly creative individuals is to learn your domain and learn it well. Poets such as Madeleine L'Engle, Anthony Hecht and Hilde Domin tell of years of copying and mimicking their predecessors to learn the art well, before being able to contribute to the domain with new ideas.<sup>4</sup>

During some time visiting an orphanage in a small village called Buwenge, just outside of Jinja town in Uganda, this was also proven to be true. An exercise shaped to explore how the children experienced different amounts of instructions given before a performed task showed that a majority of the children had more fun and were happier after working on a task with more frames than the other way around.<sup>5</sup> It appears that when given a certain number of rules it starts a sort of creativity process in problem solving which is a great way into the flow experience.<sup>6</sup> The flow experience is how psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi chose to describe the state of complete focus and concentration that we experience when a task at hand is just challenging enough; one of the most satisfying experiences that a human being can have.<sup>7</sup>

Other frames encouraging creativity is a limitation in time accessible to perform a task. In most of my conversations with creative workers such as composers and photographers they expressed that working toward a deadline is one of the best ways to ensure a good result. Having a limited amount of time has a way of ensuring focus and minimizing distractions.

<sup>4</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 244-258.

<sup>5</sup> Brodin, E., & Carlsson, I., (2014). *Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv*. Stockholm: Liber AB. 307.

<sup>6</sup> Brodin, E., & Carlsson, I., (2014). *Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv*. Stockholm: Liber AB. 325.

<sup>7</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.

This is directly connected to the matter of abundance and creativity which will be discussed later on.

We must be free of limitations in the sense that we need to be flexible and have an open mind to be creative, but knowledge in itself is never a limitation.

## **Competition and teamwork**

Not in one single conversation with the Ugandans that participated in the survey was expressed any form of insecurities in one's own abilities in comparison to other workers within the same field. It is difficult to say if this is just a matter of coincidence but considering the amount of times it was mentioned in discussions with the Swedish participants there are some interesting conclusions to be made.

Three young aspiring artists that participated just recently finished their schooling and opened their own studio just outside of Jinja town. When asked if they ever got jealous of each other when one had a sale or created a particularly good piece they laughed. Their reply; if someone made a sale they celebrated together. On the matter of comparing skills the answer was simple; they have different styles of expression and there is no way one could paint like the other. If they would like to do something similar they would just try and learn whatever they performed, preferably with the help of their colleague.

Several of the conversations were focused on discussing what might block creativity. On the subject of creativity blockers, a majority of the Swedish participants mentioned comparing and jealousy, while none of the Ugandans did. They, on the other hand, mentioned lack of financial and material means, as opposed to the Swedish who never mentioned that, although sometimes expressed that a lack of skill or knowledge related tools were a source of creative blocking.

On the other hand, all participants regardless of nationality expressed that there are huge advantages connected to teamwork when it comes to the creative process. One person made a parable to a ball game and explained that in writing with others it is as if the ball has more surface to bump into, therefor the odds of good ideas to take form are higher.

## **Creativity and the comfort-zone**

When asking the participants about what boosts their creativity, almost all answers connect to the act of stepping out of your comfort-zone. A photographer mentioned travel and meeting new people as one of the biggest creativity boosters in his life, a bag maker from Jinja experienced that when seeing what others create she feels a desire to make something similar and the thought process is already starting. A composer and director

of the Africa institute of music mentioned reading as many books as possible to be one of the best ways to be more creative. It seems that all agree that in order to be creative one must always make sure to have new impressions and experiences to create something out of.

Open mindedness and flexibility are traits that boost creative thinking, while a narrow mind is a major blocker<sup>8</sup>. When asked the question of what they think makes them creative individuals, more so than others, the word curiosity was mentioned in almost all cases.

## **Creativity and schooling**

The school environment has a great impact on how we learn to use our creativity, and along with that religion and culture play a great part.

Maria Park Kim, the director of the Africa Institute of Music in Kampala has long experience in teaching music. Growing up in Korea she had the fortunate position of being the youngest sibling, something that she explains she considers one of the main reasons she was raised in a particularly free manner compared to many other Korean children during the nineteen sixties. She herself did not have any formal training in music until later but was taught how to play the piano and sing in church related matters. She was an obvious talent in writing poems and short stories and having won several awards both her loved ones as well as herself believed that she would dedicate her life to that art.

Park Kim tells that she believes the uncontrolled curiosity she was able to feel towards music as a child to be one of the main reasons she later managed to gain her master's degree in 20th century composing while remaining free in her expression.

Having lived in three completely different cultures; as a child and youth in Korea, a student and young mother in the United states, to later have spent more than twenty years in Uganda, she has been able to observe how different styles of teaching affects, or at least directs creativity.

Before the Africa Institute of Music was founded almost ten years ago, by Park Kim, there was no formal music education in Uganda, aside from the theoretical music program at the Makerere University, which offers almost no practical training at all. Parker Kim expresses that she was critical against the way music is being taught at the Makerere University and decided to start an institute, which now has its own campus, a shy but increasing number of close to sixty students and was recently licensed to examine in bachelors and master's degrees.

<sup>8</sup> Brodin, E., & Carlsson, I., (2014). *Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv*. Stockholm: Liber AB. 262.

She is passionate about making sure that the students are always encouraged to develop their skills, but at the same time consider their inheritance in African culture to help strengthen a sense of identity in a generation that still experiences the aftershocks from the colonialism what with the desire to strive towards more of the western culture. Her goal is to teach tools to a people of extraordinarily deeply rooted artistic talents that will enable a stronger culture with more records of the work created.

Parker Kim says that she has a deep conviction that all cultures demand their own methods, and no other system can be copied and be expected to work the same way. When asked the question on what creativity means to her, she is very clear on the point that creativity is a highly individual matter that is deeply dependent on each person's background. She explains that the colonization of Africa has brought some positive side effects, but it also left behind a people struggling with a desire to live in a way that is contradictory to its cultural legacy. She continues in explaining that she found it almost seems that the actual musicality is possibly stronger and more natural in this part of the world than in the western world, where music on the other hand has been recorded to a wider extent. Even before birth the rhythm of a dancing mother or sounds of singing is comprehended by the baby. "It is in their blood".

When it comes to teaching methods Parker Kim is again clear on the fact that everyone teaches differently, but to her it has been proven to be beneficial to always make sure to explain the "why's" of a principle taught. That will enable the students to make more conscious decisions when applying the knowledge to their own creations. Especially when it comes to a subject as sensitive as music and expression, it is crucial to make sure that the student will not "just accept" truths. This goes well in hand with the statement that knowledge is not limiting, as long as it is combined with understanding and an open mind.

With Parker Kim being religious she considers it inevitable to touch on the subject of faith and spirituality in partnership with expression. She explains her idea of the reality of a spiritual creative process that highly affects her own creativity. Like many other believers she values the relation between the Great Creator and our ability to be creative.

In conversations with students at the royal college of music in Stockholm there was an almost unanimous opinion that the education itself was not necessarily developing the creativity of the students, in fact many of the objects expressed the contrary. In the years attending a program there are inevitably several syllabi to be followed and the creative space can be hard to find. Several of the interviewed also expressed a desire to have more conversations about creativity during their schooling, considering it will be one of their most useful tools in professional life.

However, there was a just as unified opinion that the act of perfecting skills, learning new tools and being around others working within the same field are highly enhancing creativity. In fact, one of the more commonly mentioned creative blockers were experienced lack of skill within the field. That doesn't necessarily mean actually lacking the skill needed but feeling like you do.

Connected to schooling and education is also the different traits of the brain where the combinatory capacity is the main one used in creative processes, and therefor schooling, either formal or informal, and the adding to one's bank of knowledge is one of the surest ways to lead a more creative life.

## **Creativity as a spiritual matter**

In the conversations a word commonly used in combination with creativity was "magic". This word was used regardless if the person was religious or not, in fact more often among those who declared themselves to be agnostic or even atheist. This was mainly among the artistic individuals and was not to the same extent used among other creatives, such as entrepreneurs who might refer to the same experience as synchronicity or luck.

The use of the word magic by secular artists can in many ways be equalized with the way religious artists explain their relationship to the Great Creator in their art.

Bestselling author Julia Cameron has, aside from writing over thirty books, dedicated her life to helping what she calls "blocked creatives" to recover their creative selves through teaching and through her book and twelve-week program "The artist's way - a spiritual path to higher creativity".<sup>9</sup> She, like many other religious artists, encourages the participants to give in to the power of being a creative outflow for the higher creativity from God. She has helped thousands of artists around the globe to understand and work with their creativity. Though the message is a bit too sacral for many (although many non-religious artists use the book) there are patterns of similar form in what is described about creativity by more secular artists. None seem to be able to describe the matter in a less abstract way than it being a magical, outer body or spiritual experience to be engaged in an artistic creative process.

<sup>9</sup> Cameron, J. (2002). *The artist's way- A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Penguin Group.

# Discussion

## Abundance and creativity

Uganda has a significant amount of riches in natural resources (e.g rich soil, regular rain periods, small deposits of copper, gold and minerals as well as recently discovered oil), yet it is one of the poorest countries in the world economically. Many things are associated with this poverty; the early colonization and current corruption, just to mention a few.

In studying creativity however, I have found there is a strong connection between abundance and how it affects creativity. In one of the interviews with a Ugandan entrepreneur who recently visited the Netherlands he mentioned his observations; In northern Europe there has always been a race between the nature and humans. Having only a few months per year of harvest enforces efficiency and longtime planning ahead. He learned that in the northern parts of the world you will find farms with a storage of up to four years' worth of food.

In Uganda, on the other hand, fruits and vegetables grow abundantly and the two seasons divided into four portions of the year control the harvest. He continues by mentioning how when Europeans sailed in ships across the sea to explore the African continent, Africans were still living a life of collecting and hunting. Brutality in the treatment of the people who had been inhabitants of the land for thousands of years is one of European history's never forgiven sins. Surprisingly though, in both his and in my experience from conversations and interviews, Ugandans have a view of the colonization as something overall positive that enabled them to be where they are today. It appears that trusting in the supplies of the earth to provide for you the way that they have done for so long is one of the things that can make people less creative and progressive.

From what I have seen, two other aspects of abundance are currently hindering creativity in Uganda. One of them is economical funding from developed countries. The same way that the people learned to trust the earth to provide them with endless amounts of food, a big issue now is that they have been taught to wait for the contributions from wealthier countries to ensure their own development. In the same way as a rich nature, it can become an abundance that provides you with means without the need of much creative work.

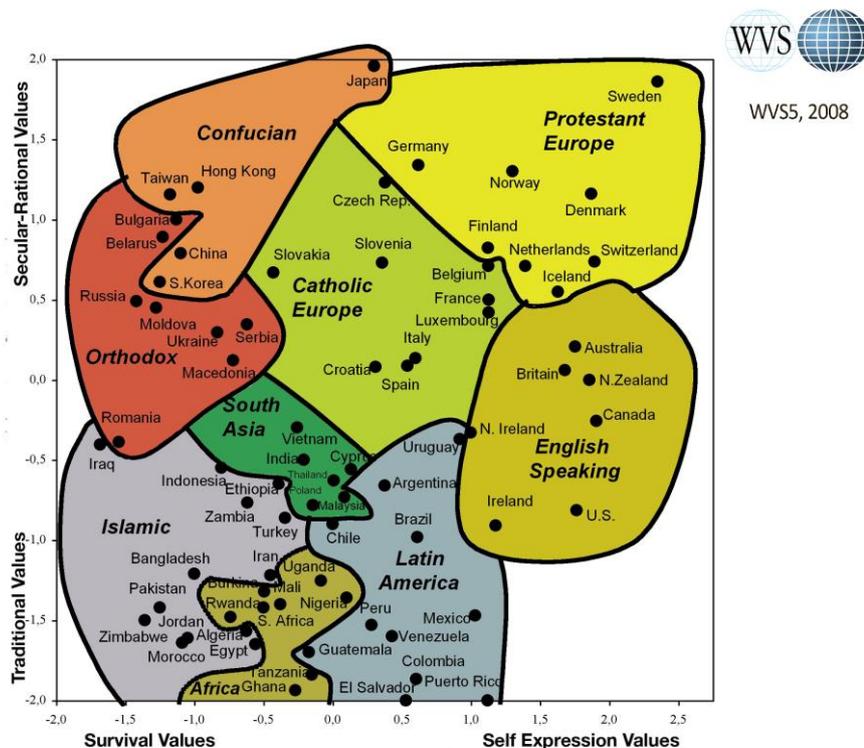
In several conversations with Ugandans there was a pattern of a kind of dependency on international aid, and the inability to accomplish certain tasks without it. It seems the wait for financial means from abroad rather than the lack of supply domestically was the reason for stagnation.

The third aspect of abundance that I've seen is connected to religious beliefs. Uganda is a religiously conservative country. A majority of the population is Christian, with a smaller part of the population being Muslim and then a

few percent Hindu and Buddhist. The effect that a society of such strong religious beliefs has on creativity is directly connected to the conviction that a higher source, in this case God, will provide. People are taught to trust and wait patiently on the helping hand of an almighty power who will give abundantly to those who believe. This in turn causes idleness and a lack of motivation to "go do".

On the other hand, it would be wrong to neglect the psychological advantages of a people of high material needs finding comfort in their religion.

On the Inglehart–Welzel Cultural Map we find a clear pattern when it comes to the parts of the world that are secular and their high level of self-expression values, and the countries that are of traditional values and their high level of survival values.<sup>10</sup>



It need be mentioned that the religiousness of Uganda is in many cases traditional and due to corruption, not necessarily connected to the actual standards of the religion, as may be in many other cases of developing countries.

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp?CMSID=Findings>

## **Abundance, flow and efficiency**

Creativity and flow are deeply connected. Flow is a state of mind where deep concentration and a high sense of the connection between ability and challenge are to be experienced.<sup>11</sup> According to studies made by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, people who regularly experience flow also experience more happiness. The flow experience appears to be one of the main reasons creative individuals continue seeking after ways to be more creative. In many ways flow is also connected to efficiency. Being efficient is often a result of an aspiration to do things better, which upon achieving that often leads to a flow experience. If we return to the analogy of the race against the seasons in northern Europe it is a good example of how Europeans have been forced into efficiency, which in turn lead to the need for creative solutions to problems connected to this, while the same cannot be said about the climate in African countries. I believe that in the kind of stagnant life of trusting abundance, you are less likely to experience flow regularly, since flow requires that you do things that are challenging your previous abilities.

Connected to this we also find a commonly expressed feeling of lack of control of one's own life due to financial circumstances. Several of the participants expressed that one of the main reasons for lack of creativity would be when they experience a lack of economical means. This can be seen as an inherit from the colonialism and the often-expressed desire to be more British. Undoubtedly materialism is one of many less fortunate inherits from the British empire. The aspiration to live in the shadow of another culture seem to have a huge impact on the creativity of an entire population. This in turn might affect the development of the country, what with a population of great potential but lack of motivation and trust in one's ability.

## **The difference between skill, creative expression and creativity**

It is commonly anticipated that people who participate in activities that are often viewed as expressive are creative. However, I consider there to be an obvious difference between having talent for painting or being gifted with musical talents and being creative.

A common business in Uganda is to perform crafts, such as baskets and bracelets, and sell them. At first glance it is presumable that people

<sup>11</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.

performing these crafts are creative people but as most of these crafts are similar, if not identical, to the ones performed by others within the same field the conclusion can be made that it is merely a talent and skill for performing the art that is the source of the crafts and not necessarily a creative contribution to the field.

On this matter it need to be mentioned the importance that childhood and background seem to have on creativity. Though it cannot be stated for all cases, at least many creative individuals seem to come from backgrounds of a highly accepting atmosphere, free of judgement and with interested and supportive parents.

On the other hand, there is a common connection between being fatherless and being creative.<sup>12</sup> George Klein, one of the founders of the new domain of tumor biology, is one to explain that connection. He explains how the fact that he didn't have a living father to fear and to depend on gave him a sense of liberation and freedom to be and do anything he wanted.<sup>13</sup> The aphorism of Jean-Paul Sartre might be an exaggeration; that the greatest gift a father can give his son is to die.<sup>14</sup>

In studying creativity, we find many similarities between the creative process of a biology researcher making a scientific discovery and a music composer writing a piece of music. The matter of combining and creating something new is the same. Highly creative individuals have many common traits no matter their field. In fact, it seems that in many cases had the creative individual chosen to focus on a different area of expertise they would likely have been equally creative.

Nevertheless, in the field of arts we find a big difference from other creative fields when it comes to the reason behind the creative outflow. Creative expression as opposed to creative solutions seem to differ when it comes to the source of the creativity. The commonly used phrase “necessity is the mother of invention” could appear to be contradictory to the motive behind a poem or a painting made solely for the sake of self-expression, when the need for a cure for a certain disease is a more obvious one. This contradiction can be easily explained though. Creative expression seems to be rooted in a necessity of the expression itself. One exceedingly self-observing music creator reflected on the need for creating cosmos out of the chaos of existential matter, which is often particularly present in the artistic personality.

<sup>12</sup> Csikzentmihalyi, M., (2013). *Creativity: the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 167-172.

<sup>13</sup>Csikzentmihalyi, M., (2013). *Creativity: the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 167

<sup>14</sup> Csikzentmihalyi, M., (2013). *Creativity: the psychology of discovery and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 171.

## The paradox

As stated, abundance and scarcity play a big role in the creative process. In many ways it can seem paradoxical, but also, in many ways paradoxes seem to be inevitable in creative living. I want to share a couple of quotes from interviews from the study “Creativity”<sup>15</sup> by Csikszentmihalyi that I think describe this connection:

There’s a very harmonious continuum of what Zen Buddhists call attachment-detachment. And you should always be in the state where you’re both. There’s a yin/yang continuum, which we can’t understand in western logic because we have this either/or. But it’s “both/and” logic, and it says that there’s a constant dance and continuum between attachment and detachment, between the long view, the infinite view, and the incarnated view where we have to learn about limitedness, and finished, and action.<sup>16</sup>

You must always keep distance from yourself. Don’t you think? It is the change between being quite close and being quite distant. You must always be in it and always see it from the outside. While you are doing it, you are in it. But you must always also keep a distance. And evidently the more you have the skill, the craft, the more you are able to at the same time be in it and also keep the distance and know what you are doing. Like, for example, when you eliminate a word. In the beginning you eliminate it after you have written it. And when you are more skilled you eliminate while you are writing. A schizoid process, is writing. You are the emotional person that kind of furnishes the words, and at the same time you are the rational person that kind of knows which words you want.<sup>17</sup>

Although these examples do not particularly mention abundance and scarcity, there’s a matter of paradoxes in it, the yin and yang continuum. In fact, Csikszentmihalyi spends an entire chapter of his book explaining the different paradoxical personal traits of the creative person.<sup>18</sup> They are smart yet naive, playful and disciplined, imaginative and realistic. This is related to his statements in his other book, “Flow”,<sup>19</sup> where he explains the complex mind, a mind that is both integrated and differentiated. Integrated in a way that it is connected with ideas that are beyond the “self” and with other people. It is also differentiated in the sense that it is moving towards the unique, separating from others. Being in the happy in between might not be so bad and cowardly after all, as it appears to be what makes our minds and us more complex.

<sup>15</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial.

<sup>16</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 305

<sup>17</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 248

<sup>18</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial. 55-76.

<sup>19</sup> Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.

Presumably the same connection can be made when studying the relation between abundance and scarcity. While abundance in many cases make creativity less necessary, scarcity also seem to have a similar effect on us. Lack of skill, lack of material or financial means, lack of health; these all have been mentioned as creativity blockers. There has to be a need of some sort, be it a disease threatening to extinct humanity or an inner need to express something. At the same time if outer conditions are too rough, or too pleasing, the process of creating will not take place.

### **Creativity - a matter of luxury**

Being creative can in some aspects seem like a matter of luxury given to those who already have their basic needs such as food, water and shelter satisfied. As stated, a foundation of education and a big bank of experiences and cultural participation are tightly connected to creativity. Especially this connection is accurate when talking about creative artists, since that need is of more of an inner nature rather than for example a life-threatening disease. It is easy to assume then that people living in conditions less favorable, such as the Ugandan or African population, might be less artistically creative. However, if we look at it historically, the African culture has directly contributed with what we today claim to be western music. The entire music of pop, jazz, RnB, and many more genres, are immediately influenced by the African music heritage. Their history of culture in dance, music, arts and storytelling is grand and goes back a long time. To explain this, it is of great importance to point out that it is the experienced scarcity and inability that has a great impact on a person's creative expression, not necessarily the actual scarcity.

Being one of the world's richest countries when it comes to natural resources might have been the only reason why Uganda's historically were able to be so artistically creative. With the new values of the colonization and new measurements of wealth implemented into a culture very different from the European from which these values were being taught. Today we find a population where a great part has very scarce financial means, and in a world where wealth is measured in money, this leaves the people with a feeling of poverty, lack of control of their own destiny and dependency, despite the huge resources of food and the fact that starvation is a minor issue in this country.

Without minimizing the fact that money is of great importance for a well-functioning society in many ways; education, hospital care and convenient living only to mention a few, there are some interesting conclusions to draw from this. From my observations and conversations I have learned that western countries implemented new values to a population, and at the same time used their resources to a maximum of our benefit and a minimum of theirs. I believe it has left them with small financial means while also taught

them that to be wealthy you need to be rich in money, which in turn has affected their own creativity negatively and additionally decreased their creative outflow. At the same time, we are able to buy their resources for a fraction of the value, in turn making us even richer, and giving us the means for world class education, health care and to be more creative. Our needs are satisfied enough so that we can focus on development, but still present enough to allow us to be creative. A positive paradoxical spiral; while leaving them stuck in a negative spiral of abundance in resources and scarcity in finances.

## **Conclusions**

### **Being a blocked creative**

In starting this process of learning more about creativity my main focus was on why some creatives become blocked, and what might cause it. It is difficult to distinct to what extent it is a matter of internal or external forces in one's life that causes this kind of block. It appears to be either/or as well as both/and. One might have the traits of a creative person but certain experiences in early childhood or later teens can have a dramatic impact on one's creative ability. At the same time some personality traits seem to have a negative effect on the creative person. The human brain is luckily adaptable and changeable, and any person, no matter a blocked creative or someone who never even tried to be creative, can to some degree develop or recover the traits necessary to live a creative life.

In my own experience having conversations with and reading about other creatives is highly inspiring and motivating, and to be honest made me want to quit the project and "go do" instead of just learning about the matter. Also working in "The Artist's way" has been very interesting and encouraging and has given me many new tools to go about with my own artistic endeavors. I've seen new things happen to my music and text writing, a few of which will be shared in the annex of this essay.

The points made by Cameron are very closely connected to what Csikszentmihalyi states, while on a less scientific and more spiritual note. It has also provided me with a deep desire to act, because, when it comes down to it, creativity is really a matter of acting, and as many have testified; the more you create - the more you create.

## References

1. Brodin, E., & Carlsson, I. (2014). *Kreativitet – teori och praktik ur psykologiska perspektiv*. Stockholm: Liber AB.
2. Cameron, J. (2002). *The artist's way- A spiritual path to higher creativity*. New York: Penguin Group.
3. Csikszentmihalyi, M (2013). *Creativity: flow and the psychology of discover and invention*. New York: Harper Perennial.
4. Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*. New York: HarperCollins.
5. Vygotskij, L. (1930). *Imagination and Creativity in Childhood*. Göteborg: Bokförlaget Diadlos, 1995.
6. <http://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSContents.jsp?CMSID=Findings>

## Annex

The artistic work connected to this essay contains four poems and lyrics with associated photography.

### Ni sträcker er

Ni sträcker er  
Sträcker er upp  
Förbi rader av planeter  
Förbi drömmar som fått sväva högt, men iväg  
Ekande öppet, isande kallt  
Men fyllt med andetag  
Stjärnorna andas ut över jorden och över oss  
Ett täcke av glittrande damm lägger sig över ytan och blir en del av allt  
Jag sträcker mig lite mer, sträcker ryggen och försöker vara som er

Lite närmre all magi



## Röd

Röd jord  
Blodröd vallmoröd  
Röd som färgen på min tröja  
Rödahänder röda av det som lämnats  
De som lämnats  
Lämnats att bli röda  
Röda av ansträngning  
Röda av ilska, sorgröda, sorghumröda  
Röda hjärtan pumpar rött blod  
Samma blod, samma röda  
Samma händer håller hårt  
Hårt i varandra  
Röd jord, brun jord

Tillsammans ska vi klara det



## Det glittrar guld

*Det glittrar guld  
Glittrar tyst vrålstarkt  
Guldregn över hela vattnet över ditt huvud stänker  
Guldregn rinner över din rygg faller  
På min hand  
Båten skär guldregn  
Guldregn letar sig in*

stanna

*Jag blundar i guldets, guld på mina ögonlock  
Himlen glänser, njuter  
Delar sitt guld med spegeln,  
sjön har aldrig varit så vacker och som alltid gör det ont för jag vill inte att  
det ska ta slut*

*Försöker rita, rita med guld i mig*



## Lilla hand

Lilla hand

Du som sträcks upp, väntar, längtar  
Lilla hand som skrapat, rivit, kämpat  
för att få finnas, få känna, få vara med

Du som bär

Bär tungt och länge  
Bär tills den mjuka handflatan blir till tegel och flammande persika

Lilla hand som håller hårt och klappar mitt hår  
varm

Sprider bubblor innanför min hud  
stiger rinner hårt känslor på min kind som landar

Landar på dig

lilla hand

Ska du bära också dem?



