

THE ARTS

Names to know (visual artists)

Western: Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Monet, Picasso, Duchamp, Andy Warhol, Banksy. **Eastern:** Georgette Chen, MF Husain, Ai Weiwei, Yayoi Kusama

One who creates with great skill and

Roles of the Artist

imagination: a skilled worker. Reflection of themselves and their society; Influencers;

Definition of the Arts

revolutionaries and radicals; messengers

Modes of expression that use skill or imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, entities, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others

- philosophical: a form of reflection

Functions of the Arts

- moral: as testimony, critique and record of what happens in society

CULTURE

Definition of culture

- instrumental: promote ideas and propaganda, convey messages, unite people
- functional : design, generate income

“the way of life, esp. the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time” – Cambridge Dictionary

1. Consists of material and non-material components
2. Shaped by geography and history
3. Culture is learnt
4. People are products of cultural experiences but not cultural replicas of one another
5. The tool that enables the individual to adjust to the problems of life
6. It is difficult to separate the effects of non-material and material cultures on behaviour
7. Ideas, materials, products, and inventions can be borrowed from other societies.
8. The home culture is usually the standard that people use to judge another culture

TRADITION

Definition of tradition

9. In every society there are groups that have distinctive traits that set them apart from the main culture

“a belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of those beliefs in a particular society or group” – Cambridge Dictionary

- Inculcate identity, beliefs, values, conventions of behaviour in a

Function of culture / tradition

- population
- Establish or legitimize institutions, status, or authority
- Establish or symbolize social cohesion between communities
- Differences: greater

Globalisation & culture / tradition

- connectedness from globalisation may produce more diversity instead of reducing it
- Homogeneity: globalising forces of (predominantly) Western capitalist modernity penetrate and absorb other cultures; soft-power exerted by rising

powers like China, India, Korea can influence other cultures too

- Many traditional cultures have evolved and survived globalising forces

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THE ARTS

Types, genres, examples

Some of the art forms and examples listed below will overlap.

Literature: including poetry, drama, novels, short stories etc.

Performing arts: theatre, dance, music

Visual arts: painting, drawing, sculpture, etc.

Graphic arts: painting, drawing, design, and other forms expressed on flat/ two-dimensional surfaces

Plastic arts: sculpture, modelling

Decorative arts: enamelwork, furniture design, mosaic, etc.

Architecture: includes interior design

Defining the Arts

The arts have not always been what we think it is today. An object regarded as art today may not have been perceived as such when it was first made, nor was the person who made it necessarily regarded as an artist. Both the notion of "art" and the Idea of the "artist" are relatively modern terms.

Many of the objects we identify as art today - Greek painted pottery, medieval manuscript illuminations, and so on – were made in times and places when people had no concept of "art" as we understand the term. These objects may have been appreciated in various ways and often admired, but not as "art" in the current sense.

It is easier to describe it as the way something is done -- "the use of skill and imagination in the creation of aesthetic objects, environments, or experiences that can be shared with others" -- rather than what it is.

The Western ideas of a "work of art and "the artist" emerged in the 15th and 16th centuries in Italy. During the Renaissance, the word "art" emerges as a collective term encompassing painting, sculpture, and architecture, a grouping given currency by the Italian artist and biographer Giorgio Vasari in the 16th century. As there was a more exalted perception of the artist, his social status also rose. Subsequently, this grouping was expanded to include music and poetry which became known in the 18th century as the 'Fine Arts'. These five Arts have formed a core from which have been generally excluded the 'decorative arts' and 'crafts', such as pottery, weaving, metalworking, and furniture making, all of which have utility as an end.

By the middle of the 19th century, "modernist" approaches were introduced which adopted new subject matter and new painterly values. In large measure, the modern artists rejected, or contradicted, the standards and

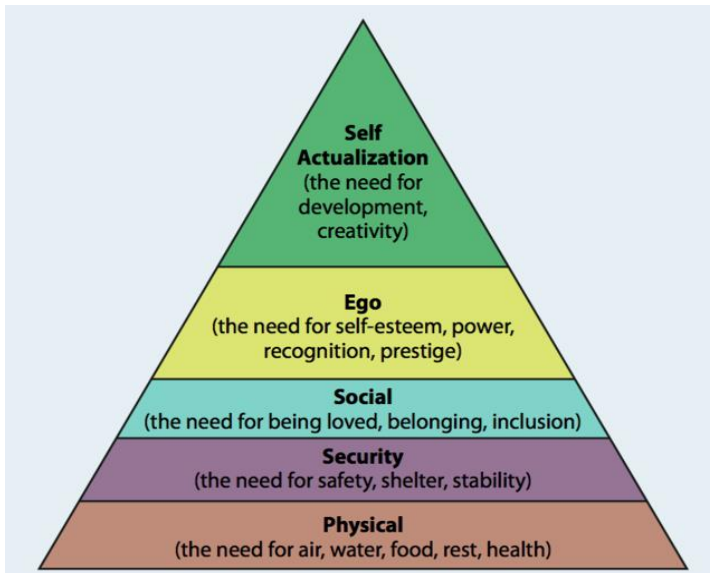
On the difficulty of defining art:

"...Each successive age sees a restaging of the battle between artist and critic, in which the latter — often mirroring conservative public taste — cries out in horror and disdain at the supposed excesses of a new and assertive generation of artists. In our own time, we witness the constant wringing of critical hands at the latest artistic atrocity: a pickled shark, a urine-soaked canvas, an unmade bed. The conflict is timeless and beyond resolution because it is motivated by a fundamental disagreement on the most basic of questions: what is art?...We seem to know what it is, yet struggle to define the necessary and sufficient conditions for something to count as a work of art...

But even if we cannot quite define it in adequate terms, art serves a function...Art is social; it pertains to the life and relations of human beings in a community. Art is active; it is provocative."

– Ben Dupre

principles of the art academies and the Renaissance tradition. In the early 20th century all traditional notions of the identity of the artist and of art were thrown into disarray by Marcel Duchamp and his Dada associates. In ironic mockery of the Renaissance tradition which had placed the artist in an exalted authoritative position, Duchamp, as an artist, declared that anything the artist produces is art. For the duration of the 20th century, this position has complicated and undermined how art is perceived but at the same time it has fostered a broader, more inclusive assessment of art.



Following Maslow's logic, the creation of art stands at the apex of our hierarchy of needs. The need to **self-actualize, to know who we are** is the ultimate goal of our existence. Therefore, the needs of society comprise not only the outward structure of a world to live in, but also the inward structure of the mind capable of enjoying life. We must therefore search for methods encouraging the artist — latent in each one of us. Perhaps this hierarchy could be an explanation for why not everyone 'appreciates' the arts; not every individual in society is free from diseases, not every individual has access to shelter and stability.

Some important visual artists through the ages

Leonardo da Vinci (1452 —1519)

Period: Renaissance

Nicknamed "The First Modern Man", Leonardo da Vinci was one of the most intriguing personalities in the history of Western art. Trained in Florence as a painter and sculptor, Leonardo is also celebrated for his scientific contributions. Leonardo's curiosity and insatiable hunger for knowledge never left him. He was constantly observing, experimenting, and inventing, and drawing was, for him, a tool for recording his investigation of nature.'



Leonardo's *Last Supper*, on the end wall of the refectory of Santa Maria delle Grazie in Milan, is one of the most renowned paintings of the High Renaissance.

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/leon/hd_leon.htm

¹Jones, Judy, and William Wilson. *An incomplete Education: 3,684 Things You Should Have Learned but Probably Didn't*. New York: Ballantine Books, 2006. Print.

Michelangelo Buonarroti (1475 — 1564)

Period: High Renaissance

Michelangelo is considered one of the greatest artists of all time. A number of his works in painting, sculpture, and architecture rank among the most famous in existence. His *David* (1501-04), commissioned for the cathedral of Florence, is still considered the prime example of the Renaissance ideal of perfect humanity.

<http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/379957/Michelangelo>

<https://medium.com/the-collector/the-hidden-meaning-of-michelangelos-creation-of-adam-3eb73ad987b9>



The Sistine Chapel Ceiling (1508 - 1512)



The Creation of Adam

Pablo Picasso (1881 -1973)

Period: Cubism

Towards the end of his career, Picasso enjoyed a fame no painter, not even sophisticated ones like Raphael and Rubens, had ever known. The artistic genius of Picasso has impacted the development of modern and contemporary art with unparalleled magnitude. His prolific output includes over 20,000 paintings, prints, drawings, sculptures, ceramics, theatre sets and costumes that convey myriad intellectual, political, social, and amorous messages. His creative styles transcend realism and abstraction, Cubism, Neoclassicism, Surrealism, and Expressionism.



Guernica, 1937. Painted for the 1937 World's Fair, in response to the Spanish Republicans' request to Germany and Italy to bomb and unarmed civilian Basque village.

http://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/pica/hd_pica.htm

<https://www.ideelart.com/magazine/famous-picasso-paintings>

Marcel Duchamp (1887 -1968)

Associated artistic movements: Cubism to Dada to Surrealism

Embodying the intellect of his literary contemporaries Marcel Proust and James Joyce, Marcel Duchamp has been aptly described by the painter Willem de Kooning as a one-man movement. Duchamp has had a huge Impact on twentieth-century art. By World War I, he had rejected the work of many of his fellow artists as "retinal" art, intended only to please the eye. Instead, Duchamp wanted, he said, "to put art back in the service of the mind."

One of his most important works, *Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2)* (1912) reflects Duchamp's ambivalent relationship with Cubism. Subverting traditional or accepted modes of artistic production with irony and satire is a hallmark of Duchamp's legendary career. His most striking, iconoclastic gesture, the *Readymades*, is arguably the century's most influential development on artists' creative process.



Nude Descending a Staircase (No. 2), 1912



Fountain, 1917

https://www.metmuseum.org/toah/hd/duch/hd_duch.htm

[moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade/](https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/themes/dada/marcel-duchamp-and-the-readymade/)

Ai Weiwei (1957 –)

Ai Weiwei is a Chinese artist and activist who produced a multifaceted array of creative work, including sculptural installations, architectural projects, photographs, and videos. While Ai's art was lauded internationally, the frequently provocative and subversive dimension of his art, as well as his political outspokenness, triggered various forms of repression from Chinese authorities, including being assaulted, placed under house arrest, jailed, and having his studios demolished. At the same time, Ai's art has also drawn the world's attention to the vibrancy of contemporary Chinese culture.

Remembering, 2009. The dissident artist created a work in Munich to honour the thousands of children



who died in the Sichuan earthquake after being trapped in collapsed school buildings which were shoddily built. Made of 9000 backpacks in the colours of Toys R Us, it spelt out a sentence said by one of the victim's mother.

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Ai-Weiwei>

<https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/feb/15/ai-weiwei-remembering-sichuan-earthquake>

<https://www.aiweiwei.com/>

Banksy (early 1970s –)

Banksy is a household name in England but his identity is the subject of febrile speculation. The graffiti artist like to keep his real identity concealed. His early works appeared around 1992, where his graffiti began appearing on trains and walls around Bristol, UK; by 2001, his blocky, often stencilled and spray-painted signature had cropped up in various parts of the world. His tongue-in-cheek messages are often anti-authoritarian and prods the social conscience. One of his latest works, "Game Changer", which pays tribute to the frontline workers of Britain's National Health Service (NHS) in their fight against the COVID-19 pandemic, was sold for \$20 million and proceeds will be donated.



Flower thrower, 2005. Painted on a West Bank wall that separates Israel from Palestine.



In 2018, Banksy's iconic image of *Balloon Girl*, was sold for 1.04 million pounds. The moment it was sold, the painting descended down the frame where a shredder was actually hidden. His reasoning: "The urge to destroy is also a creative urge."



Game Changer, 2020

<https://pestcontroloffice.com/use.asp>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-culture/the-story-behind-banksy-4310304/>

Some functions of the Arts

Philosophical Function: a form of reflection	When a work of art impresses "immediate aesthetic effects" upon an audience that is contemplating or reflecting upon that work of art (Walhout 1986, 18)
Moral Function	When a work of art arouses moral awareness, spotlights moral problems. For instance, because of its "emotive nature", the arts can help people feel the pathos and waste of war and help to instil a desire and commitment to end war and work for peace. Art and Peace According to Leo Tolstoy (Russian author): "The task of art is enormous. Through the influence of real art, aided by science, guided by religion, that peaceful cooperation of man which is now maintained by external means – by our law-courts, police, charitable institutions, factory inspection, and so forth – should be obtained by man's free and joyous

	activity. Art should cause violence to be set aside. And it is only art that can accomplish this." In a more tangible sense, art can also serve as testimony and witness. For example, Francisco Goya responded to the Napoleonic Wars in Spain (1808 – 1814) with his series of etchings, The Disaster of War showing the maiming and killing of Spanish peasants who had risen up against the occupying French army. The First World War also generated a plethora of anti-war reactions in the visual arts as well as other arts such as literature and poetry. Artists, writers and poets conscripted into the war powerfully and graphically captured the senseless slaughter which took the lives of millions. Such works of art serve a moral function in highlighting moral issues during times of war and trouble, they serve as a reminder of the 'evils' of war, its consequences. Naturally, the extent and context under which such works are distributed and displayed are also significant factors which affect art's contribution towards peace.
Instrumental Function	Some examples are : religious art, commercial art, folk art, political art, entertainment art, therapy art, intellectual art, decorative art, etc. <u>Example: Art, War and Revolution</u> One form of art that 'works' for wars and revolutions would be photography, more specifically, war photography. Photography has had a significant impact on how societies have 'seen' war and reacted either in favour of it or against it. A classic example is the WWII photograph by Joe Rosenthal of U.S. marines raising the American flag on Mount Suribachi on the island of Iwo Jima. It was meant to express heroism and the triumph of the Allies in the battles against the Japanese in the Pacific. The film directed by Clint Eastwood, Flags of our Fathers, tells the story of this photo, how it was used to promote the war, and the impact it had on the lives of those featured in the photo.

The Arts in Singapore

The **Infocomm Media Development Authority (IMDA)** and the **National Arts Council (NAC)** are the two main government bodies in charge of the promotion of arts in Singapore. The former was "created in 2003 to develop Singapore into a vibrant global media city as well as foster a creative economy and connected society" while the aim of the latter, founded in 1991, is "to build up a strong body of creative content, such as scripts, music compositions and art works, which are distinctive to Singapore". The National Arts Council published the **Our SG Arts Plan (2023-2027)** as the roadmap for development of the arts. According to the plan arts in Singapore should foster creativity, inculcate a sense of belonging, bond people together and distinguish Singapore globally. The government's attitude towards the art: serious funding and support given to various activities such as the Arts Festival, Film Festival and Biennale to name a few, some leeway given to free expression but some topics which are considered controversial or with the potential to undermine certain values or national security are out of bounds.

Initiatives and Projects (Click on the links to visit the web pages)

- The Culture Matching Fund (<https://www.mccy.gov.sg/sector/policies/cultural-matching-fund>)
- Our SG Arts Plan (2023-2027) ([https://www.nac.gov.sg/docs/default-source/our-sg-arts-plan-\(2023---2027\)/our-sg-arts-plan-2023---2027.pdf](https://www.nac.gov.sg/docs/default-source/our-sg-arts-plan-(2023---2027)/our-sg-arts-plan-2023---2027.pdf))
- Arts and Culture Resilience Package (ACRP) and Other Support Measures (<https://www.nac.gov.sg/whatwedo/support/sustaining-the-arts-during-covid-19/acrp.html>)
- #SGCultureAnywhere (<https://www.a-list.sg/>)

Infrastructure and facilities for the Arts, Culture and Heritage.

This is a non-exhaustive list. For more examples of spaces for the arts, culture and heritage, refer to page 80-81 of A City of Culture: Planning for the Arts.

https://www.clc.gov.sg/docs/default-source/urban-systems-studies/uss_a_city_of_culture.pdf

Museums and Galleries	Performing Arts Spaces	Institutions	Others
The National Gallery	Esplanade	School of the Arts	Heritage Conservation Centre
Indian Heritage Centre	Victoria Theatre	LASELLE College of the Arts	Le Freeport
Malay Heritage Centre	Kallang Theatre	Yong Siew Toh Conservatory of Music	
Chinese Heritage Centre	Goodman Arts Centre	Nanyang Academy of Fine Arts	
Gillman Barracks	OBJECTIFS		

Cities need to build a super-competitive, super-productive society that can attract the world's best and brightest professionals from an array of industries. To do so they need a world-class arts and culture scene. For a city, having the ingredients for a thriving art market creates a virtuous circle. The powerful marketing machines of the big auction houses, including public previews of coming sales, raises awareness and appreciation of art in the community. All this encourages local artists to create more art. And that momentum, in turn, contributes to the development of a city's broader cultural scene, including music, theatre and design.

– Richard Florida, urban studies theorist

**Which function
of the Arts do
you think is more
important to
Singapore?**

The artwork created in Singapore are uniquely placed to speak to our citizens. They can capture, channel and reimagine the lives of residents in a way that an imported Broadway musical or a work by an international writer cannot... Art can root the young Singaporean who is still finding his or her voice and provide a link, through the imagination, to his or her forebears and a physical landscape that has been lost... At the end of the day, what makes a country home?...The bedrock of that home must be in its social fabric - its people, and the experiences they build in the common spaces they share. The arts and culture form a vital part of this fabric.

– Paul Tan, deputy CEO of the NAC

CULTURE

“The way of life, esp. the general customs and beliefs, of a particular group of people at a particular time”

– Cambridge Dictionary

What is culture?

But how is “it possible to find words to define something so vast as the way of life of a people?” Is it possible to “determine who belongs to a group designated as a culture”? Is it possible to “identify the distinguishing characteristics that set culture apart from others”? (Ferrante 70)

Does ‘culture’ suffer from a similar problem as that of ‘art’? The “paradox of recognizing a culture but being unable to define its boundaries, the characteristics determining where a culture begins and ends, or the qualities marking some people off from others as a unified and distinctive group”(Ferrante 70)?

“The problem is that we use the term “culture” **(1)** in conjunction with specific places and categories of people, **(2)** in ways that emphasize differences (cultural gaps), **(3)** as if cultures have clear, identifiable boundaries, and **(4)** in ways that suggest people from one culture are replicas of one another” (Ferrante 100).

“It is not easy to pin down “culture” with a precise and singular definition. “Popular culture”; “high culture”; “national culture”; “youth culture”; consumer culture; global culture; multicultural; culture clash and so on; in a myriad of phrases, clichés and references, “culture” is much in vogue as a topic in the media, politics and everyday life. Rarely, however, do those who use it say what they mean by it” (Schech & Haggis 16).

“The word has along and involved history, and this is reflected in the variety of ways the term has been defined and used across various academic disciplines, ranging from literary studies to anthropology and sociology” (Schech & Haggis 16).

And so here are two main approaches to interpreting “culture”:

Functionalist: this approach emphasizes the “shared and normative nature of culture and its functions for integrating the individual into the group”. Thus culture is seen as a “design for living”, as an aspect of the social structure ensuring the cohesion and continuity of society as a whole (Schech & Haggis 21).

Interactionist: this approach puts much less emphasis on the structural dynamic of culture. Instead, it emphasizes how culture, as meanings, values, and ways of life, is formed out of interaction between individuals and society. A greater emphasis is placed on individual agency. This approach emphasizes the symbolic nature of culture and focuses on the symbols, rituals, activities involved in the construction of everyday social reality (Schech & Haggis 21).

Another way to look at 'culture' is Ferrante's **9 Essential Principles Defining the Nature of Culture**, which is "a framework for thinking about culture that considers both its elusive nature and its importance in shaping human life" (Ferrante 70).

Principle 1: Culture consists of material and nonmaterial components (Ferrante 71)

"**Material culture** consists of all physical objects that people in one society have invented themselves or borrowed from members of other societies and to which they have attached meaning". It "includes natural resources such as plants, trees, and minerals or ores, as well as items that people have converted from natural resources into other forms for a purpose." "Learning the meanings that people assign to objects in the material culture helps sociologists grasp the significance of those objects in people's lives" (Ferrante 71).

"**Nonmaterial culture** consists of nonphysical creations. [...] Three of the most important of these creations are beliefs, values, and norms" (Ferrante 71).

- Beliefs – "conceptions that people accept as true, concerning how the world operates and where the individual fits in relationship to others. This type of nonmaterial culture can be rooted in blind faith, experience, tradition, or the scientific method. Whatever their accuracy or origins, beliefs can exert powerful influences on actions as they are used to justify behaviour, ranging from the most generous to the most violent" (Ferrante 71).
- Values – are "general, shared conceptions of what is good, right, appropriate, worthwhile, and important with regard to conduct, appearance and states of being" (Ferrante 71).
- Norms – are "written and unwritten rules that specify behaviours appropriate and inappropriate to a particular social situation." "Some norms are considered more important than others—and so the penalties for their violation are more severe." "Mores are norms that people define as essential to the well-being of a group" (Ferrante 72).

Principle 2: Geographic and historical forces shape the character of culture (Ferrante 76)

For e.g. South Koreans "depend on other nation for most resources, they are vulnerable to any world event that might disrupt the flow of resources into their country. This vulnerability reinforces the need to use resources sparingly and not to take them for granted. The relative lack of natural resources has affected the energy costs in Korea and may ultimately explain conservation-oriented behaviour" (Ferrante 76).

Principle 3: Culture is learned (Ferrante 77)

Often people think of culture as something inherent in us, as something inherited. But while "our genes endow us with our human and physical characteristics...our cultural characteristics" are learned. "We cannot assume that someone comes from a particular culture simply because he or she looks like a person whom we expect to come from that culture" (Ferrante 77).

So why then do people commonly think that one is born into a particular culture?

Perhaps the development of language will more clearly illustrate the "relationship between genetic and cultural heritages"

Human genetic endowment gives us a brain that is flexible enough to allow us to learn the languages that we hear spoken by the people around us. As children learn words and the meanings of words, they learn about their

culture". Language then functions as a "tool that enables them (people) to think about the world — to interpret their experiences, establish and maintain relationships, and convey information". But language also "conveys important messages above and beyond the actual meaning of words" (Ferrante 77).

- "Words refer to more than things; they also describe relationships"
- "Words mirror cultural values"; "language embodies values considered important to the culture" For e.g. honorifics "-san" "-nim"
- "Common expressions embody the preoccupations of the culture". For instance, "Americans use the word *my* to express "ownership" of persons or things over which they do not have exclusive rights: my mother, my school, my country. The use of *my* reflects the American preoccupation with the needs of the individual over those of the group" (Ferrante 78).

Principle 4: People are products of cultural experiences but are not cultural replicas of one another (Ferrante 79)

Why not? We are exposed to "versions" of a culture as interpreted by the people around us (Ferrante 79).

Principle 5: Culture is the tool that enables the individual to adjust to the problems of living (Ferrante 80)

It provides us with cultural formulas for hunger and social emotions for example: "One indicator of a culture's influence is that people define only a portion of potential food available to them as edible." "Culture also influences the expression of emotion, just as it influences people's responses to food needs" (Ferrante, 80-81).

Principle 6: It is difficult to separate the effects of nonmaterial and material cultures on behaviour (Ferrante 83)

"(P)eople tend to underestimate, ignore, or distort the extent to which familiar ideas, materials, products, and other inventions are connected in some way to outside sources or are borrowed outright from those sources" (Liu 1994 quoted in Ferrante 84).

Principle 7: Cultural Diffusion — People borrow ideas, materials, products, and other inventions from other societies (Ferrante 84)

Principle 8: The home culture is usually the standard that people use to make judgments about the material and nonmaterial cultures of another society (Ferrante 87)

Culture shock – "The strain that people from one culture experience when they must reorient themselves to the ways of a new culture" (Ferrante 87)

Ethnocentrism – "A viewpoint that uses one culture as the standard for judging the worth of foreign ways". "The most extreme and destructive form of ethnocentrism is cultural genocide, in which the people of one society define the culture of another society as not merely offensive, but as so intolerable that they attempt to destroy it" (Ferrante 91).

Reverse ethnocentrism – "A type of ethnocentrism in which the home culture is regarded as inferior to a foreign culture" (Ferrante 94)

Cultural relativism – “The perspective that a foreign culture should not be judged by the standard of a home culture and that a behaviour or way of thinking must be examined in its cultural context” (Ferrante 96)

Principle 9: In every society there are groups that possess distinctive traits that set them apart from the main culture (Ferrante 97)

Subcultures – “Groups that share in some parts of the dominant culture but have their own distinctive values, norms, language, or material culture” (Ferrante 97); they are “produced within specific historical and cultural ‘conjectures’”; they are not to be read as simply resisting hegemony or as magical resolutions to social tensions – as earlier theorists had supposed” (Hebdige).

Jean Burgess (2004) confers subculture with these defining characteristics:

- “Firstly, a subculture must be externally distinguishable from its parent culture”. “Sub cultures must exhibit a distinctive enough shape and structure to make them identifiably different from their ‘parent’ culture. They must be focused around certain activities, values, certain uses of material artefacts, territorial spaces etc. which significantly differentiate them from the wider culture. But, since they are subsets, there must also be significant things which bind and articulate them with the ‘parent’ culture”
- “Secondly, subcultures were internally homologous; “to speak of the homologous relations of a subculture is to describe “the symbolic fit between the values and lifestyles of a group, its subjective experience and the musical forms it uses to express or reinforce its focal concerns”. “The subculture was nothing if not consistent. There was a homological relation between the trashy cut-up clothes and spiky hair, the pogo and amphetamines, the spitting, the vomiting, the format of the fanzines, the insurrectionary poses and the ‘soulless’, frantically driven music” (Hebdige qtd in Burgess).

Let us return to the first characteristic. What is the link between parent cultures (dominant) and subcultures?

Well, in juvenile gang culture, for example, "the core values of the straight world — sobriety, ambition, conformity etc. — were replaced by their opposites: hedonism, defiance of authority and the quest for 'kicks'", "many of the values of the deviant group merely reiterated in a distorted or heightened form the 'focal concerns of the adult working-class population" (Hebdige). Subcultures could therefore be seen as "a 'compromise solution between two contradictory needs: the need to create and express autonomy and difference from parents ... and the need to maintain the parental identifications— (Cohen qtd in Hebdige). Interestingly, Cohen asserts that "the 'latent function' of subculture was to 'express and resolve, albeit magically, the contradictions which remain hidden or unresolved in the parent culture'".

However, note that there are "equally significant differences between the two forms which must also be acknowledged ... even where experience was shared between parents and children this experience was likely to be differently interpreted, expressed and handled by the two groups. Thus, while obviously there are points where parent and adolescent 'solutions' converge and even overlap, when dealing with the spectacular subculture we should not grant these an absolute ascendancy. And we should be careful when attempting to tie back subcultural style to its generative context not to overstress the fit between [the dominant] culture and the altogether more marginal forms ... concerned here" (Hebdige).

Do not forget that "people possess the ability to interpret, select, manipulate, revive, and create culture, they are not passive agents who absorb or transmit to others a single, uniform version of a culture" (Ferrante 99).

Functions of culture

"Words, drawings, movies, material objects, all function as signs or symbols which enable communication between social actors. When a group shares a culture; it shares a common set of meanings which are constructed and exchanged through the practice of using language". As mentioned earlier, one of the functions of culture is to integrate the individual into the community by providing a "design for living" (Schech & Haggis 21-22).

However, culture may also segregate the individual as it "provides a standard by which we evaluate others' behaviour"¹; individuals that do not abide by a certain set of values or behaviours may face severe repercussions.

Similarly, while culture can be perceived as a tool to maintain "social solidarity" as it "provides a link between the goals and needs of individuals and the requirements of society as a whole", some may argue that it is not about social solidarity, but in fact Ethel dominant culture usually benefits some groups at the expense of others" (Piccolo 2006).

Culture can also simply be used as a concept to "identify people according to what they believe, what they do, what they know, and how they act" (Piccolo 2006).

In addition, when culture is essentialised as a "discrete set of forms and behaviours marking identity", it has lent itself to a "diverse range of effects": "a global tourism industry geared to locating the authentic and exotic "Other" for commercial consumption. For example, the hill tribes in parts of Southeast Asia are "integrated" into the postcolonial nation-state and coerced out of opium growing (under the pressure of powerful foreign interests) by relocation into "traditional" villages as tourist exhibits for a tourism industry that is a cornerstone of national development plans"; "Third World nationalist discourses that reify "tradition" as a counter to the perceived threat of "westernization" or "neo-colonialism"; "romanticized notions of "traditional", particularly tribal societies, usually by outsiders, often expressed as an anti-development rhetoric to preserve a "vanishing world" against the influx of modernity" (Schech & Haggis 24).

¹ http://www.uwec.edu/bonstemj/Intro/Spring04/Culture.Structure_files/frame.htm

TRADITION

“A belief, principle, or way of acting that people in a particular society or group have continued to follow for a long time, or all of those beliefs in a particular society or group”

– Cambridge Dictionary

What is tradition?

What about invented tradition?

Invented traditions refer to a set of practices normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past. In fact, where possible, they normally attempt to establish continuity with a suitable historic past. However, in so far as there is such reference to a historic past, the peculiarity of Invented traditions is that the continuity with it is largely fastidious" (Schech & Haggis 129).

"The past two hundred years have been marked by an increase in invented traditions because societies have been experiencing more rapid change. Modernization "weakens or destroys the social patterns for which 'old' traditions had been designed, producing new ones to which they were not applicable'. While some traditions were swept aside by forces of change, others were deliberately rejected "as obstacles to progress, or, even worse, as its militant adversaries'. Both scenarios can lead to the invention of new traditions. These invented traditions, while usually drawing on the past, tend to be less specific and less binding than their 'old- predecessors. They are Important in public life, but occupy a smaller place in the private lives of people than the old traditions did" (Schech & Haggis 129).

Hobsbawm distinguishes three overlapping types of Invented traditions in the period since the industrial revolution:

1. Traditions which establish or legitimize institutions, status, or relations of authority
2. Traditions which establish or symbolize social cohesion of communities (e.g. national communities)
3. Traditions which serve to socialize, or inculcate, beliefs, value systems, and conventions of behaviour in a population (Schech & Haggis 129)

At the height of colonial expansion, (colonial administrations) were neither willing nor able to rule by military force alone. In many territories, colonizers were vastly outnumbered by indigenous people, and thus relied on their collaboration in the colonial economy and acceptance of the administration. While British administrators seeking to legitimize their position in India were able to draw on the complex traditions of previous rulers and well-established hierarchies of caste, ethnicity, and religion, their counterparts in Africa were faced with indigenous

political traditions that were very different from their own ... One way for the British colonizers to establish themselves as a ruling class, in their own eyes and those of their African subjects, was to set up in Africa replicas of institutions whose traditions validated the British governing class. One example of such an institution is Kenya Public School, built to replicate Eton, an exclusive private school in England. Neo-traditionalist British school education was also offered to some of the children of the Indigenous aristocracy, to mold them such that they could function as part of the governing colonial elite ... Thus, the main purpose of European invented traditions in colonial Africa according to Ranger (1983: 221) was to define a hierarchal society within 'a shared framework of pride and loyalty' (Schech & Haggis 129-131).

On the other hand, anti-colonial nationalists had to Invent traditions that would bind the population into a new national community, but at the same time they had to establish that these traditions were, in fact, much older, and therefore more persuasive, than the colonial traditions constructed by their opponent' (Schech & Haggis 132).

In the case of Indian nationalism, "we look at the consequences of the educated middle class playing a dominant role in the construction of national culture'. In this construction, "the caste system produce(d) a stable and harmonious social order, in which each individual has its appropriate place. The nationalist elite's construction of national culture reflected their own social position and cultural experiences. They mobilized the Indian peasants as an anti-colonial force, but remained 'suspicious of their supposed ignorance and backward consciousness," and kept them at a distance from the institutions of the state. Despite its claims to involve the whole people, Indian national culture is the culture of the new middle class — other groups are merely represented' (Schech & Haggis 133-5).

In Singapore, 'Asian values are promoted to instil a sense of national identity and social and cultural cohesion among the multicultural population of Singapore. What links these constituent ethnic groups are the shared values established by the government, which are defined as quintessentially Asian' (Schech & Haggis 135).

But are they quintessentially Asian?

Globalisation and tradition

"Few of us, wherever we might live, escape some kind of connection with the global, whether it is through the ways we earn our living, the foods we eat, music we listen to, or the environment we inhabit. The parameters of our lived experiences are permeable as never before, in an ever-expanding awareness of 'other' circumstances, experiences, images, and ways of living. This "ordinary" quality of globalization implicates it in the reworking of the "cultural". The idea of culture as a bounded, discrete entity cannot comprehend the fluidities of globalization where everyday lives and ways of thinking are structured within broad influences stretching well beyond the borders of language, territory, and belief of specific communities, societies and states' (Schech & Haggis 60).

But does globalization = homogeneity?

"[A]rguments for increased homogeneity hinge on a centre-periphery model in which the globalizing forces of Western capitalist modernity penetrate and absorb peripheral cultures". However, this "fails to consider that at least as rapidly as forces from various metropolises are brought into new societies they tend to become indigenized in one way or another" (Schech & Haggis 60.61).

Thus, "greater "greater connectedness fostered by globalization may actually produce more diversity, not less" (Schech & Haggis 62).

'For those who move across borders, for whatever reasons, there is often no longer a congruence between the spatial, cultural, and political aspects of their sense of identity and belonging. Often, the very act of moving to another place makes people more aware and committed to their erstwhile "local" community'. "Thus globalization, despite, or perhaps because of, the ways in which it makes the boundaries of nation-states porous, may have the paradoxical effect of Intensifying and reinvigorating nationalisms in multiple and complex ways" (Schech & Haggis 63).

In addition, the centre-periphery model disregards the fact that 'the global flow is not simply from the global to the local, but also the reverse. World Music is a good example of this. Over the last decade of the twentieth century (and in the twenty-first century], non-Western forms of music and various blends of music and instruments became commercially successful in the previously monocultural world of Western popular music" (Schech & Haggis 63-60).

"The new global cultural system promotes differences Instead of suppressing it, but difference of a particular kind. Its hegemony is not of content but of form, global structures organize diversity, rather than replicating uniformity' (Wilk 1995:118) (Schech & Haggis 64).

Is there a place for tradition in modern times?

Gun Culture: Swiss Vote to Keep 'a Gun in Every Closet'

'Perhaps the great paradox of peaceful and safety-conscious Switzerland, which hasn't been under military threat since World War II, is its cherished tradition of a gun in every closet. And, as the defeat of a Feb. 13 initiative seeking to tighten the nation's liberal gun law proves, the Swiss are not willing to bid a farewell to arms anytime soon.

Early polls in the midst of what was a heated and contentious campaign predicted victory for the anti-gun lobby, but on Sunday, 56.3% of voters rejected the proposal to ban army rifles from homes. With between 2.3 million and 4.5 million military and private firearms estimated to be in circulation in a country of less than 8 million people, Switzerland trails behind only the U.S. and Yemen in the number of guns per capita.

The initiative, launched by center-left parties, church groups and women's groups, as well as other anti-gun organizations, called for legislation requiring that soldiers and those who have completed their military service store their firearms in army depots rather than in their homes, as has been customary for hundreds of years. It also called for the establishment of a national, rather than cantonal, gun registry and for a ban on the sale of fully automatic weapons and pump-action rifles.

... [The] initiative's authors claim that the wide availability of weapons is a factor in the estimated 300 gun crimes committed in Switzerland every year. According to Martin Killias, professor of criminology at the University of Zurich, who has conducted extensive research on this topic, that figure includes rates of family shootings and suicides by firearms that are among the highest in Europe. It is believed that if the Initiative was accepted and the guns would have to be deposited in arsenals, gun violence would decrease; Killias says.

'This whole discussion about suicide figures and violence in households was a very insidious trick; says Hermann Suter, vice president of proTELL, Switzerland's gun lobby, aptly named after the country's legendary apple shooter,

William Tell, who used a crossbow to target enemies long before firearms were invented. Suter says the initiative was a conspiracy by "socialists and neo-Marxist groups to destroy our army and all the shooting traditions."

In fact, the gun-in-every-closet tradition has been the cornerstone of Swiss national identity for generations. It is tied to the long-held belief that enemies could invade the tiny nation fairly quickly, so every citizen-soldier has to be ready to defend his country. To this day, all Swiss men between the ages of 18 and 30 are required to do three months of military service, followed by annual refresher courses. Firearms are used in compulsory and recreational target practices, so it is not unusual to see civilian men and women, as well as soldiers, with rifles slung across their shoulders, on bikes, buses or trains. In some shooting clubs, children as young as 12 learn sharpshooting and go on to participate in youth rifle competitions around the country. Much of this tradition is based on trust the government places in its citizens to act responsibly.

"We feel it's our patriotic and civic duty to use the guns wisely," Felix Endrich, a spokesman for the Swiss Armed Forces, told TIME in 2007, when the discussion of launching an initiative first started."

Culture of Cruelty: Bullfighting in Spain

In "these past two decades the number of ham-worshipping Spaniards who abhor bullfighting has soared. Last year 180,000 signed what's known as a people's legislative initiative, which asked the Catalan parliament to debate the abolition of bullfighting. The parliament recently finished a series of heated debates on the issue; its decision will probably come in July (2010), the main parties allowing their deputies a free vote."

The debates inspired the opportunistic president of the Madrid regional government, Esperanza Aguirre, to declare bullfights a *Bien de Interés Cultural*, a protection order until now reserved for buildings or landscapes. But they also emboldened antifighting activists. Some veterinarians have finally drawn a line in the bloodied circle of sand. Two years ago they formed AVAT, an association that seeks the abolition of bullfighting. Representing its 70 vets before the Catalan parliament, José Enrique Zaldivar gave evidence at once forensically calm and 'horrifying in its detailed wound-by-wound explanation of what some 12,000 bulls a year endure in each of the stages of the corrida that lead to death. (That number, from 2009, is about 3,000 lower than usual thanks to the economic crisis.) As AVAT says on its website, "We can't understand how, in the name of a supposed tradition, in the 21st century customs such as these need to form part of our misnamed culture."

The opponents of a ban, as always, fell back on this tradition. It's the national fiesta, they argue. It's what the bulls are bred for, and they have a great life in the countryside before the corrida. And what about poor fish? Or battery hens? And, oh, the bravery of matadors like Josi Tomas, who came so close to death after being gored in Mexico on April 24?

The outcome

The vote took place as the result of a petition brought to parliament, signed by 180,000 people who say the practice is barbaric and outdated. Bullfight supporters insist that the corrida, as it is known, is an important tradition to preserve. They also fear the vote could be the first of many in the country. The ban takes effect in January 2012.

Barcelona's main bullring is one of the oldest in Spain, but support for the bullfight has waned. The Barcelona bullring is the only functioning one in Catalonia. The vote was brought to the agenda by activists who argue it is cruel and unacceptable and say most spectators in Catalonia these days are tourists. The campaign was led by the animal rights lobby group Prou! (Enough!).

Supporters say the corrido is an art form that it is vital to preserve.

<http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,1997422,00.html>

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