



Arts & Culture

Tampines Meridian Junior College
JC1 General Paper
2023

Art is an effort to create,
beside the real world, a
more human world.

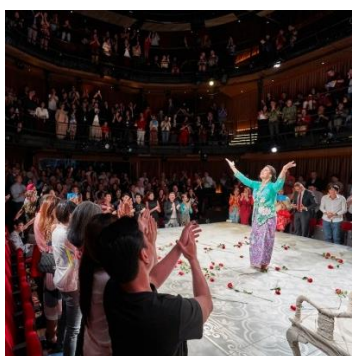
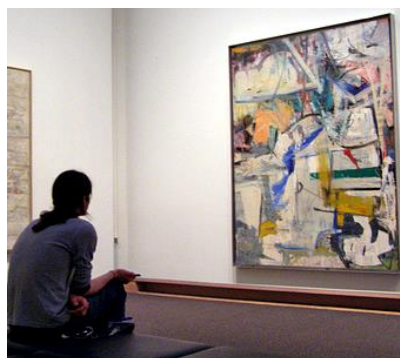
Andre Maurois



Understanding the Arts: Value and Functions



Culture & Identity



Culture is the
arts elevated
to a set of
beliefs.
-Thomas Wolfe

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• An Overview •

Unit Title: Arts and Culture		
Inquiry Questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'The arts cannot change the world but they make it more beautiful.' Discuss this view with reference to one of the following: painting, sculpture or music. (2007, Q3) • 'The arts are nothing more than a luxury.' How far is this true of your society? (2021, Q9) • How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition? (2010, Q10) • Is cultural globalisation to be welcomed or feared today? (Adapted from A Level 2019 Q9) 		
Unit Strand 1: The role and functions of the arts for individuals and societies	Unit Strand 2: The challenges faced in developing Singapore as an Arts Hub	Unit Strand 3: The role of culture and the impacts of globalisation
Conceptual lens: Power, Identity	Conceptual lens: Power, Identity	Conceptual lens: Power, Change and Continuity
Concept: Freedom of Expression, Activism, Heritage, Commercialisation	Concept: Freedom of expression, Censorship, Identity, Commercialisation	Concept: Identity, Heritage, Globalisation, Soft Power, Cultural Appreciation
Topics: Visual, Performing & Literary Arts History of Art	Topics: Singapore as an Arts Hub Renaissance City Plan	Topics: National Identity Cultural Imperialism Cultural Heritage
Possible Generalisation(s):	Possible Generalisation(s):	Possible Generalisation(s):

Inquiry Questions:

'The arts cannot change the world but they make it more beautiful.' Discuss this view with reference to one of the following: painting, sculpture or music. (2007, Q3)

At the end of this section, students should be able to:

- ✓ Understand how the definition and relevance of the Arts has changed over the years
- ✓ Identify the functions of the arts for individuals and societies (Singapore and other countries)

Before delving into the benefits of the Arts, we first need to consider what makes something Art. Let's begin by defining the Arts and then move on to a consideration of what exactly constitutes the Arts.

⇒ Concepts: Freedom of expression, Creativity

• Art Vs the Arts •

Reading Set 1

Art is the expression or application of human creative skill and imagination, typically in a visual form such as paintings or sculptures, producing works to be appreciated primarily for their beauty or emotional power.

The Arts, however, is now commonly used as an umbrella term to refer to the various aesthetic mediums and modes through which ideas and emotions, oftentimes compositionally satisfying, are skillfully designed and presented to an audience. The arts thus refer to any creative product including visual arts (paintings, installations, sculptures), music and dance performances, theatre and literary work.

Visual Arts

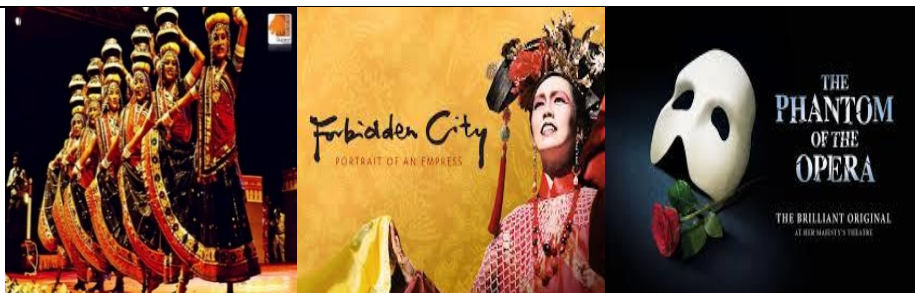
Creations that are primarily visual in nature. For example, drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography, jewelry, furniture and interior design.



(From left) Campbell's Soup Cans portrait by Andy Warhol, 18m-high 'Momentum' sculpture outside One Raffles Place, iconic photo of The Huli Tribesman by National Geographic

Performing Arts

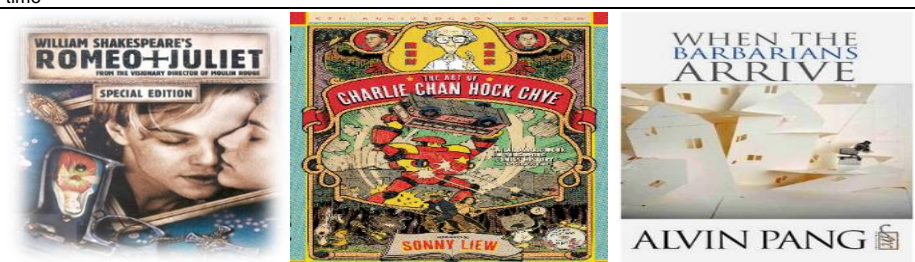
Where the artist uses his/her own body, face, and presence as a medium. For example, dance, music, opera, musical theatre, drama, magic, circus arts.



(From left) The most famous dance of Gujarat, Forbidden City: Portrait of an Empress – one of the most successful original musicals produced in Singapore and Phantom of the Opera, the longest running Broadway show of all time

Literary Arts

The art of written works, literature in the forms of novels, drama, poetry, short stories in various genres (comedy, tragedy, romance, satire, tragicomedy, epic, lyric).



(From left) Shakespeare's famous tragedy Romeo and Juliet which was adapted into a movie in 1996, Singaporean comic artist, painter and illustrator Sonny Liew's graphic novel- The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye which was the Winner of the Eisner Award for Best Writer/Artist 2017 and our hometown poet Alvin Pang, whose award winning poems have been translated into more than 15 languages.

Recognise any of the following famous art pieces from across the different centuries? Would you consider all of them to be art?



Pieta
Michelangelo (1498)



Luncheon of the Boating Party
Pierre-Auguste Renoir (1880)



Campbell Soup Cans
Andy Warhol (1962)



Table with Two Legs on the Wall
Ai Weiwei (2004)



The Street Is In Play
Banksy (2013)



EVERYDAYS: The First 5000 Days
Beeple (2021)



Still don't understand what makes something art? Scan the QR code on the left or watch this video at <https://bit.ly/2lb3Dkv>!

What makes something art? Note down your observations here!

• Functions of the Arts •

Artworks carry and embody the cultures from which they come from, i.e. they are mediums / channels of culture. To many, the arts is also a public sharing of an intensely personal experience.

⇒ Concepts: Creativity, Heritage, Activism, Commercialisation

Article 1: Art and its purposes

Adapted from <http://instructional1.calstatela.edu> and <http://www.tourism-master.com/2010/10/31/art-in-tourism-tourism-in-art/>

Studying art contributes to developing one's intellectual powers

Using one's mind, i.e. engaging in cognitive activity, includes acquiring and utilizing the storehouse of mental images that are the basis for concept formation and comprehending what one experiences. Art can make an important contribution to building this storehouse because it is an image-centred phenomenon. Making or responding to art requires that one be involved in either producing or decoding a variety of images. Responding to works of art requires the use of one's imagination to make sense out of the difference between what is implied and what actually exists (coloured pigments on a canvas, carved or chiselled wood, etc.). Both images and concepts (ideas) are represented through the use of signs and symbols. In addition to cultivating the imagination, making or responding to art also contributes to developing powers of observation; i.e., moving beyond what is obvious and learning to see variations and subtleties. By learning to react to the visual world in the mode of the artist or art critic, one develops abilities to observe carefully, and to identify, analyse, and evaluate what is experienced.

Being involved in learning how to create art implies developing abilities to represent and interpret feelings and thoughts, and to create personal responses to experience; these are the skills of expression. These types of abilities relate to primary mental aptitudes associated with spatial visualisation and perceptual speed and accuracy. Knowing how to "read" the visual world and how to "write" visual statements that express one's thoughts and feelings constitute being literate in nonverbal areas of communication. Such skills require that one be engaged at all levels of cognitive activity, ranging from identifying and/or producing simple visual qualities to analytical, critical, and creative thinking. These are among the ways that art education contributes significantly to the development of intellectual power, which is the central goal of all schooling.

Art has several vital socio-cultural functions

Because works of art give form to fundamental beliefs and feelings, they serve as conduits for culture; they are, in effect, culture carriers. Such works make a significant contribution to transmitting ideas, values and attitudes from person to person and from generation to generation. Examples of these dynamic roles for art range from precolonial or "traditional" art from Africa to Gothic cathedrals. Beliefs in the mystical and all powerful role of natural forces, or in the possibility of an immortal existence in paradise would be extremely difficult to communicate without such works. Art forms are essential to engaging in the rituals that serve as the ingredients required to nurture and sustain any society. Works of art are significant players in the evolution of culture since they contribute both to cultural continuity and, through innovations in forms and techniques, to cultural change.

Art functions in a myriad of ways for individuals and for society. It appears that humans instinctively seek to enhance and beautify their lives. The visual arts and her sister art forms -- literature, music, dance, theater, and film -- range from very primitive to very sophisticated models of expression and communication. However, to benefit from its many functions and to participate fruitfully either in producing art or in responding to its complexities, skills and sensibilities must be cultivated.

Art contributes to learning about the past and other cultures

Becoming historically and culturally literate is greatly facilitated by studying the art of the world, cutting across both cultures and time. Our understanding of ancient civilisations and tribal societies, as well as historical periods in the East and West, such as Dynastic China, Medieval Europe and the Renaissance, is greatly facilitated through the images presented in relevant works of art. Significant works of art not only reveal something of the physical character and the dominant social values of the period or culture in which they were produced, they also convey or transmit a "feeling" for the culture or period.

For instance, studying the enormous bronze-copper Amida Buddha in Kamakura, created in the 13th century in what was then the capitol of Japan, not only informs us about how Buddha's aristocratic birth and spiritual insight were symbolized (elongated ear lobes and a dot on his forehead, respectively), such study also generates empathy for the great reverence for Buddha reflected in this extraordinary sculpture.

Art can boost cultural tourism

The concept of art tourism sounds new but it is definitely as old as tourism itself because for centuries many societies had already given much appreciation for the arts and culture. Art tourism covers a big segment of the industry because around the globe people travel in order to visit, explore and engage in activities related to art festivals, concerts and cuisine events and to explore famous museums. Artists, musicians, authors and others involved in the arts present unique stories of certain cultures to the world. Culture and the arts are key elements in the positive development of a tourist destination. A city or town with diverse cultural options and attractions like museums, restaurants, art galleries, operas, theaters, and symphonies are attractive not only to their residents, but for visitors because tourists can discover more and have memorable experiences.

Art can lead to political and/or social change

As the Arts influences society by changing opinions, instilling values and translating experiences across space and time, it can give voice to the politically or socially disenfranchised. A song, film or novel can rouse emotions in those who encounter it, inspiring them to rally for change. This makes the Arts an ideal medium to critique society and governments and push for political and /or social change. In repressive states, the role of the artist is to assert the individual imagination, the singular power that all dictatorships fear.

An example of activism via the Arts is social activist artist Ai Wei Wei, a Chinese artist and dissident who was openly critical of the Chinese Government's stance on democracy and human rights. He also investigated government corruption and cover-ups, leading to his imprisonment and eventual exile. Perhaps less political, but no less impactful are examples of arts involvement in social change, such as in animal rights activism. For example, graffiti installations of painted chickens were used by animal rights groups in the UK to draw attention to the cruelty suffered by farmed chickens used by KFC.

Releasing emotions and evoking pleasurable responses in art

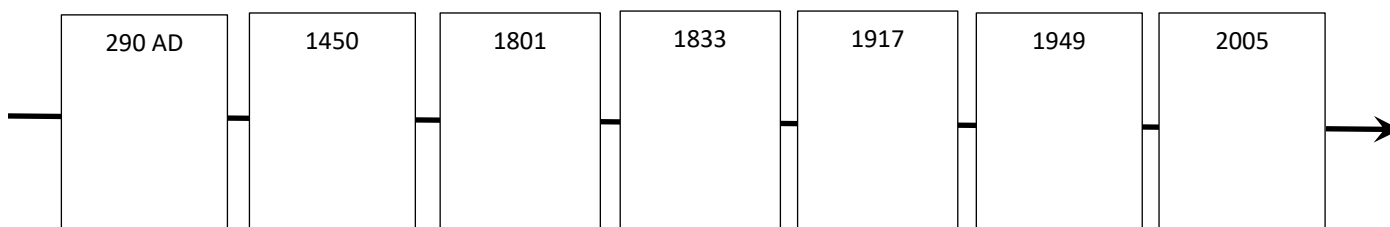
Art also possesses the potential to contribute to the release of tensions and the resolution of conflicts. For the artist, creating art is a vehicle for making inner thoughts and feelings visible and, therefore, more objective, which can have a cathartic, tension releasing payoff. What may have been repressed can be expressed through socially approved channels. This is the basic rationale for art therapy: through participation in art activity, what has been suppressed can be given form and, thereby, exorcised.

For the consumer of art, perceiving the organisation of sensuous qualities in works of art can evoke feelings of excitement, pleasure, and a sense of equilibrium and euphoria (the principal reasons for purchasing art and/or visiting art museums and galleries). Works of art often involve us in those peak experiences that differ so markedly from the outcomes of routine encounters. These types of experiences are so satisfying that many of us are willing to make significant expenditures in time, effort, and money to be enriched by art.

Art and its purposes have evolved through the ages. Watch the following video on the History of Ideas (Art), which examines the history of art and the changing purposes of the arts in history. Fill in the timeline below as you watch the video. Scan the QR code on the right or go to <https://bit.ly/2sc0jKH> to access the video!



How have the purposes of Art changed?



Application #1: Functions of the Arts

After having read Reading Set 1 on the functions of the Arts, sort out the functions into those that benefit individuals and those that benefit societies as a whole.

Functions of the Arts for Individuals	Functions of the Arts for Society

Inquiry Question:

How important is technology in the development of the arts? (TMJC2020JC1RAQ10)

At the end of this section, students should be able to:

- ✓ Understand the role of technology in the development of the Arts
- ✓ Evaluate the positive and negative impacts due to the rise of technology in Arts

Change and Continuity – Technology's Impact

Reading Set 2

Change in the Arts occur organically in reaction to generational changes to remain relevant. To enable artists and their audience to perceive their messages in a new way, artists seek to **change** the ways to present their ideas. The intention is to create something fresh and unexpected-- to "surprise" the viewer into giving his/her full attention to the work of art. In addition, as the social and political climate shifts, the perspective of the artist must also shift to take new circumstances into account. Increasingly, **technology** becomes one the largest factor affecting **change** in the Arts. Technology affects the forms, mediums and materials which art gets created in.

Continuity in the Arts occur as an attempt to preserve and recognize to the significant achievements of various artistic movements throughout the years. While the artworld is ever fickle and both art and artist undergo constant evolution, the continuity in terms of universal skill and mastery in technical and aesthetic processes. Technology today while an agent of change has allowed for the preservation and recording of the Arts that they may be experienced unadulterated for generations to come.

Articles 2, 3 & 4 discuss whether the definition and value of the Arts has changed over time due to the impact of technology.



Concepts: Creativity, Commercialisation

Article 2: The Rise of Technology in Art

Thomas Evans | Bare Conductive | Oct 7, 2016 (adapted)

Since the earliest cave paintings, the history of art has evolved in tandem with developments in technology. In the 15th century, Jan Van Eyck experimented with oil-based pigments, ushering in a new era of painting. The introduction of photography at the end of the 19th century changed how artists see the world forever. More recently, Andy Warhol's most famous works used screen-printing, an innovative new technology borrowed from the graphic arts. The following are some of the most common technologies that artists are utilizing today to give you a better perspective on the rise of technology in art.

1. **3D Printed Art** For example, Romanian artist Ioan Florea uses 3D printed plastic molds to produce large-scale metal models of vehicles, exploring the role of technology in our current age of customisation. Another example is Eyal Gever, an artist who creates imaginative digital environments on his computer, before translating these environments into physical space through 3D printing.
2. **Interactive Art** Collaborative digital art group Random International is also known for its large-scale installations. For their project *Rain Room*, they used real-time analytics of visitors' movements to control their immersive digital experience. Depending on how the viewer moved, they would experience a unique rain shower, complete with humidity, the sound of falling water, and the visual effect of rain; all without getting wet. Random International described it as "the latest in a series of projects that specifically explore the behavior of the viewer and viewers: pushing people outside their comfort zones, extracting their base auto-responses and playing with intuition."
3. **Online Art** Jonas Lund's *Fair Warning* (2016) encourages users to engage in his online platform by clicking on options that appeal to them. At once apparently fruitless and highly addictive, Lund asks questions about the nature of our online activities and the role of big-data statistics in determining our online experiences.
4. **Augmented Reality** Artists have also been exploring the possibilities inherent in augmented reality. Amir Bardaran's *Frenchising the Mona Lisa* takes the Louvre Museum's most famous artwork as a starting point, a visual anchor that the artist can exploit through AR. Using Bardaran's app, the viewer can position their smartphone camera over any image of the *Mona Lisa* (the real one or a reproduction), and they will see the woman come to life and wrap a French flag around her head. She then resembles a woman wearing a hijab headscarf, a symbol of Islam, which has been banned in France. This is a great example of an artist using augmented reality to present a subversive political message.
5. **Virtual Reality in Art** Artist Jon Rafman, who is known for his digital artworks, believes that in our digitally saturated world, the all-consuming nature of virtual reality is necessary for us to engage completely with a work of art today. His 2015 piece *Sculpture Garden (Hedge Maze)* collapsed boundaries between the physical and the digital, using Oculus Rift virtual reality technology to draw viewers into his art-viewing virtual environment.
6. **Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)** While anything digital can be sold as an NFT, much of the buzz centres on NFT-based digital artwork – and the high prices they fetch at auctions. Digital artist Beeple's *EVERYDAYS: The First 5000 Days* (2021) is a collage of 5000 digital images created by the artist as part of his *EVERYDAYS* series. It sold for US\$69.3 million, making it one of the most expensive NFTs ever sold, as well as one of the most expensive works by a living artist.




Concepts: Creativity

Article 3: The Rise of AI Art – and What It Means for Human Creativity

Raya Bidshahri | Singularity Hub | June 17 2019 (adapted)

Artificially intelligent systems are slowly taking over tasks previously done by humans, and many processes involving repetitive, simple movements have already been fully automated. In the meantime, humans continue to be superior when it comes to abstract and creative tasks.

However, it seems like even when it comes to creativity, we're now being challenged by our own creations. In the last few years, we've seen the emergence of hundreds of "AI artists." These complex algorithms are creating unique (and sometimes eerie) works of art. They're generating stunning visuals, profound poetry, transcendent music, and even realistic movie scripts. The works of these AI artists are raising questions about the nature of art and the role of human creativity in future societies.

Draw/Paint/Sculpt	Poetry	Music
<p>Ai.Da is considered the first ultra-realistic drawing robot artist. Her mechanical abilities, combined with AI-based algorithms, allow her to draw, paint, and even sculpt. She is able to draw people using her artificial eye and a pencil in her hand. Ai.Da's artwork and first solo exhibition, Unsecured Futures, will be showcased at Oxford University in July 2020. Ai.Da has no true consciousness, thoughts, or feelings. Despite that, the (human) organizers of the exhibition believe that Ai.Da serves as a basis for crucial conversations about the ethics of emerging technologies. The exhibition will serve as a stimulant for engaging with critical questions about what kind of future we ought to create via such technologies.</p>	<p><i>"Our transcendence adorns, That society of the stars seem to be the secret."</i></p> <p>The two lines of poetry above aren't like any poetry you've come across before. They are generated by an algorithm that was trained via deep learning neural networks trained on 20 million words of 19th-century poetry. Google's latest art project, named PoemPortraits, takes a word of your suggestion and generates a unique poem (once again, a collaboration of man and machine). You can even add a selfie in the final "PoemPortrait." Artist Es Devlin, the project's creator, explains that the AI "doesn't copy or rework existing phrases, but uses its training material to build a complex statistical model. As a result, the algorithm generates original phrases emulating the style of what it's been trained on."</p>	<p>Artificial Intelligence Virtual Artist (AIVA) is an AI that composes soundtrack music for movies, commercials, games, and trailers. Its creative works span a wide range of emotions and moods. The scores it generates are indistinguishable from those created by the most talented human composers.</p> <p>The AIVA music engine allows users to generate original scores in multiple ways. One is to upload an existing human-generated score and select the temp track to base the composition process on. Another method involves using preset algorithms to compose music in pre-defined styles, including everything from classical to Middle Eastern.</p> <p>Currently, the platform is promoted as an opportunity for filmmakers and producers. But in the future, perhaps every individual will have personalized music generated for them based on their interests, tastes, and evolving moods. We already have algorithms on streaming websites recommending novel music to us based on our interests and history. Soon, algorithms may be used to generate music and other works of art that are tailored to impact our unique psyches.</p> <p>LISTEN TO ONE OF AIVA'S TRACKS HERE:</p> 

⇒ Concepts: Creativity, Commercialisation

Article 4: What You Need to Know About Non-Fungible Tokens (NFTs)

Robyn Conti and John Schmidt | Forbes | May 14 2021 (adapted)

An NFT is a digital asset that represents real-world objects like art, music, in-game items and videos. They are bought and sold online, frequently with cryptocurrency, and they are generally encoded with the same underlying software as many cryptocurrencies. Although they've been around since 2014, NFTs are gaining notoriety now because they are becoming an increasingly popular way to buy and sell digital artwork. A staggering \$174 million has been spent on NFTs since November 2017.

NFTs are also generally one of a kind, or at least one of a very limited run, and have unique identifying codes. "Essentially, NFTs create digital scarcity," says Arry Yu, chair of the Washington Technology Industry Association Cascadia Blockchain Council and managing director of Yellow Umbrella Ventures. This stands in stark contrast to most digital creations, which are almost always infinite in supply. Hypothetically, cutting off the supply should raise the value of a given asset, assuming it's in demand.

But why are people willing to spend millions on something they could easily screenshot or download? Because an NFT allows the buyer to own the original item. Not only that, it contains built-in authentication, which serves as proof of ownership. Collectors value those "digital bragging rights" almost more than the item itself. Essentially, NFTs are like physical collector's items, only digital. So instead of getting an actual oil painting to hang on the wall, the buyer gets a digital file instead. They also get exclusive ownership rights: NFTs can have only one owner at a time. NFTs' unique data makes it easy to verify their ownership and transfer tokens between owners. The owner or creator can also store specific information inside them. For instance, artists can sign their artwork by including their signature in an NFT's metadata.

NFTs afford artists and content creators a unique opportunity to monetize their wares. For example, artists no longer have to rely on galleries or auction houses to sell their art. Instead, the artist can sell it directly to the consumer as an NFT, which also lets them keep more of the profits. In addition, artists can program in royalties so they'll receive a percentage of sales whenever their art is sold to a new owner. This is an attractive feature as artists generally do not receive future proceeds after their art is first sold.



Scan the QR code on the left or visit <https://bit.ly/3GLuqzg> to learn about the rise of NFTs in Singapore's art scene.

Application #2:

Discussion Qn: How important is technology in the development of the arts?
(TMJC2020JC1RAQ10) (Jot down your ideas below)

Inquiry Questions:

'The arts are nothing more than a luxury.' How far is this true of your society? (2021, Q9)

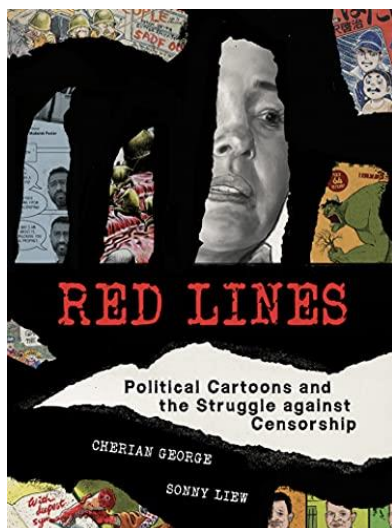
At the end of this section, students should be able to:

- ✓ Identify the positive impacts of the arts on Singapore society
- ✓ Explain the challenges faced in developing Singapore as a Renaissance city of the arts

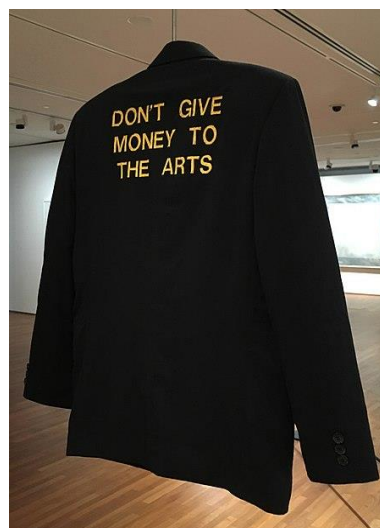
• Power – Singapore as an Arts Hub •

Reading Set 3

The **contestation of power** in Singapore is most noticeable between Artists and the Government. Over the years, the liberalisation of the scene and the increased public spaces of expression both physically and online show a greater acceptance by the authorities and society alike. While **censorship** has always been a primary limiter of what can be discussed, a shifting acceptance within society, the loosening of control measures and the rise of technological platforms have seen the Arts in Singapore evolve vibrantly beyond race and culture. The utilisation of the Arts to develop a certain national identity, to leverage certain economic advantages and also to meet certain aspirations of the citizenry are primary considerations that places the arts in a more privileged position of power, preventing it from being neglected. Art understood abstractly yields great power for the artist and governments that co-opt it.



Red Lines: Political Cartoons and the Struggle Against Censorship, authored by Professor Cherian George and cartoonist Sonny Liew, was banned from being distributed in Singapore in November 2021, three months after it was first launched in the US. Communications and Information Minister Josephine Teo said the publication contained "multiple objectionable images" that were racially and religiously offensive.



Tang Da Wu, *Don't Give Money to the Arts*, 1995, Cloth jacket, Collection of National Gallery Singapore. "This is a relic from a performance by Tang Da Wu at the inauguration of a major arts festival in 1995, involving then President Ong Teng Cheong. Tang asked for the president's permission to don this jacket, then presented him with a letter which read: 'I am an artist. I am important.'" This is one of Tang's most iconic works and engages with issues confronting the practice of art in Singapore."

• Singapore as an Arts Hub •

Based on the Population Survey of the Arts 2019...

- ✓ More Singaporeans acknowledged the role of the arts in improving quality of life, fostering a greater sense of belonging and identity, and being a source of pride for Singaporeans
- ✓ More Singaporeans engaged with the arts, with marked increase in arts engagement among students and working adults
- ✓ More Singaporeans consumed arts and culture via digital/online media

For more statistics, check out <https://bit.ly/3KuYCRl>

Here are some important names you should be familiar with. Do try to read up on them!

Galleries

1. Singapore Art Museum
2. National Gallery Singapore
3. Gillman Barracks
4. ArtScience Museum
5. NTU Centre for Contemporary Art Singapore

Exhibitions/Festivals

1. Singapore International Film Festival
2. ART SG
3. Singapore International Festival of Arts
4. Singapore Art Biennale – a contemporary art exhibition held every 2-3 years
5. Singapore Writer's Festival

Famous Artists/Sculptors/ Photographers

1. Liu Kang (Artist)
2. Georgette Chen (Painter)
3. Chong Fah Cheong (Sculptor)
4. Tan Swie Hian (Multidisciplinary artist)
5. John Clang (Photographer)

Famous stage artists

1. Beatrice Chia-Richmond
2. Glen Goei
3. Dick Lee
4. Adrian Pang
5. Hossan Leong

Performing venues

1. Esplanade - Theatres on the Bay
2. Victoria Concert Hall
3. The Star Performing Arts Centre
4. Drama Centre Theatre
5. Marina Bay Sands - The Grand Theatre & The Sands Theatre

Local theatre companies

1. The Necessary Stage
2. The Theatre Practice
3. Theatre Works
4. Pangdemonium Productions
5. Nine Years Theatre

Arts Education

1. School of the Arts (SOTA)
2. Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA)
3. Lasalle College of Arts
4. Yong Siew Toh Conservatory

Emerging from the Pandemic – A special report with highlights from the 2019 Population Survey on the Arts

The emergence of COVID-19 brought sudden and widespread changes to the way we lived, worked and played. In Singapore, this came after physical arts attendance had risen to a high of 69% in 2019. NAC's COVID-19 Arts Consumption Study, which examined people's online engagement with the arts during the pandemic, revealed that 88% of Singaporeans engaged with the arts online, motivated by novel experiences and for their mental well-being. This report explores how difficulties can be transformed into innovation, for the arts to thrive post-pandemic.

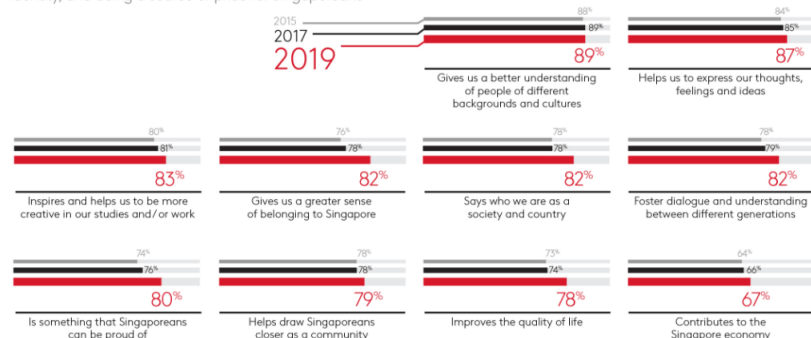
Download the report here: [Emerging from the Pandemic](#)

Population Survey on the Arts 2019



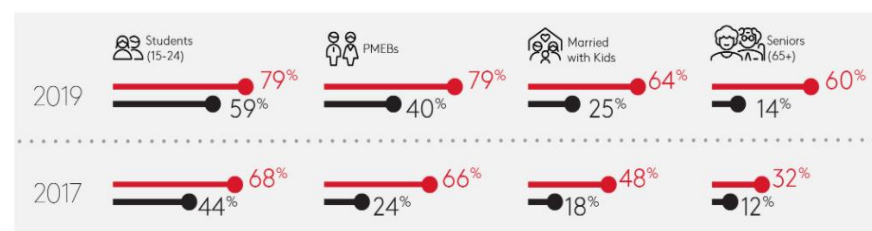
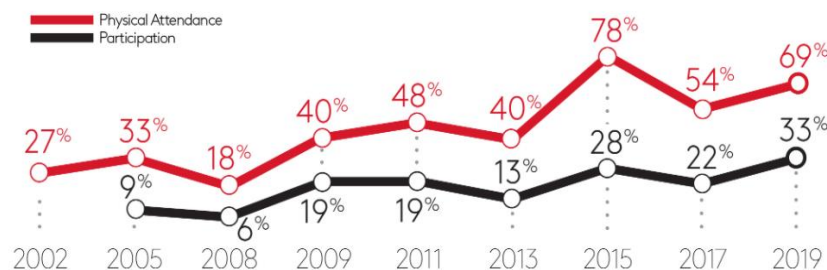
Perception of the Arts

More Singaporeans acknowledged the role of the arts in improving quality of life, fostering a greater sense of belonging and identity, and being a source of pride for Singaporeans



Physical Attendance and Participation in the Arts

Overall arts engagement improved in 2019. Attendance improved across all life stages, with marked improvement in participation for Students and PMEBs.



Article 5 touches on whether the Arts have a beneficial impact on Singapore: The Singapore government has worked hard to raise the profile of the arts in Singapore in their efforts to make it a viable art hub. Yet, despite the huge funding that goes into Singapore's art scene, it is not clear that an organically vibrant arts scene has taken root. Is Singapore losing its standing as the Arts Hub of Southeast Asia?

⇒ Concepts: Freedom of expression, Censorship, Identity, Commercialisation

Article 5: Singapore swings and misses at the arts

Nile Bowie | Asia Times | February 10, 2018 (adapted)
and Oscar Holland | CNN | January 25, 2019 (adapted)

Singapore, known for its robust education system, meticulous city planning and draconian laws, is more often associated with efficiency than creativity. Derided by some as a “cultural desert” for its past lack of emphasis on the arts, the city-state of 5.6 million people has doubled down on national cultural policies over the last two decades in a push to become a centre for Southeast Asian art. The wealthy island nation, a hub for financial and wealth management services, has made massive investments in cultural infrastructure in recent years: showcase museums, a world-class national gallery and performance centres dedicated to the arts. But despite the state-led push, with generous backing from government agencies like the National Arts Council (NAC), Economic Development Board and the Singapore Tourism Board, it's still not clear an organically vibrant arts scene has taken root.

Top-down ambitions to nurture creativity and innovation date back to the roll-out of the government's ‘Renaissance City Plan’ in 2000. The initiative envisioned the arts as “cultural ballast” to nation-building and strengthening Singaporeans' sense of national identity. Moreover, the plan identified the importance of creative, artistic endeavours in a future-oriented economy. The city-state has made notable strides toward building an ecosystem for arts development. That's come through the establishment of teaching institutions and incubating local artists, the primary recipients of scholarships, grants, awards and subsidies awarded by state-bodies. Up to 85% of Singapore's arts scene is funded by the state, according to 2016 data. That had given rise to a wide range of state-promoted cultural programs and events in recent years. Now, however, several commercial galleries, contemporary showcases and art fairs have ended or scaled back their operations and events amid falling foot-traffic and lower-than-expected sales.

Up to 85% of Singapore's arts scene is funded by the state, according to 2016 data.

Art Stage Singapore, the anchor event of Singapore Art Week, the city's biggest festival dedicated to visual arts, is one of the most important events on the local arts calendar. Founded by Swiss national Lorenzo Rudolf, a curator and organizer widely credited with initiating a global expansion of the Art Basel international art fair, the eighth iteration of the showcase pairing influential international galleries and collectors held from January 26-28 saw a 40% drop in exhibitors.

Eighty-four exhibitors participated in last month's Art Stage, compared with 131 galleries last year and 170 in 2016, the Straits Times reported. Compare that to Art Basel Hong Kong, where 248 exhibitors are slated to appear in the March 2018 fair. High-profile international modern art galleries have established a robust presence in Hong Kong in recent years, due largely to its proximity to the lucrative Chinese art market. Singapore, according to Rudolf, lacks domestic “art production” and does not face competition from other art fairs but rather, “competition from the art scenes in other cities.” He has long maintained that Singapore's artists and institutions lack the international recognition to compete with bigger art markets. The Swiss fair organizer has claimed Singapore's arts landscape would be better served by attracting non-Singaporean artists and positioning the city-state's art scene as promoting Southeast Asia as a whole. Art Stage's weakest showing yet forced Rudolf to dismiss rumours of the fair being discontinued amid closures and downsizing elsewhere.

The Singapore Contemporary Art Show launched in 2016 with a focus on the mid-tier art market, with works ranging from S\$10,000 to S\$100,000 and above. It was discontinued this year. The Affordable Art Fair, a

Just four in 10 Singaporeans expressed an interest in arts and cultural events, according to a 2016 NAC survey.

multi-city fair aimed at first-time art buyers, was also scaled back by organizers last year due to lacklustre participation from exhibitors and poor sales. The Singapore Pinacothèque de Paris, a privately-owned museum modelled after the Pinacothèque de Paris museum in the French capital, showcased masterpieces by Picasso, Monet, Rembrandt and others. It surprised many by closing just over a year after its 2015 launch, citing weaker than expected visitor numbers. The gallery cluster at Gillman Barracks, a former colonial British military compound turned art district outside Singapore's city centre, is regarded as a key focal point of Singapore's contemporary art scene. Even there, nearly one-third of the 17 galleries chose not to renew their leases last year, citing poor sales and attendance. Some have questioned whether lower-than-expected turnout at art fairs could be attributed to a glut of similar events being held around the same time, though audience attitudes and expectations of the arts remain an important

factor. Just four in 10 Singaporeans expressed an interest in arts and cultural events, according to a 2016 NAC survey. "The statistics underline the fact that the appreciation of the arts is in its nascent state in Singapore," wrote Paul Tan, poet and deputy chief executive of NAC. Eight in 10 respondents, however, acknowledged the benefits and value of engaging in arts and culture. Critics sometimes attribute public disinterest in the arts with the perceived rigidity of Singapore's education system. Renowned for producing pupils who outperform their international peers in standardized math and science tests, a cultural bias that favours technical career-oriented productivity has arguably stifled creativity by reducing emphasis on the arts and humanities.

While known as a hub for collectors in Asia, Singapore is not renowned for its homegrown art. For Jasdeep Sandhu, founder of Singapore's Gajah Gallery, state funding – which still accounts for a huge portion of arts spending in Singapore – is helping to improve the city-state's grassroots art scene. "Singapore has never been known as a city that produces artists but (the government) started building infrastructure and improving art schools almost 30 years ago," he said. "You now have a very sustainable art community where young artists can actually survive." But for Singaporean photographer Nguan, whose work has been exhibited at galleries in the city, public money acts as a barrier to a thriving art scene. "I wasn't surprised by Art Stage's demise," he said over email. "(But) I don't think the absence of a booming art market is necessarily a bad thing -- the commercial art market in Japan, for example, is also relatively small, but their museums are packed. "Our authorities have spent a lot of money trying to manufacture an art scene in the most inorganic of ways," he added. "I think they're finding that a culture of art-making and appreciation cannot be developed as if it were a piece of land. "Art has to happen in the cracks; organically, or not at all," said Nguan, who called for reduced regulation on exhibitions and tax incentives to encourage private investment in the arts.

In an incipient arts sector with few funding alternatives other than government bodies, many question whether unorthodox forms of creativity and more diverse perspectives can flourish, particularly in a climate where censorship on a range of political, social and religious topics is stringent and often ambiguous. Museums and art fairs in Singapore are required to submit detailed descriptions of exhibitions to the Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA), a regulatory body responsible for issuing licenses and audience restrictions for theatre performances, media and exhibitions prior to public release. The regulator has issued rating denials on the grounds that some works feature "excessive nudity" and evoked national security concerns to justify banning a 2013 documentary on Singapore's left-wing political exiles (see right). Event organizers and curators widely regard the process of obtaining licenses as an administrative headache and are sometimes granted or denied permissions at extremely short notice prior to planned screenings and openings. The state's NAC – the body responsible for issuing artist grants – has in recent cases withdrawn funding for



To Singapore With Love, a documentary on Singapore's political exiles made by local filmmaker Tan Pin Pin, was given a 'Not Allowed For All Ratings' classification by the IMDA in 2014.

Read more at
<https://bit.ly/2WRA6jl>
or scan the QR code.



author Jeremy Tiang and artist-illustrator Sonny Liew for crossing politically sensitive red-lines.

While many may argue that the government's arts funding has better enabled obscure artists to realize their pursuits, grant money comes with heavy strings attached. "If artists are not happy with the conditions set by whichever organisation is offering funding, the only real option is to decline that funding," wrote poet Toh Hsien Min in an online editorial for Quarterly Literary Review Singapore. Some artists – albeit in small numbers – are starting to break away from their dependence on the state for funding. Seelan Palay, a Singaporean artist and founder of Coda Culture, a commercial gallery launched last month, describes his newly-opened platform as "an artist-run space, by artists for artists that will remain independent without any state funding and thereby, hopefully, no state intervention."

Palay believes the state's arts funding has bred a climate of self-censorship that stifles the local scene's vibrancy, forcing artists to adapt their works to be more palatable to the government grant application process and depressing the art market's potential in the process. "There is a climate of fear here, and one that not only applies to the arts but society-at-large. Such conditions do not lend well to foster free expression, creativity and exchange of ideas - aspects that I believe are necessary for any market, not just the arts, to grow. There should be a free market of ideas alongside a free market economy," he said in an email to Asia Times.

⇒ Concepts: Freedom of expression, Censorship, Creativity, Identity

Article 6: Closure of The Substation @ Armenian Street: a loss to the Singapore Arts Scene

Navene Elangovan | todayonline.com | Feb 4, 2021 (adapted)



The Substation, founded in 1990 by Cultural Medallion winner and playwright Kuo Pao Kun has supported many artists in their careers, including thirteen Cultural Medallion recipients. It was thus named because the conserved building was formerly a power substation. The independent arts centre currently leases the premises - from the National Arts Council (NAC) under its Arts Housing Scheme, which provides subsidised spaces to the arts community. The identity of the arts centre is inextricably linked to the building, generating a unique and creative buzz.

However, The Substation has announced that it will close permanently in July 2021, after it was unable to come to an agreement with the NAC. Initially, the NAC planned to close the place for renovations before inviting the Substation back as a co-tenant. The Substation board has expressed concerns over its ability to operate independently as a co-tenant as it will lose control of the building facilities integral to its operations such as the theatre and gallery. This will result in the loss of autonomy over the spaces and facilities crucial for its mission, and the loss of its income from venue hiring. The Substation believes it will not be in a position to fulfil its mission to support and provide a safe space for artists to do pioneering and experimental work.

The COVID-19 economic downturn has made fundraising for the arts "especially difficult" for the Substation which relies heavily on fundraising. Donors have been cautious with their funds and some have also refocused their philanthropic outreach, giving lower priority to the arts. While the NAC offered grants to help the Substation tide over the renovation period and a subsidised office space at Goodman Arts Centre, this will still result in halving the Substation's current budget, entailing a drastic reduction in staff strength and programming.

Members of the arts community rued the loss of the space, which they said was integral to supporting less conventional works and collaborations within the arts community. Ms Audrey Wong, a former artistic co-director of The Substation said that the centre's closure was worrying because it means that there is one fewer incubator space, which gives artists the freedom to try new works. The former NMP for the arts added: "While The Substation has been overshadowed in the past decade as the Singapore arts scene developed with more international shows, festivals and mass crowd-pleasing events, it has always had a role and purpose (here). So, having it disappear will be a huge loss."

Article 7: The Arts in Singapore: Entering the Next Decade

Speech by Mr Edwin Tong, Minister for Culture, Community and Youth & Second Minister for Law, at the 38th Patron of the Arts Award I 17 September 2021 (adapted) | <https://www.mccy.gov.sg/about-us/news-and-resources/speeches/2021/sep/arts-in-singapore>

Today, we have a strong and vibrant arts community: One that spans across different generations, unique artistic traditions and diverse cultural backgrounds. One that is involved in a wide range of art forms, from the traditional to the modern, across different genres and, increasingly, even cross-genres. Over the years, Singapore has also successfully established high quality and internationally regarded cultural institutions, such as the Esplanade and National Gallery Singapore. Together with highly respected educational institutions like the School of the Arts (SOTA), Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts (NAFA), LASALLE College of the Arts, and the Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music.

All of these moves would not have been possible without the hard work, and the sheer courage of conviction of the arts community, arts patrons, and policymakers. Indeed, this partnership between the arts fraternity, patrons and government, including an annual spend on arts and culture amounting to about \$450 million annually since 2013, is bearing fruit.

What I consider priceless, however, is the progress that we have made in strengthening:

- (a) The role of the arts, as an anchor to our distinctive Singaporean identity.
- (b) Fostering cross generational links to our own heritage.
- (c) And deepening the foundations of our unique culture, to inspire, motivate, and uplift Singaporeans.

In my mind, there is no doubt that local arts and culture are essential to our society, essential to nation-building and will continue to be so. Probably increasingly so. It is a valued weave which binds each of us together, making up our Singapore Tapestry.

An Inflection Point

Up till COVID-19, the arts in Singapore had been on a fairly healthy and positive trajectory. The scene was exciting and burgeoning, with new diverse talents coming to the fore. On the international stage, our artists, and Singapore as a whole, have also been gaining increasing recognition at key festivals, biennales and art fairs. Domestically, donations from the private sector, coupled with the dollar for dollar matching of the Cultural Matching Fund (CMF), has strongly supported the arts and heritage sector with close to \$650 million since the inception of CMF in 2014.

Then came COVID-19, which battered and railroaded the arts sector all over the world. It has been tough, and we all know that we are not yet out of the woods, by any stretch. And I acknowledge just how difficult it has been for so many of our artists. But at the same time, it heartens me that Singapore has largely been able to preserve our arts and culture capabilities even through this very difficult time.

Local arts and culture are essential to our society, essential to nation-building and will continue to be so. It is a valued weave which binds each of us together, making up our Singapore Tapestry.

Since the start of the pandemic, NAC has been instrumental as a strong advocate for the arts community. They have worked, often behind the scenes, on COVID-19 safe management and support measures, including the \$75 million Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP). I must say also that unlike many other countries where orchestras and museums have let go of, or furloughed their staff, we have not had to do so in our key cultural institutions. Many of the organisations which form the bedrock of our arts ecosystem, such as NAC's Major Companies, have remained steadfast and resilient.

In the same vein, many of our longer term plans remain in place. For example, we announced plans earlier this year to establish a new university of the arts, through an alliance between NAFA and LASALLE. Our infrastructure projects, such as the new Esplanade Waterfront Theatre, are still proceeding; as are our plans to upgrade existing arts housing spaces such as 45 Armenian Street.

We have continued to invest strongly in local talent, such as through the annual NAC Arts scholarship. This year, our scholars have gone overseas to Goldsmiths, Berklee College of Music, the Royal College of Music, and many other top-tier institutions. They will return to add to the rich diversity of art talent in Singapore. And throughout this time, we continued to make arts accessible to Singaporeans even as we were encouraged to stay at home and be safe, we launched the SG Culture Anywhere campaign which brought arts content onto digital formats.

To go back to my earlier comment – that **we are at a point of inflection – where do we go from here?**

This year, NAC celebrates its 30th anniversary. It is timely for the government, the arts community and our partners to think deeply and reflect on what we want our arts landscape to look like, as we enter the next decade and beyond.

The arts in the future economy

First, we will do more to have the arts thrive as a key part of our future economy, and provide meaningful careers for those who choose to join the arts sector and for whom the arts is the source of their livelihoods. For this to happen, we have to start by making the economics work. Global cultural hubs such as London, New York, Paris, Beijing, Tokyo, Seoul and Taipei are well-supported by sophisticated value chains – which includes government funding, philanthropic support, and also a competitive business model and landscape. In Singapore, the government will continue to provide strong support for the arts. But we will need more hands on deck if we are to have higher ambitions.

Cultural philanthropy

Cultural philanthropy already plays a crucial role in the development and coming-of-age of our local arts scene. As early as the 1940s and 1950s, our pioneer artists like Cheong Soo Pieng, Chen Wen Hsi, Chen Chong Swee, Liu Kang and Georgette Chen could thrive because they were well-supported by benefactors. Today, our cultural philanthropy landscape has evolved to more than just providing monetary support. Industry expertise, specialist advice and assistance from companies and experts have become key pillars of support. For example, Accenture collaborated with National Gallery Singapore as its Innovation Partner to introduce [Adopt Now], an art adoption programme powered by blockchain crowdfunding, while StorHub Self Storage opened storage facilities to theatre companies. Mapletree Investments also stepped up support over the past year, recognising the vitality of the arts in place-making.

Experimentation and innovation

Next, we will also redouble efforts to promote experimentation and innovation in the arts. We want to encourage new forms of art creation, presentation, and engagement with existing and new audiences – part of our hope that everyone has equal access to the arts.

One important issue which we need to address is that of space, which is important for arts practitioners to experiment, innovate, incubate and create works that can connect with audiences. These spaces give an opportunity for young, budding, nascent talent to experiment, and eventually break through, gain recognition and eventually gain a foothold in the sector.

On this issue, we will take a few immediate steps. First, NAC will set up varied incubatory spaces to complement the existing Arts Housing Spaces. The Arts Resource Hub will offer revitalised spaces at 42 Waterloo Street in the last quarter of 2021, for practitioners to network, trial new ideas and share best practices on digital and technology tools. Second, NAC has partnered with the Singapore Land Authority to work on setting up pilot arts sandboxes in Kampong Java. We are aiming for the space to host multidisciplinary artists and give them an affordable space to focus on their experimental and creative processes.

We will also redouble efforts to promote experimentation and innovation in the arts. We want to encourage new forms of art creation, presentation, and engagement with existing and new audiences – part of our hope that everyone has equal access to the arts.

here and now and solve the problems, but also to look ahead to see what we should be doing to position ourselves. To date, we have supported more than 100 projects for the SEP Grant and over 30 for the OTG.

All of this bodes well, for innovation in creation and presentation. There have been extensive changes in how the arts is created and consumed and that is unlikely to change. For instance, over the past year, Singaporeans could sit in the comfort of our own living rooms, and access virtual tours of the Louvre Museum collection in Paris and also stream National Theatre performances. Our own arts groups were quick to adapt in reaching out and engaging new fans online – we could watch Nam Hwa Chinese Opera on Facebook, catch livestreams of Esplanade's programmes, and listen to the Singapore Symphony Orchestra on Spotify.

These shifts and changes are here to stay. So we have to be adaptive, innovative and opportunistic to harness the upsides in the digitalisation of the arts and international platforms, for artists to share and grow their works. We are likely to see more collaborative, inclusive co-creation among artists, partners and the community, and new forms of presentation that transcend dedicated arts spaces. We will actively look into and study these new trends, to prepare the arts and culture sector for the future.

The arts in a time of COVID-19

Finally, we need to embrace the changes which COVID-19 has foisted upon us. We cannot go back to what it was like before. The pandemic has fundamentally altered our operating assumptions and environment, and made us question the familiar, tried and tested.

But at the same time, amidst the challenges, we have also seized opportunities. NAC consulted extensively with the arts community on the architecture of the Self-Employed Person (SEP) Grant and the Organisation Transformation Grant (OTG) to give immediate assistance, and also drive change and transformation. To look at the

Inquiry Questions:

How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition? (2010, Q10)

At the end of this section, students should be able to:

- ✓ Identify the different aspects of what make up the culture and identity of a society.
- ✓ Understand the role and functions of culture
- ✓ Explain the benefits of preserving cultures and traditions

• Primer – What is Culture and Its Impact on Identity •

Reading Set 4

⇒ Concepts: Heritage, Identity, Globalisation

*Ethnicity: Belonging to a social group that has a common national or cultural tradition, irrespective of race

Article 8: What is Culture?

Kim Zimmerman | Live Science | July 12, 2017 (adapt

Culture is the characteristics and knowledge of a particular group of people, encompassing language, religion, cuisine, social habits, music and arts. The Center for Advanced Research on Language Acquisition goes a step further, defining culture as shared patterns of behaviors and interactions, cognitive constructs and understanding that are learned by socialisation. Thus, it can be seen as the growth of a group identity fostered by social patterns unique to the group.

"Culture encompasses religion, food, what we wear, how we wear it, our language, marriage, music, what we believe is right or wrong, how we sit at the table, how we greet visitors, how we behave with loved ones, and a million other things," Cristina De Rossi, an anthropologist at Barnet and Southgate College in London, told Live Science. The word "culture" derives from a French term, which in turn derives from the Latin "colere," which means to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture. "It shares its etymology with a number of other words related to actively fostering growth," De Rossi said.

Constant change

No matter what culture a people are a part of, one thing is for certain, it will change. "Culture appears to have become key in our interconnected world, which is made up of so many ethnically diverse societies, but also riddled by conflicts associated with religion, ethnicity*, ethical beliefs, and, essentially, the elements which make up culture," De Rossi said. "But culture is no longer fixed, if it ever was. It is essentially fluid and constantly in motion." This makes it so that it is difficult to define any culture in only one way.

While change is inevitable, the past should also be respected and preserved. The United Nations has created a group called The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) to identify cultural and natural heritage and to conserve and protect it. Monuments, building and sites are covered by the group's protection, according to the international treaty, the Convention Concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage. This treaty was adopted by UNESCO in 1972.

"Culture is that complex whole which includes knowledge, beliefs, arts, morals, law, customs, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by [a human] as a member of society."

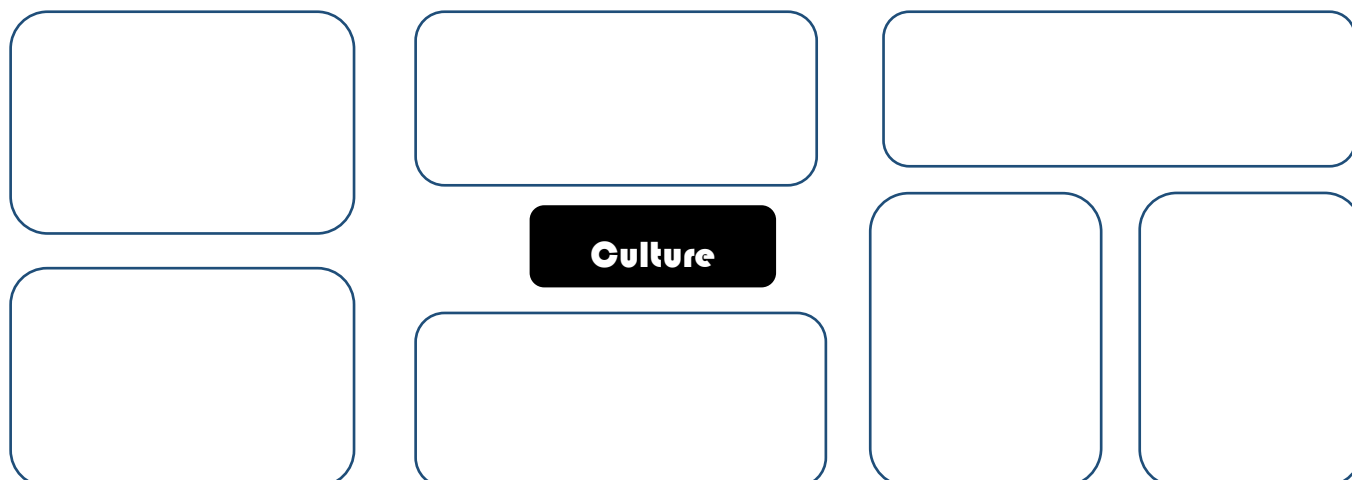
Edward B. Tylor



This is an extract from the article 'What is Culture?'. For the full article, go to <https://bit.ly/2ujeRMq> or scan the QR code on the left.

What are the different aspects of culture?

Watch the following video and fill in the mindmap below as you watch the video.
Scan the QR code on the right or go to <https://bit.ly/2WTpwc5> to access the video!



What are the roles and functions of culture?



Culture Defines Situation

- Each culture has many subtle cues which define each situation
- A person who moves from one society to another may misread those cues



Culture Defines Attitudes, Values & Goals

- Attitudes are tendencies to feel and act in certain ways
- Values are principles or standards of behaviour
- Goals are those attainments which our values define as worthy



Culture Provides Behaviour Patterns

- Culture provides a ready-made pattern for the individual which he needs to learn and follow
- Culture also imposes limits on humans and their activities, promoting socially acceptable behaviour while curtailing undesirable ones



Culture Defines Myths, Legends & the Supernatural

- Myths and legends are powerful forces in a group's behaviour.
- Culture provides the individual with a ready-made view of the universe.

Cultural identity can be defined as having a sense of belonging towards a culture. This belonging can be justified with a shared set of companionship, principles or beliefs of living with a community. A person who subscribes to the cultural identity of a group thus embraces its various boundaries of ethnicity, nationality, language, religion, and gender.

Cultural identity is the foundation on which we establish other boundaries. To illustrate, we embrace the traditions and norms of our parents and grandparents at a young age, and continue holding on to them as we grow older. We continue to practice them as it becomes a source of identity for us and helps us better understand the people who share these common aspects of culture with us. This not only broadens up our relationships but lead to further advancement of the cultural acts which would have otherwise been abandoned if not for the continuation of such acts by the younger generation.

Cultural identity can be determined by **one's nationality (either the country one is born in and/or the one the person currently lives in), ethnicity or race, religion, social class, locality, or generation**. Culture, which determines one's attitudes, values, goals and behaviours, also contributes to one's national identity.

National identity, on the other hand, refers to a **collective identity among citizens defined by the nation they live in and not by race, ethnicity or religion**. A shared sense of belonging, history and sense of self form the basis for collective interest from which a country also determines its character.

The distinction between cultural identity and national identity thus presents problems in a multi-racial country like Singapore. What is Singaporean Identity? While Singapore does not have a long history, we do have a rich ancestral heritage that predated Singapore's position as a nation-state. Does this therefore mean that Singaporeans identify more with their ethnic identity than national identity? The following article has some surprising answers!

⇒ Concepts: Freedom of expression, Censorship, Identity, Commercialisation

Article 9: Emerging sense of Singaporean identity independent of ethnic heritage

Leonard Lim and Mathew Mathews | Nov 15, 2017 | The Straits Times (adapted)

and Leong Chan-Hoong | SUSS, Centre for Applied Research | Nov 20, 2020 <https://www.suss.edu.sg/blog/detail/what-does-it-take-to-become-a-singaporean> (adapted)

The run-up to Singapore's first reserved presidential election was marked by contention over what exactly constitutes an "authentic" Singapore Malay. As the 2017 presidential election was reserved for Malay candidates, some scrutinised the presidential hopefuls' heritage, their fluency in Malay, and their participation in cultural activities. But without an established consensus on what the most important distinguishing features a Singapore Malay should possess or practise were, the debate among the citizenry could not be easily settled. This is to be expected. While self-identification is an important part of determining ethnic identity, notions surrounding identity will invariably be contested - groups within each community and the broader public have different opinions as to who legitimately qualifies to use a particular ethnic label.

To better understand public views on this topic, the Channel News Asia - Institute of Policy Studies (CNA-IPS) Survey on Ethnic Identity was conducted. The survey gave a list of nearly 40 ethnic identity markers for each major ethnic community in Singapore, and asked respondents how important they felt these were for one to be considered a Singapore Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian. So, each respondent, whether Chinese, Malay, Indian or Eurasian, would be given the same lists for all four ethnic groups. They were also asked to state their race, so that their views on their own group could be appropriately matched. This project allowed the researchers to have some ground-up notions of the markers of ethnic identity in Singapore.

ETHNIC, CIVIC, AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

But first, what is ethnic identity, and how does it relate to the Singaporean identity – or more broadly, one's national identity?

National identity is a sense of a nation as a cohesive entity, one that consists of distinctive and diverse traditions, cultures and languages. It is a consistent and

congruent set of values, attitudes and behaviours that defines a person as a citizen of their country. It is pivotal to the fortunes of nations as it helps to ensure good governance, assist with economic development, and unite members of a society. And ultimately, it also taps into the one fundamental and primal desire of humans – to belong.

National identity can be divided into two parts: ethnic and civic. An ethnic identity is based on ascribed social identity marks that are relatively unchanging. Examples of such indicators include that of ethnicity, country of birth, and religion. On the other hand, we have a civic identity. It is composed of non-exclusive indicators that anyone can usually achieve. This could include factors such as showing respect for local customs, following the law and fulfilling certain obligations as a member of that society.

MARKERS OF ETHNIC IDENTITY

The results of the CNA-IPS study showed that across the three main ethnic groups, respondents were unanimous in ranking vernacular language proficiency (Mandarin, Malay and Tamil) and the marking of key festivals as being of much greater significance than other traits such as having close friends of the same ethnicity, the ability to eat in a traditional way (with chopsticks or hands) or appreciating ethnic music and art. At least 90 per cent of respondents from each of the three major races ranked reading, writing and speaking in the community's language as among the top three most important markers of ethnic identity in Singapore. Nearly 92 per cent of Chinese regarded the celebration of Chinese New Year as at least a somewhat important identity marker of a Singapore Chinese, as did 95.9 per cent of Malays when it came to Hari Raya Puasa for a Singapore Malay, and 88.2 per cent of Indians on Deepavali for Singapore Indians.

Respondents were also near unanimous in their agreement that the ability to read or write in an individual's ethnic language (93.3 per cent) and converse in one's ethnic language (94 per cent) was at least somewhat important to be passed down to future generations. These findings were consistent across all age groups (our study tapped the views of mostly Singaporeans aged 21 to 74). For instance, 93 per cent of those aged 21 to 25 thought it was important to transmit the ability to read and write in their ethnic language. The proportion of 56- to 65-year-olds reporting similar sentiments was the same.

STATE-LED POLICIES' IMPACT

The convergence towards the importance of ethnic language proficiency and festival celebrations can be interpreted as partly resulting from state-led policies. The bilingualism policy, in place since 1959 and which makes it compulsory for students in mainstream schools to learn both the English language and a mother tongue language for at least 10 years, has arguably conveyed the notion that being a Singapore Chinese, Malay or Indian is closely associated with the ability to speak and write in his or her mother tongue. Preserving mother tongue languages via a bilingual education policy has given generations of students cultural ballast amid the perceived worries of the effects of globalisation.

Respondents' identification of festive cultural celebrations as a key marker of ethnic identity suggests that state-supported observance of key cultural festivals associated with the different ethnic groups through public holidays, and celebrations in schools and community organisations, have had some effect in fostering a sense of community identity. This is no doubt strengthened by Singaporeans' own celebrations of such festivities in their own families and social circles.

THE ROLE OF ENGLISH



One finding worth highlighting was that around 80 per cent of respondents in each of the three main ethnic groups viewed speaking good English as

important to being considered a Singapore Chinese, Malay and Indian. This was accorded more weight than ethnic lineage and heritage markers, such as tracing one's ancestry. The focus on English as an identity marker for a Singapore Chinese, Malay, and Indian, despite our different backgrounds and heritage, would probably not have figured as prominently among first-generation immigrants to Singapore. That this emphasis on English is now considered important today, and the fact that it occurred across respondents from the three main races, suggests that there is some acknowledgement of one of the features that binds us - a common language.

It also leads to the notion that ethnic identity is just one part of how we think of ourselves. The other is the idea of "being Singaporean". Which figures higher in our consciousness though? When asked whether they identified more with their ethnic or Singaporean identity, it was the combination of the two that resonated with the most respondents (49 per cent, compared to 35 per cent for Singaporean identity only and 14.2 per cent for ethnic identity only). The fact that a greater proportion of respondents picked a choice involving the Singaporean identity indicates that the notion of "Singaporean-ness" resonates with many of us. In contrast, comparatively fewer see themselves purely in ethnic terms.

Because of our immigrant history, and our proximity to China, India and the Malay Archipelago, there have been concerns that loyalties based on ethnic or historical ties may surface from time to time, leading to conflicted allegiances among some. But the survey results suggesting that many respondents view themselves primarily as Singaporeans first indicates a substantial sense of loyalty to this budding nation composed mostly of immigrants, or descendants of immigrants, from diverse backgrounds.

THE SINGAPOREAN IDENTITY

Another way of assessing national identity is through social markers of everyday citizenship, which can be either ethnic or civic in nature. These are indicators, acts, and behaviours that are present in our daily routines and rituals.

Beyond ethnic identity, what social markers are deemed important to be a Singaporean? Research conducted by Associate Professor Leong Chan-Hoong at the Centre for Applied Research, Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS), found that both local and foreign-born Singapore citizens polled agreed that respect for multi-racial and multi-religious practices are most critical of being and becoming a Singaporean. This should perhaps come as no surprise, considering the demographic and geographic nature of the country, and government policies such as the Ethnic Integration Policy (EIP) for public housing. After all, as one of the smallest nations in the world and one of the most religiously diverse, racial harmony and getting along with each other are crucial for Singapore to prosper.

Another interesting observation would be that of National Service, the bedrock of our national security and crucial for countries with small populations. It has gradually evolved to be regarded as a rite of passage, and we have seen this narrative played out everywhere in books, newspapers and movies such as *Ah Boys To Men*. This sentiment is even echoed by President Halimah Yacob, who has two sons who served, stating that National Service contributed to her sons' growth and development, and that many parents would have also witnessed this transformation in their sons as well.

In the end, we should remember that our national identity is dynamic, not static. Over time, with the influx

of new people and ideas, alongside global events, what Singaporeans believe to be important will constantly grow. Over time, with the influx of new people and ideas, alongside global events, what Singaporeans believe to be important will constantly grow. As Singapore is

dependent on people as a resource, and with falling birth rates, there will always be room for immigrants, and with that, new cultures, traditions and practices that eventually will be woven into the fabric of what it means to be Singaporean.

The above article speaks about an emerging sense of Singaporean identity independent of ethnic heritage. But that opinion is not unanimous: the Lion City's identity as a melting pot is being tested by rising nationalism brought on by Singapore's immigration policy. Read the following article to understand the reasons behind rising xenophobic sentiment in Singapore.

⇒ Concept: Globalisation

Article 10: What has fuelled the 'us vs them' sentiment in Singapore?

Janice Heng | 6 Aug 2021 | The Business Times (adapted)

The businesses and people of Singapore yearn for borders to reopen safely; while the pandemic has underscored the importance of solidarity on this tiny island, which both residents and non-residents currently call home. Yet the pandemic's pressures have also stirred up calls for stricter border closures, and hostility towards those seen as being outsiders. One focus has been the India-Singapore Comprehensive Economic Cooperation Agreement (CECA), a trade agreement signed in 2005 that has resurfaced in public discourse in recent years - often with a xenophobic tone.

In Parliament on July 6, Health Minister Ong Ye Kung and Manpower Minister Tan See Leng addressed questions about foreign professionals, managers and executives (PMEs), free trade agreements (FTAs) and CECA. Some of these queries were from Non-Constituency Members of Parliament (NCMPs) of the Progress Singapore Party (PSP), which plans to file a motion on those issues. The ministers set out arguments for FTAs and foreign talent, and clarified misconceptions about CECA.

Yet broader questions remain. What fuels this animosity? To what extent is it addressed by existing arguments? And what else can be done?

The -phobia in xenophobia

This fear of foreigners - as xenophobia might be etymologically understood - is partly an economic fear, say sociologists. National University of Singapore (NUS) associate professor Vincent Chua explains that when two groups of workers do similar work but one is paid less (in this case, foreign workers), the lower-cost labour is more attractive to businesses, which may lead to businesses preferring to hire foreign workers over locals. Meanwhile, resentment grows among the locals towards the foreigner group whom they 'perceive' to be taking away their jobs, even if that perception is unfounded.

Besides the perception that elite migrants take away resources such as jobs, many foreigners may appear to have a higher standard of living than the average Singaporean as they live in condominiums and send their children to private schools - even though that may be due to lack of access to public options. Perceptions of greater visibility may occur even if actual numbers have not risen much. In December 2019, before Covid-19 hit, there were 193,700 Employment Pass (EP) holders (foreign professionals, managers, and executives working in Singapore), up from 187,900 in 2015 - a growth of just 3 per cent over four years. By December 2020, amid the pandemic, the figure had fallen to 177,100.

The benefits of being open to foreign labour may not resonate with those whose lived experiences suggest otherwise.

Fairness and reassurance

The economic case for foreign labour has been made many times. Given the limited size and rising age of Singapore's workforce, manpower is needed to meet the needs of our economy and businesses. Some foreign workers help to fill jobs that are unattractive to Singaporeans. Others help to bridge critical skills gaps in high skills areas like digital technology, advanced manufacturing, and cutting-edge research, and

Singapore would not be able to attract such investments without them.

Yet perhaps the constant repetition of this narrative suggests that these points have not been entirely successful in assuaging unhappiness. One reason for this is that the benefits of being open to foreign labour may not resonate with those whose lived experiences suggest otherwise. Many Singaporeans are feeling the stress of having to compete with foreigners and new citizens in the workplace, as well as for homes in HDB estates and school placements. Though there are many initiatives for workers to reskill, not every displaced worker who feels they have been outcompeted by

foreigners may be able to find an ideal job. But at another level, the fear of competition might stem from a more basic fear of not being able to get by.

In many respects, the current unhappiness has to do with the middle class feeling increasingly disenfranchised as costs of living become increasingly higher in Singapore, without wages necessarily keeping up. Taking further steps to indicate that rising inequality is undesirable for social harmony, and that it is the average Singaporean worker who is being placed at the centre of policy decisions, would send a meaningful message. Of course, this has to be alongside more grassroots efforts at workplaces, schools and neighbourhoods to encourage integration, as well as fostering stronger civic organisations that draw from both local and non-local populations.

Who we are, where we come from

Along with economic reassurance, then, there is a need to encourage social integration and acceptance. But NUS associate professor Daniel Goh flags a disquieting possibility: that some sentiments, once rooted, may be hard to weed out.

In the July 6 debate, Workers' Party (WP) MP and Leader of the Opposition Pritam Singh suggested that earlier data could have arrested the spread of xenophobia. In 2016, then-NCMP Leon Perera had asked for the number of intra-corporate transferees (ICTs) in Singapore under CECA. ICTs refer to employees of international companies who transfer from overseas branches to Singaporean branches – in this case, from branches in India to branches in Singapore. The reply then was that Ministry of Manpower (MOM) does not disclose data on foreign manpower with a breakdown by nationality, noted Mr Singh. But this February, replying to PSP NCMP Leong Mun Wai, MOM disclosed that ICTs accounted for about 5 per cent of EP holders. On July 6 itself, Dr Tan revealed that in 2020, only 500 ICTs were from India. If the ICT figure had been revealed earlier, Mr Singh suggested that “a lot of the misunderstanding and the reaction we see about CECA could have been addressed and actually nipped in the bud”.

Yasmine Wong, senior analyst at the Centre of Excellence for National Security in NTU's S Rajaratnam School of International Studies, agrees that greater transparency and data could help dispel speculation “and quell fears of what is perceived to be the rapidly changing social demographics of Singapore”. But NUS associate professor Daniel Goh, a former WP NCMP who has retired from politics, says: “It may help somewhat, but I am not optimistic.” With the decline of traditional trusted communication channels and the rise of social media echo chambers, the facts can be ignored.

Foreigners create value in other ways too - for example, they add social diversity to Singapore, which enriches our society.

“Beyond transparency, we also need an open, candid national conversation on the next lap regarding population and the contour of our workforce beyond 2030” - the year of the 2013 Population White Paper's projections. This debate is perhaps one for the next white paper, he adds.

“It will be useful for the government to show exactly how many Singaporean jobs were created as a result of foreign labour,” says Dr Chua. “But besides the economics, foreigners create value in other ways too - for example, they add social diversity to Singapore, which enriches our society.”

“The fact is that we need foreigners. But we should not see them in terms of their ‘use value’ - rather their intrinsic value, in terms of the social diversity, economic diversity and values they bring to our society.” Beyond economic arguments and greater transparency on data, “there is a fundamental need for a common understanding of the Singaporean identity that is more inclusive and is not predicated against the foreign ‘other’”, says Ms Wong.

Inquiry Question:

Assess the impact of foreign films or foreign TV programmes on the culture of your society. (2009, Q9)
Is cultural globalisation to be welcomed or feared today? (Adapted from A Level 2019 Q9)

At the end of this section, students should be able to:

- ✓ Explain how globalisation positively and negatively impacts local culture and identity.
- ✓ Evaluate the efforts that have been made to preserve cultures and traditions, and whether national culture and identity should be protected from the forces of globalisation

• Change and Continuity - Cultural Globalisation •

Reading Set 5

Change in culture as a result of cultural globalisation is an inescapable outcome. Identity in the modern world is fluid and everchanging and this can occur for a vast array of reasons. Beyond the technological changes in society, another significant factor is cultural globalisation. This sort of change occurs at the societal level as some types of artforms from different cultures are valued differently (some more than others). Colonialism (Hollywood) and non-European pop-culture waves (Japanese wave, Korean) are some forms of cultural globalisation that occurs very rampantly today. The transborder cultural transmission around the world have significant impact on the type of Art that gets created and influences the artists greatly due to societal and cultural pressure from consumers. To remain relevant culturally, the artist would often embrace or infuse the changes arising from cultural globalization into their own art forms. All of these have significant implication on the shifting nature of arts and the rapid evolution and fusion of the arts.

Continuity in culture can be rather political in relation to cultural globalisation as various communities attempt to preserve and prevent the dilution of their domestic art form (local identity), in a way they are fighting change. Inevitably, the embrace of another culture from another context can result in the loss of localised art and artforms as the masses embrace globally loved trends. In a contestation of local and foreign art, some locals would reject change and external influences in an attempt to preserve and protect national art and artforms against other pervasive or more popular art forms. While this is increasingly becoming impossible, these traditional and older artforms which have important historical, cultural and even political significances that makes them impossible for stakeholders to ignore. This makes it a challenge particularly to governments and artists deeply involved with nation building to persist in upholding the continuity of these types of art.

Cultural Globalisation

Cultural globalisation, a phenomenon by which the experience of everyday life, as influenced by the diffusion of commodities and ideas, reflects a standardisation of cultural expressions around the world.

James L. Watson

- The encroachment of Western values upon the cultures of other worlds - whether conscious or not - is often referred to as **cultural imperialism**.
- While the direction of cultural globalisation can go in any direction, it is undeniable that countries like the United States have had a much greater influence on globalising culture.
- This is largely due to it being a large producer of various forms of media and the proliferation of its large corporations all over the world.

Cultural Imperialism



Cultural Soft Power

- Soft power is a phrase coined and popularised by Joseph Nye in the late 1980s. Nye defines 'soft power' as the ability to shape what others want by being attractive. This attractiveness rests on intangible resources, such as culture and ideology which could help to legitimise a given state's power and policy in the eyes of others.
- Many countries, in a bid to increase their influence, are expanding and exporting their culture via cultural industries like music, movies, food, etc.

The next three articles examine the characteristics and both the positive and negative impact of cultural globalisation. As you read the articles, fill in the table on page 27.

⇒ Concepts: Identity, Heritage, Globalisation, Soft Power

Article 11: Cultural Globalisation

Internationalrelations.org | November 10, 2017

There is a large debate surrounding the issue of culture and globalisation, and it revolves around the questions of globalisation and cultural diversity. Namely, the question that many ask is what are the effects of globalisation on cultural diversity? For those who question the effects of globalisation on culture argue that although there might be political economic benefits of globalisation, there are negative effects of globalisation on culture.

The critics of cultural globalisation argue that a couple of things are happening. First, as we are becoming more and more connected (economically, technologically, and culturally), we are becoming more and more similar to one another. By sharing ideas, language, music, the concern by some is that the differences that exist between different cultures might become lost over time.

For example, one of the primary concerns is related to the issue of language. With certain languages being used more than others (in terms of overall number of people that speak that language), smaller languages might one day become extinct (the issue of extinct languages is not a new concern but has happened over the history of humankind).

Related to this, a second concern is that not only are these different cultures either shifting towards other cultures, but that the only cultures that are continuing to have a strong (and increasing presence) are the ones from more economically and politically dominant countries. Some are concerned that “though globalisation has been judged as involving a general process of loss of cultural diversity, some of course did better, some worse out of this process.

Whilst those cultures in the West and, specifically, the United States saw a sort of standardized version of their cultures exported worldwide, it was the ‘weaker’ cultures of the developing world that have been most threatened. Thus, even though cultural identity is at risk everywhere with the

diversity and freedom of choice, that trade gives artists a greater opportunity to express their creative inspiration. When two cultures trade with each other, they tend to expand the opportunities available to individual artists.

Furthermore, globalisation is not the uncontrollable force that easily sweeps away other cultures with the dominant culture, but rather, individuals themselves have the ability to accept what cultural globalisation offers, or equally, they have the ability to reject it. Individuals’ roles in the transmission of culture—even those participating in a globalised world—cannot be underestimated. Individual decisions and choices are critical to the processes of cultural globalisation, wherever it is evident.

While this phenomenon promotes the integration of societies, it may also bring with it a loss of uniqueness of local culture, which in turn can lead to loss of identity, exclusion and even conflict.

Globalisation is not the uncontrollable force that easily sweeps away other cultures with the dominant culture, but rather... individuals themselves have the ability to accept what cultural globalisation offers, or equally, they have the ability to reject it.

depredations of globalisation, the developing world is particularly at risk.

However, there is also another way to look at the relationship between culture and globalisation. Instead of viewing cultural globalisation as threatening to existing cultures, globalisation itself can be a catalyst for actually creating and shaping culture. Instead of one culture dominating another, the relationship between cultural globalisation and cultural diversity is one that actually allows for greater diversity. For example, markets support

With regard to the relationship of globalisation and cultural diversity, while some blame globalisation with the cause of languages dying out, others suggest that globalisation and new technologies have allowed languages to exist – arguably for very long periods of time. For example, Swahili scholars are working with Google on making Swahili more accessible to the world. In developing the Google-Swahili language interface, Google collaborated with East African academics and Swahili scholars to verify maintenance of the language’s integrity. The “global” came to the “local” to learn and adapt, and then the local became global after Google’s interaction with the Swahili scholars. Suddenly, a language that was localized to the Greater East Africa found its way to global availability. Now, with a computer terminal, one can learn Swahili from anywhere in the world, as is the case with many other languages. Thus, Swahili is re-defined through cultural artifacts that originated in the “West”—computers, internet, Google—and globalised to anyone that has access”

In short, cultural globalisation is a very important issue for international relations. It is important to keep thinking about the issues related to globalisation and cultural change, particularly as we find newer ways to connect with one another.

⇒ Concepts: Soft Power, Globalisation

Article 12: Here's what a Korean boy band can teach us about globalisation

Peter Vanham | World Economic Forum | Dec 18, 2018

For the readers of America's TIME Magazine, it was clear: Korean boy band BTS should be 2018 Person of the Year. After a worldwide online poll, they held onto their early lead to beat candidates like Planet Earth and US President Donald Trump.

But who is BTS? Well, unless you've been living under a rock this past year (like me), you wouldn't ask that question. The K-pop sensation scored two number one albums in the Billboard Top 200, beat Justin Bieber to become Top Social Artist of 2018, and are the most talked about artists in the world. In their global success, though, one peculiarity stands out. Their songs are mostly sung in Korean, not English. They are not alone in this phenomenon. Latin artists like Fonsi (*Despacito*) and Enrique Iglesias, or fellow Korean artists like Psy (*Gangnam Style*), are showing that the globalisation of culture no longer only coincides with Americanisation. Will we see a more diverse globalisation as of now?

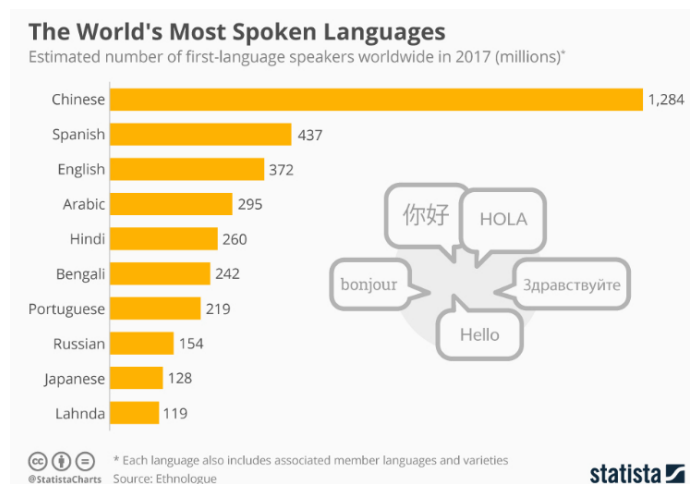


From the end of World War Two to the 2000s, the arrow of cultural globalisation pointed in only one direction: that of the English language and American culture. Whereas many European countries until the 1960s were still mostly influenced by French culture, the tide had started to shift from 1945. American GIs had come to Europe to fight, but they also brought Coca-Cola, jazz music and an admiration of Hollywood films. On other continents too, the rising economic and political power of America translated into a rising cultural influence. Indeed, as many Asian and European societies were focused on rebuilding, American culture conquered the world. Elvis Presley, Frank Sinatra, Marvin Gaye, Aretha Franklin and James Brown started the trend. As the decades went by, only Brits and other English language artists like The Beatles and the Rolling Stones could really keep pace with their American peers.

Today, there is no denying the dominant global culture is American. The highest grossing films of all time, worldwide, are almost without exception from Hollywood (think *Avatar*, *Titanic* or *Star Wars*). The best-selling albums of all time are mostly American. Most social-media and internet firms are American. And food culture, though more diverse, is still affected by the McDonalds, Coca-Colas, Starbucks and PepsiCos of this world. This evolution would not have been possible without the wider globalisation of the world economy, and the transformative impact of technology. In the 1960s, transatlantic flights and radio recordings made it possible for The Beatles to unleash a mania in America. In the 1990s and 2000s open global markets and the internet allowed for cultural sensations to spread even faster.

The dark side of globalised culture

But this globalisation of culture did come at a price. Consider languages. Since the earliest era of globalisation – the 16th Century Age of Discovery – the number of spoken languages worldwide has steadily declined, from about 14,500 to less than 7,000. By 2007, the New York Times reported, half of the remaining 7,000 languages were at danger of extinction. And by 2017, the World Economic Forum wrote, almost 1,500 languages had less than 1,000 speakers left.



As UNESCO, the United Nations' educational, scientific and cultural arm pointed out at Rio+20, the homogenisation of culture brought other risks too. It said in 2012: "While this phenomenon promotes the integration of societies, it may also bring with it a loss of uniqueness of local culture, which in turn can lead to loss of identity, exclusion and even conflict." Recent outbursts of violence incited through global social media like Facebook and Twitter show it was a prescient view.

Then there are the economic effects of a globalising culture. Already before the rise of social media and the so-called Big Tech companies, less than a dozen companies – like Disney, 21st Century Fox, Sony and Viacom – owned the lion's share of the world's leading media and entertainment institutions. The arrival of large tech platforms only accelerated the trend towards larger market concentration, and the risks of loss of cultural diversity.

Finally, as much as we may like our burger with fries, our bag of chips and our takeaway cup of coffee, the globalising fast-food culture exacerbated global problems too. If everyone consumed the same amount of burgers as Americans, or created as much rubbish, climate change and pollution might be insurmountable, and obesity an even bigger cause of illness and death.

Cultures will continue to exist and cross-fertilise each other, as they have for centuries. It is important for all to embrace their own culture, and for policymakers and other stakeholders to strengthen and promote cultural bonds in society.

Time bomb, or boon?

This raises some important questions. Is American-led cultural globalisation a self-destructive time bomb, destined to slowly kill languages, cultures and life itself? Is cultural globalisation a phenomenon that enriches local cultures with a diverse set of foreign influences? Or should we be agnostic about it, as long as it leads to more positive outcomes for society and the environment, like better governance and climate leadership?

If, until recently, the first question seemed most likely to be answered "yes", BTS, Fonsi and their peers showed a more diverse globalisation can't be completely written off. Take the case of Luis Fonsi first. With his hit single *Despacito*, the Puerto Rican singer broke seven Guinness World Records, including first YouTube video to reach 5 billion views, and most streamed track worldwide. Doing so, he showed that you can influence global culture through the Spanish language and Caribbean culture too. This is unsurprising when you consider that there are 437 million people who speak Spanish as a first language compared to 372 million native English speakers.

The case of BTS is perhaps even more impressive, because it is so much more against the cultural odds. While Spanish, alongside Mandarin Chinese and English belongs to the top 3 of most spoken languages worldwide, Korean doesn't even feature in the top 10. As a matter of fact, Korea until about a century ago was known as the "Hermit Kingdom", for its cultural and economic isolation. There are still remnants of

Korea's isolation today. In many other G20 economies, like France or Germany, English language songs counted for the majority of hits by 2017. In Korea all top hits were still Korean. BTS is no exception. Most of their songs are largely sung in Korean, with only parts of the lyrics in English. Yet, BTS managed to become the global musical sensation of the year. What's more, their success is in part bottom-up, with many fans helping the band voluntarily to translate and subtitle their music videos and performances to English. And BTS is also not the first K-pop band to break through internationally. In the West, Psy is well-known, but across Asia, including in China, Vietnam, and Japan, many more K-pop bands are vastly popular.

In other domains too, cultural power players have emerged from elsewhere than America. Asia in particular is rising in cultural influence. The first AI news anchor, for example, comes from China, and speaks both Mandarin and English. Hollywood is increasingly influenced by and working with Chinese companies and actors, like *The Great Wall* with Matt Damon and Jing Tian, or one of the hit movies of this year, *Crazy Rich Asians*, which featured an all-Asian cast, and was based on an equally successful series of books. In the field of technology, Swedish-based Spotify managed to become one of the most successful streaming companies.

All of these show that there is nothing inevitable about the Americanisation of cultural globalisation after all. More likely, cultures will continue to exist and cross-fertilize each other, as they have for centuries. It is important for all to embrace their own culture, and for policymakers and other stakeholders to strengthen and promote cultural bonds in society. But if a boy band from the Hermit Kingdom can become Person of the Year in the economic capital of the world, a global monoculture is still quite a way away.



Scan the QR code and read more about how the Hallyu or Korean Wave has taken over the world in this CNA report (Oct 2021). Alternatively, you can read it at this link <https://bit.ly/3IDYrBH>

⇒ Concepts: Soft Power, Globalisation

Article 13: China's influence in Africa grows as more young people learn to speak Mandarin

Aanu Adeoye and Idris Mukhtar | CNN | April 11, 2019



Inside a brightly-lit classroom, around 20 schoolchildren are enthusiastically singing the Chinese national anthem. That song is followed by another tune in Chinese – one typically sung during the Lunar New Year. But this scene is not taking place in a Chinese school but at Lakewood Premier School, thousands of kilometres away in Nairobi. Here, schoolchildren are learning Mandarin, a language spoken by nearly 1 billion people almost 8,000 kilometres away from their home.

Sandra Wanjiru, 13, is one of hundreds of African schoolchildren who are increasingly proficient in the Chinese language. More will join their ranks in 2020 when Mandarin will be officially taught in all Kenyan schools alongside French, Arabic and German, which are already on the curriculum.

Lakewood Premier School, where Wanjiru studies, has begun the program a year early to give its pupils a head start. "I chose to learn Chinese first because it's interesting to learn a foreign language but also because I would want to travel and do business in China," said Wanjiru. Julius Jwan, CEO of the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), told Chinese state-owned Chinese news agency Xinhua: "The place of China in the world economy has also grown to be so strong that Kenya stands to benefit if its citizens can understand Mandarin."

China's growing influence in Africa

China has become increasingly powerful and prominent across Africa over the past two decades. Through President Xi Jinping's flagship Belt and Road Initiative, China has loaned money to African countries to build highways, dams, stadiums, airports and skyscrapers. The Asian powerhouse has given out more than \$143 billion in loans to African countries since 2000, according to the Johns Hopkins SAIS China-Africa Research Initiative. Kenya is not the only country teaching its youngsters Chinese; in South Africa, Mandarin has been an optional language course for students since 2014, and in December 2018, Uganda introduced Mandarin to secondary students in selected schools.

Soft power, if successful, may lead to more influence -- as a matter of fact, it is more than just influence and rather works through persuasion and attraction.

Henry Adramunguni, a curriculum specialist at Uganda's National Curriculum Development Centre, said Mandarin was included in the curriculum because it is one of the United Nations' languages of work. Ugandan students also have the choice of learning French, Arabic and Latin or German in school. "We want to give the opportunity for our young Ugandans to have access to jobs, education, and business beyond our

borders. That's why we've given them this opportunity to learn Chinese," he said.

Teachers in the program were trained by tutors at the Confucius Institute, a non-profit organisation, working to promote Chinese language and culture around the world. Confucius Institute launched its first outpost in Africa at the University of Nairobi in 2005 and has since expanded to 48 centres across the continent. They are run by Hanban (the Office of Chinese Language Council International) and are part-funded by the Chinese government and the universities that host them.

China ranks second only to France as the country with the most number of cultural institutions in Africa; a remarkable rise given China has no colonial ties with any country on the continent unlike France and the UK, which have traditionally used cultural institutes such as Institut Français or the British Council to wield influence abroad.

The continued expansion of Chinese cultural institutes on the continent is part of the country's strategy to increase its influence in Africa through 'soft power,' says Ilaria Carrozza, a researcher on China-Africa relations at the London School of Economics and Political Science. China hopes that by encouraging the study of its language, it can boost its soft power and appeal abroad, says Carrozza.

"Soft power, if successful, may lead to more influence -- as a matter of fact, it is more than just influence and rather works through persuasion and attraction," Carrozza said. She added that African governments see the introduction of Mandarin and Chinese institutes as an investment in the future of young Africans. "African governments hope that introducing Mandarin in school curricula will lead to a future workforce that gets better jobs either in China or with Chinese companies operating in the continent," she said.

Confucius Institutes Concerns

Despite the apparent advantages, Carrozza warned that African governments should keep a close eye on these institutes especially in the wake of closures in the US of such centres amid fears of interference from the Chinese Communist Party.

The University of North Florida joined a growing list of American schools to end its partnership with the Confucius Institute, saying the centre's activities did not align with the school's goals. The decision was welcomed by US Senator Marco Rubio who has been an outspoken opponent of the institutes. "Without degenerating into a witch-hunt, this is something African governments and institutions need to carefully consider in each individual case," Carrozza said.

China's Foreign Ministry denies accusations the government interferes in running the institutes. Ministry spokesman Lu Kang said at a February media briefing in Beijing: "All the Confucius Institutes in the US are jointly established in American universities in accordance with their voluntary application and in line with the principle of mutual respect, friendly consultation, equality and mutual benefit by the Chinese and American universities.

In Kenya, the introduction of Mandarin hasn't been welcomed by all. Wycliffe Omucheyi, chair of the Kenya National Union of Teachers (KNUT), said he believes the government is rushing into the program. Rather than Mandarin, students should be taught indigenous African languages, he said. "The government needs to develop the vernacular languages classes first before embarking on something foreign," said Omucheyi.

Despite these concerns, Russell Kaschula, a professor of African Language Studies at Rhodes University in South Africa, said it would be naive for Africans not to learn Mandarin as China is a major trading partner to many countries on the continent. "It is as important as the learning of English, French and Portuguese were back in the 19th century in Africa," he added, referring to a time when former colonial powers imposed their languages.

Africans often have to learn new languages as a matter of necessity and as long as foreign languages are optional, Kaschula said having them in a school's curriculum was not a problem. "Nelson Mandela once learned Afrikaans so that he could understand the Afrikaner oppressors better," he said. "In the same way, I think the learning of Mandarin makes sense."

Despite the apparent advantages...African governments should keep a close eye on these institutes especially in the wake of closures in the US of such centres amid fears of interference from the Chinese Communist Party.



Scan the QR code and learn more about how the Confucius Institutes backlash reveals bigger problems with China's soft power. Alternatively, you can read it at this link <https://nus.edu/3AxKoLc>

Application #3: Cultural Globalisation

What are the positive and negative impact of cultural globalisation presented in articles 11, 12 and 13? Write down the examples illustrated for each point.

Positive Impact of Cultural Globalisation		Negative Impact of Cultural Globalisation	
Impact	Example	Impact	Example

• Response to Cultural Globalisation •

With globalisation's unwavering stride forward, many around the world are worried about the impact it will have on their own cultures, belief systems and way of life. Below are 2 articles on how some countries are trying to protect their culture (for various reasons) from this. As you read the articles, fill in the table on page 37.

⇒ Concepts: Globalisation, Soft Power

Article 14: Xi Jinping's crackdown on everything is remaking Chinese society

Lily Kuo | The Washington Post | Nov 16, 2021 (adapted)

The orders have been sudden, dramatic and often baffling. In early September, "American Idol"-style competitions and shows featuring men deemed too effeminate were banned by Chinese authorities. Days earlier, one of China's wealthiest actresses, Zhao Wei, had her movies, television series and news mentions scrubbed from the Internet as if she had never existed.

Over the summer, China's multibillion-dollar private education industry was decimated overnight by a ban on for-profit tutoring, while new regulations wiped more than \$1 trillion from Chinese tech stocks since a peak in February. As China's tech moguls compete to donate more to President Xi Jinping's campaign against inequality, "Xi Jinping Thought" is taught in elementary schools, and foreign games and apps like Animal Crossing and Duolingo have been pulled from stores.



A dizzying regulatory crackdown unleashed by China's government has spared almost no sector. This sprawling "rectification" campaign — with such disparate targets as ride-hailing services, insurance, education and even the amount of time children can spend playing video games — is redrawing the boundaries of business and society in China as Xi prepares to take on a controversial third term in 2022.

"It's striking and significant. This is clearly not a sector-by-sector rectification; this is an entire economic, industry and structural rectification," said Jude Blanchette, who holds the Freeman Chair in China Studies at the Centre for Strategic and International Studies.

At China's national congress this month, Xi retained his title as general secretary of the ruling Chinese Communist Party (CCP), a move that would upset a decades-old system of term limits and leadership succession. Xi has pushed an agenda of tackling income inequality under the banner of "common prosperity," a campaign that gives officials and companies rallying around the cause opportunity to show their loyalty before the reshuffle of party personnel. Since coming to power in 2012, Chinese President Xi Jinping has sought to enhance the role of the ruling Communist Party in all areas of society, including its businesses, schools and cultural institutions. In a speech marking the centenary of the Party in July 2021, Xi vowed to "enhance" the Party's powers, uphold his own "core" leadership and strengthen the unity of the Chinese people.

Officials are cracking down on China's fervent fan clubs whose members discuss and rank celebrities, going to extreme lengths to support their favoured stars. (When Chinese Canadian pop star Kris Wu was detained on allegations of rape in August, his fans flooded social media in his defence and called for breaking him out of prison.) Male Chinese celebrities known for their androgynous style have also become a threat in Beijing's eyes. Regulators have ordered broadcasters to encourage "masculinity" and put a stop to "abnormal beauty standards" such as "niangpao," a slur that translates to "sissy men."

"The party does not feel comfortable with expressions of individualism that are in some ways transgressive to norms that it puts forward," said Rana Mitter, a professor of modern Chinese history and politics at the University of Oxford. "The party-state makes it clear that it has the first and last word on what is permitted in mass culture."

Within China, the campaign has been met with a mix of approval and scepticism. Liang Min, 35, a linguist from Jilin province, said China's pop idol culture, in which young fans donate money to celebrities, is out of control. "The teenagers are being misled. Personally, I'm proud of this action," Liang said. Internet users criticised the order against "sissy" culture as state-sponsored homophobia. "Sissy men will not harm the country, but prejudice and narrow thinking will," said one comment that was censored on WeChat after getting more than 100,000 views.

Xi's crusade has left the country's previously all-powerful tech titans, such as Alibaba's Jack Ma and Tencent's Pony Ma, in no doubt about who controls China's future. But it has also alarmed investors.

Regulators in September summoned Tencent and Netease over their online gaming platforms, ordering the companies to eliminate content promoting "incorrect values" such as "money worship" and "sissy" culture. Both firms promised to "carefully study" and implement the orders.

Officials have been working to restore investor confidence, with Vice Premier Liu He promising during a forum on Monday in Hebei province that China's support for the private economy "has not changed and will not change in the future." In early September, the People's Daily ran a front-page article pledging the government's "unswerving commitment" to the private sector and protecting foreign capital and competition.

A 'profound revolution'

The scope and velocity of the society-wide rectification has some worried China may be at the beginning of the kind of cultural and ideological upheaval that has brought the country to a standstill before. In September, an essay by a retired newspaper editor and blogger described the changes as a response to threats from the United States. "What these events tell us is that a monumental change is taking place in China, and that the economic, financial, cultural, and political spheres are undergoing a profound transformation — or, one could say, a profound revolution," wrote Li Guangman. This is also a return to the original intentions of the Chinese Communist Party... a return to the essence of socialism.

The essay, picked up by China's state media outlets, prompted comparisons with a 1965 article that launched China's chaotic decade-long Cultural Revolution, and left even some in the party establishment worried. Hu Xijin, the outspoken editor of the state-run Global Times, criticised the article as misleading and an "extreme interpretation" of the recent rush of regulatory orders that could trigger "confusion and panic."

Differences over the article may be a sign of deeper dispute within the party, according to Yawei Liu, a senior adviser focusing on China at the Carter Centre in Atlanta, who wrote that such disagreement indicates "raging debate inside the CCP on the merits of reform and opening up, on where China is today . . . and about what kind of nation China wants to become."

Residents expect more measures to come, targeting regular life as well as other sectors. While the Ministry of Culture and Tourism is preparing a ban on karaoke songs deemed out of line with "the core values of socialism," city officials are regulating dancing in China's parks, a popular pastime for retirees. In an editorial in the People's Daily in early September, the vice chairman of the Chinese Film Association called on filmmakers to make more patriotic films and "further promote" Xi Jinping Thought.

Ouyang Haotian, a student from Guangzhou studying event management at Macau University of Science and Technology, said the government's crackdowns are well-meaning but sometimes implemented too abruptly.

"Everything the government does — they do it to maintain the stability of its governance, sometimes without considering the impacts on individuals," said the 22-year-old. "It is a trial-and-error process, so people have to accept those errors and move on."

Still, he said, the measures can go too far. "There is a point where government regulations stop working. You can ban artists and certain movies or songs, but you cannot teach people what to think," he said.

⇒ Concepts: Heritage, Identity

Article 15: The SG Heritage Plan

What is Our SG Heritage Plan

Our SG Heritage Plan is the first master plan for Singapore's heritage and museum sector which outlines the broad strategies and initiatives for the sector over five years (2018 to 2022). These strategies and initiatives will help raise awareness and pride in our heritage, and in what makes us Singaporean. They will also help us in strengthening our identity, improving our quality of life, and fostering our sense of belonging.

Our cultures cover our intangible cultural heritage, which comprise the traditions, rituals, crafts, expressions, knowledge and skills that we practise and pass on from generation to generation. As it is part of our living, everyday heritage, it is important that we document and safeguard it for future generations.



How can we safeguard Intangible Cultural Heritage?

Safeguarding intangible cultural heritage does not just mean merely documenting and conducting research on practices, rituals, festivals, crafts, art forms, etc., but also transferring the knowledge and skills critical to these elements to the next generation. These safeguarding efforts include public education and outreach programmes that increase the awareness and appreciation of our intangible cultural heritage.



What does Our SG Heritage Plan do?

Strengthen Research and Documentation

Intangible cultural heritage is often passed down by word of mouth from one generation to another, and it may be lost over time without proper documentation. Robust research and documentation are therefore important in ensuring that the knowledge is retained. Under Our SG Heritage Plan, more efforts will be devoted to the research and documentation of our intangible cultural heritage and include the following initiative, among others:

Partnerships with Institutes of Higher Learning

We have stepped up efforts to partner our universities and other institutes of higher learning (IHLs) to conduct in-depth research on Singapore's intangible cultural heritage through our Heritage Research Grant, which seeks to encourage our IHLs to embark on heritage-related research for the documentation and preservation of Singapore's heritage.

Encourage Greater Awareness and Transmission of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Under Our SG Heritage Plan, we leverage existing platforms to work with partners and introduce new initiatives to raise public awareness and appreciation of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage. We also expend more effort to facilitate the transmission of different aspects of our intangible cultural heritage to future generations of Singaporeans. The strategies and initiatives include the following:

Leverage Existing Platforms and Showcases

We continue to use exhibitions, festivals and programmes, such as the Singapore Heritage Festival and Singapore Food Festival, to showcase and promote greater appreciation of different aspects of Singapore's intangible cultural heritage. We also conduct talks and workshops by experts and practitioners to facilitate the transmission of knowledge and skills about Singapore's intangible cultural heritage.

Promote Traditional Trades in Historic Precincts

Many traditional trades and interesting stories still exist in our historic precincts such as Chinatown, Kampong Glam and Little India. We cast a spotlight on these interesting trades by working with other agencies, such as the Singapore

Tourism Board (STB), and precinct partners such as the Chinatown Business Association, One Kampong Glam, and Little India Shopkeepers and Heritage Association.

Promote Traditional Performing Arts

Singapore's traditional arts are made up of deeply-rooted cultural and artistic expressions linked to our major ethnic groups. These form part of our intangible cultural heritage and contribute to Singapore's rich cultural diversity. The National Arts Council (NAC) administers various programmes and initiatives to promote traditional arts in Singapore, including traditional arts showcases and educational programmes for schools. A major initiative of the NAC was the re-opening of the Stamford Arts Centre in 2018, which has a strong focus on the traditional arts.

Ratify the UNESCO 2003 Convention

On 22 February 2018, Singapore ratified the UNESCO 2003 Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. The main goal of the convention is to safeguard the practices, expressions, knowledge and skills of communities and groups, as well as to promote awareness of and respect for intangible cultural heritage. By ratifying this convention, we signal our commitment to safeguard and promote Singapore's intangible cultural heritage. The convention also provides a framework to guide our safeguarding efforts and facilitates collaboration with our international counterparts.

Nominate a Singapore Intangible Cultural Heritage Element for UNESCO's Representative List




As a member state of the UNESCO 2003 Convention, Singapore worked successfully towards getting our hawker culture, an intangible cultural heritage element, listed on UNESCO's Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020. The Representative List, which comprises intangible cultural heritage elements from different countries, showcases the diversity of cultural heritage across the world and raises awareness about their importance so that they can be safeguarded. Our hawker culture resonates with Singaporeans and best reflects our rich, multicultural heritage. This successful listing allows us to share the multicultural aspects of our heritage with the international community and contribute to the diverse cultures of the world.

The Singapore Hawker Culture

- Hawker culture in Singapore was officially added to the Unesco Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity in 2020.
- Hawker Culture in Singapore is an integral part of the way of life for Singaporeans, hawker Centres are spread across our island and serve as "community dining rooms", where friends and families gather, interact and bond over their shared love for food.
- They also serve as vibrant communal spaces that promote social cohesion, moderate the cost of living and foster a common national identity based on shared experiences, values, and norms.
- The origins of Hawker Culture in Singapore can be traced back to the mid-1800s, when the first street hawkers would ply the streets selling an array of food offerings.
- From 1968 to 1986, the Government licensed and resettled street hawkers into purpose-built hawker centres and markets with proper sanitation and amenities and hawker centres made their way into housing estates and industrial areas.
- Today, there are more than 110 hawker centres across the island. An additional 13 more hawker centres will be developed by 2027.

This is extracted from Our SG Heritage website. To find out more about the SG Heritage Plan, go to <https://www.oursgheritage.sg/what-is-the-heritage-plan-for-singapore>

Scan the following QR codes to watch videos about efforts to preserve Singapore's heritage.

 <p>Shophouses Transformed: Preserving Our Heritage Dream Spaces CNA Documentary (2021)</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3fOojhK</p>	 <p>Keeping Heritage Alive In Singapore Show Me The City CNA Insider (2020)</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3fRvvd1</p>	 <p>Preserving Singapore's Ageing Hawker Culture: The New Wave Hawkers In Our Centre CNA Insider (2020)</p> <p>https://bit.ly/3rlrSvw</p>
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Other countries have also made efforts to protect different aspects of their culture.
Here are more examples!

Cultural Traditions

The Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage, which is administered by UNESCO, was adopted in 2003 and is ratified by 132 States. It recommends the protection of elements such as oral traditions and expressions, performing arts, social practices, rituals and festive events, knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe and know-how related to traditional handicrafts.

Examples of new additions to the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding include the Meshrep tradition found among the Uygur people in China's Xinjiang Uygur autonomous region. A complete Meshrep event includes a rich collection of traditions and performance arts, such as music, dance, drama, folk arts, acrobatics, oral literature and games.

Croatia's Ojkanje singing also made it to the list. Found in the Croatian regions of the Dalmatian hinterland, the Ojkanje is performed by two or more singers using a distinctive voice-shaking technique created by the throat. Each song lasts as long as the lead singer can hold his or her breath.

Traditional Ways of Life

The nations of Norway and Japan have attempted to obtain exemption from an international whaling ban based on cultural grounds. In the spring of 2000, at a UN conference on trade in endangered species, the governments of these two countries sought to claim that whaling constituted an integral part of their cultural heritage.

For hundreds of years, local fishermen have hunted whales and the food source was considered part of their tradition and culture. The Norwegian representatives claimed that their northern coastal villages depended on hunting and fishing for their livelihoods. Although whaling is not a big part of the Norwegian national budget, it is still considered a crucial source of income for those fishermen who need it.

They also argued that the global effort to prohibit the hunting of whales amounted to an imposition of other countries' cultural values that contradicted their own. Many international agreements—and especially trade agreements—contain exceptions for cultural activities, and the Norwegians believed that this activity should also qualify for an exemption.

Local Films & Media

The European Commission announced a new proposal in 2016 that will require streaming services like Netflix and Amazon Prime to devote at least 20 percent of their libraries to European content, as part of an overhaul of existing broadcasting regulations. The Audiovisual Media Services Directive also requires streaming companies to prominently feature European titles on their websites and enables member states to mandate that the companies contribute to the production of European films and TV shows. The plan was announced as part of a broader effort to create a "digital single market" across the European Union.

In implementing quotas to protect cultural diversity, the EU is returning to familiar territory. Several European countries began imposing screen quotas and subsidies for domestic films in the 1920s, as a way to prevent Hollywood studios from flooding their markets. France, which dominated the global film market in the pre-Hollywood era, has steadily increased film subsidies since the 1980s, and continues to enforce minimum quotas for locally produced content on TV.

Languages

France has attracted notoriety for attempting to protect its language from the immigration of foreign words. The French Academy routinely scours the land for invasive words from other languages, most notably English ones. Words such as "talk show," and "prime time" have been declared unwelcome foreigners, and the government has attempted—with rather limited success—to replace them with French substitutes. In 2013 a debate was ignited online when the government decided to replace the word "hashtag" which is used frequently in Twitter and other social media, with the Gallic word "mot-dièse".

Similarly, in Canada's French speaking province of Quebec, provincial regulations stipulate that any sign containing English posted by a business must also post the same text in French in letters at least twice the size of the English text. Even more drastic measures to promote the French language have been considered, such as obliging immigrants to receive their college educations in French, and requirements that large-sized businesses conduct all their transactions in French.

Application #4: Cultural Challenges due to Globalisation

What are some of the cultural challenges faced by countries due to globalisation? What are their responses? Consider the effectiveness of these measures.

Countries	Challenges	Responses / Measures	Effectiveness
China			
Singapore			

Discussion Question

1. How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition? (2010, Q10)
2. Assess the impact of foreign films or foreign TV programmes on the culture of your society. (2009, Q9)

• Sample Student Essays •

Is spending on the arts really necessary in today's world?

(TMJC JC2 MBT 2021)

A world devoid of the arts is one that would be grey and cold. The arts come in various forms such as music, theatre, visual arts or even craftsmanship. The arts are often associated with bringing colour to the world where physically, it introduces visually stimulating, diverse artworks to be fawned upon or critiqued and metaphorically, the arts bring colour as a source of entertainment and leisure. While this is indeed true, the arts also serve purposes far beyond being a sight for sore eyes. In such a volatile world that we live in today, the arts acts as a bulwark against the vicissitudes of uncertain times. Therefore, I would argue that it is necessary to spend on the arts in today's world.

Firstly, the arts help to revitalise and connect communities around the world. In today's world, with the increasingly unstable or unpredictable economy, and the presence of rapid globalisation, it is important that communities are able to interact and understand each other, as well as stay active and engaged in the global economy. If these aspects were disregarded, we face the risk of great dereliction in many communities' welfare and peace. Communities in this case may include people living in a state, country, ethnic groups and many more. One such example to show how the arts is successful in revitalising and connecting communities is the Seto Islands of Japan. Previously, the island was in great poverty and there were high levels of unemployment. However, after the island was converted into a place rife with art exhibitions and festivals, such as the Setouchi Triennial, the people on the island enjoyed increased fortune and a bustling landscape. Furthermore, this attracted art aficionados around the world, heightening the island's interconnectivity with tourists from all over the world. While in today's world, globalisation is an undeniable factor, it does not necessarily mean that communities will be able to get along smoothly as seen in increased hate crimes in the USA against immigrants and minorities. However, the arts provide an opportunity for communities to build an understanding with each other and connect. Consider the example of Grace Tan, a Singaporean artist who took part in the Setouchi Festival. Her site-specific artwork meant that she had to create the art in Japan and through that, garnered the help from Japanese locals in creating her piece "In The Stillness". Through this experience, they managed to bond and learn more about the different cultures in Singapore and Japan, thus showing how the arts bring communities together. It enables access to such opportunities. Hence, the arts, in providing a source of income and as a basis for interaction, is thus necessary to be invested upon in a world pervaded by the need for an improved economy and harmony among communities.

Secondly, the arts act as a platform for progress. In today's world where we, as a world and society, grow increasingly plagued by issues that trouble the world, the arts enable us to push for changes in countering these issues by vocalising it to increase awareness and empathy among people. Today, there are many issues running rampant – from corrupt governments to body image troubles. The arts thus provide a space that is safe and educational to touch on such controversial issues today. For example, theatre is a way in which stories, often with messages, are delivered to an audience through performance. Therefore, it is easy to imbue messages concerning these issues into a performance and shape it in a manner that appeals to and galvanises an audience into thinking and doing something about the raised problem. This is seen in various Singaporean productions such as the most recent "The Other F Word" put up by Wildrice that talks about the issue of body image and society's negative treatment of those who have a bigger body shape. Similarly, famous Broadway production in the US, "Dear Evan Hansen" talks about social anxiety and suicide in teenagers. In most circumstances, such topics are taboo and ignored. Through theatre, the topics are brought to light which can spark proper debates and conversations as to how a society may counter or solve these problems, allowing for change and ultimately, progress. However, theatre is not the only art form to embody this. Digital art forms, such as films and physical art forms, such as books are able to convey similar purposes. In investing in a more vibrant film or literary scene, it enables opportunities for gems such as South Korean movie "Parasite" in talking about social and class divides and George Orwell's novel "1984", which talks about censorship and alludes to the impacts of a controlling, corrupt government. Thus, these manage

to successfully reflect the political and social climates of today, allowing people to gain understanding and push for change. Thus, I argue that spending on the arts is necessary in today's world.

Thirdly, the arts help to build a sense of national identity. As mentioned earlier, globalisation proliferates today's world. With that, people begin to adopt the lifestyles and mindsets of, oftentimes, the Westerners. This has led to a decreased sense of national identity and belonging as people view their own countries as inferior and desire to move elsewhere. This is evident in Singapore, where the younger generation shows rates of increasing migration, displaying a failure in Singapore's maintenance of territorial integrity. As globalisation increases, it becomes harder to establish a firm relationship between the person and his country, causing a lack of national identity. However, through the arts, a strengthened bond between the people and their state can be fostered, as the arts create markers or unique traits within a society that citizens can enjoy and take pride in. For example, Singapore spends a great amount in ensuring an exciting National Day Parade (NDP) every year. This means that factors such as the NDP song is also paid much attention to, allowing for iconic songs such as Dick Lee's "Home" to be created. This song, popular for evoking in people a sense of pride and belonging towards Singapore, has unified Singapore in singing along together every year and creating a common experience as Singapore citizens. Thus, there is a heightened sense of connection to the country as such songs transcend time to always be a reminder to Singaporeans that their country is truly, as the song says, home. This sentiment is common around the world as countries use music, in the form of their national anthems, to build in their people a sense of national identity. Additionally, the arts allow for the innovation of national symbols that once again aid in fostering national identity such as the Merlion. Other unique markers include Anime, exclusive to Japan and even the K-pop industry. Thus, I argue that it is necessary to spend on the arts in today's world.

However, it can be argued that spending on the arts is unnecessary in today's world. In today's world, there are far bigger concerns that should be invested in rather than the arts. This is prominent in many Third World countries. For example, in Africa, a large part of their community suffers economically and on top of that, they face great gender inequality where an estimate of half of the women population do not get to finish their education or do not have access to education at all. Unfortunately, this only further allows the poor economy to deteriorate. Thus, many Africans live in poverty and their added issues such as lack of education only traps them further in the cycle of poverty. In such conditions, there remains no room for the arts. In fact, it may be considered impractical to spend on the arts when the country is so clearly in need of aid in more practical, tangible areas such as employment. Therefore, the arts may be seen as a luxury to be expanded upon only in more financially and socially stable countries. Thus, I concede that spending on the arts may be unnecessary in societies that struggle to fulfil certain significant human needs as it would be impractical and thus, unwise.

Overall, I would still stand by the argument that spending on the arts is necessary in today's world. The arts bring life to communities and increase people's empathy and understanding towards one other. Furthermore, the arts act as an appropriate medium for people to deliver their stories and advocate for change and progress. Lastly, the arts bind people together as a country in a world that threatens to segregate them. Therefore, taking into consideration the borderless, globalised and volatile world we live in, I believe that spending on the arts would be necessary to tackle or dampen the impacts and nature of today's world.

Mariyya Rashid (20A301)

Marker's Overall Comments:

A generally well-written essay with relevant points and adequate examples. However, it can be clearer in terms of how the arts achieve the various important purposes. Language is generally fluent, with clear evidence of complex vocabulary and sentences.

● Essay Questions on Arts & Culture ●

ARTS - ART, MUSIC, LITERATURE, PERFORMANCE ART, ARCHITECTURE

1. Examine the claim that music without words lacks both meaning and appeal. (2022, Q8)
2. 'The arts are nothing more than a luxury.' How far is this true of your society? (2021, Q9)
3. 'We shape our buildings, but then our buildings shape us.' To what extent is this true of your society? (2020, Q4)
4. 'An appreciation of music is vital for a fully rounded education.' How true is this of your society? (2020, Q10)
5. 'Works of art which have been removed from their country of origin should be returned.' Discuss. (2018, Q10)
6. Examine the role of music in establishing a national identity in your society. (2017, Q8)
7. In your society, to what extent is it acceptable for public money to be used for the acquisition of works of art? (2017, Q3)
8. To what extent should the arts in your society focus on local rather than foreign talent? (2015, Q9)
9. For the majority of people, the Arts are irrelevant to their daily lives.' How true is this of your society? (2014, Q5)
10. 'Unlike the Arts, such as writing or music, Mathematics lacks the capacity for creativity.' How far do you agree with this statement? (2013, Q2)
11. 'People in the Arts, living or dead, receive far more recognition than those in the Sciences, though it is less deserved.' Consider this claim. (2012, Q2)
12. 'Only modern architecture and modern art have a place in today's world.' How true is this of your society? (2011, Q10)
13. Would it matter if all the performing arts venues in your society, such as concert halls and theatres, were closed down? (2010, Q3)
14. 'The arts cannot change the world but they make it more beautiful.' Discuss this view with reference to one of the following: painting, sculpture or music. (2007, Q3)
15. Do the arts, such as music and literature, really play a significant role in Singaporean society? (2005, Q4)
16. 'Contemporary music has no artistic value.' Is this a fair comment? (2008, Q10)
17. 'A work of art can never be valued in just financial terms.' Discuss. (2002, Q12)

TRADITIONS & CULTURE

1. Assess the importance of food within Singaporean culture (2019, Q11)
2. Do handicrafts still have value when machine-produced goods are so readily available? (2018, Q6)
3. Assess the view that traditional buildings have no future in your society. (2016, Q2)
4. How important is it for people in your society to retain a sense of tradition? (2010, Q10)
5. Assess the impact of foreign films or foreign TV programmes on the culture of your society. (2009, Q9)
6. Can a belief in the supernatural be sustained in our modern world? (2007, Q2)
7. Do myths and legends still have a role to play in Singapore? (2006, Q10)