

What is Culture? By Jasmine West 12LG

What, is, culture?
What does it mean to me?
What does it mean to others?
And what can it be?

Is it nestled withing the fabric of a special woven cloth, Or is it
Hidden in the spices wafting from grandmother's pot?
Is it swaddled in the sound, of a mother's tongue, Or is it
Tucked in the stories that parents tell their young?

What, is, culture?
What defines it?
What do I look for,
And how do I find it?

Is it held in the heirlooms that are handed hand to hand. Or is it
Deep-rooted in the landscape of earth or rock or sand?
Is it in books that are read, or the songs that are sung,
Is it the instruments that are played and the rhythm of a drum?

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How do I find it?

Must it be an object, or could it be more abstract?
Could it be cloaked in our values or how we think and act?
Is it written in our past, etched into stone? Or is it
Written out in ink and crossed out when new ideas are sewn?

What, is, Culture?
It seems to me it can mean lots of things,
Defining what *exactly* it is,
Might be as hard as flying without wings.
Everywhere I've looked, culture seems to be,
I've seen what it could mean for others,
But what does it mean to me?
Half American, quarter English, quarter Irish,

You could say I'm an unusual mix,
When they say 'what's your culture?'
Nothing quite clicks.

I suppose it's my family's past,
My great grandmother marching through the desert,
My mother fleeing from Lebanon,
The history that I inherit.

Is it possible to find 'culture' baked into a cake?
The victoria sponge my grandma, taught me now to make.
Does my violin count as my culture, the music that I play?
What about dance? Jazz, musical theatre and ballet?

Is it in the fish & chips that me *must* have on a Friday?
Is it somewhere in the excitement when I wake on Christmas day?
Is it hidden in the tabbouleh that my Medzmama makes for me?
Is it right front and centre in my love of breakfast tea?

What. Is. Culture?
What defines it?
What do I look for,
And how do I find it?

I'm not sure if I've found it quite yet,
It's sort of hard to know,
But I think when I do,
It'll feel like I am home.

Culture's Tapestry by Purav Vora 8HB

In the loom of time, where destinies align,
Threads of culture intertwine,
Weaving tales of lands afar,
In the fabric of who we are.

Each strand a story, rich and deep,
In the tapestry of cultures, secrets keep.
From ancient rites to modern art,
Each thread plays its unique part.

In the colours of tradition, vibrant and bright,
Shades of heritage blend just right.
From the hills of Tibet to the Nile's flow,
Culture's tapestry continues to grow.

In the dance of customs, hand in hand,
Across borders and distant lands.
From the chants of monks to the songs of birds,
Every culture's voice is heard.

Through the patchwork of history, sewn with care,
Lessons learned; wisdom shared.
From the whispers of ancestors, wise and true,
Guiding each thread, weaving anew.

In the fabric of humanity, we find,
Unity in diversity, intertwined.
For only in culture's tapestry, we see,
The true beauty of our shared legacy.

Arjun Sistla 9BB - A Vast World of Culture

Culture can be an interesting topic. Its roots are from all around the world, may it be Egyptian and Sudanese pyramids, or old Mayan masks, or even Japanese katanas put up on show. Many civilisations grew to be the different races and people we are today, with deep roots founded on belief. I am here to take you through the idea of culture, mainly the amount of different ones that exist throughout this large, large world, but in a more entertaining manner. After all, who doesn't love a great story? Best yet, it was from my very own experience:

I once had seen a little child wandering out in a park, but I didn't think much of it. After a while, my curiosity had gotten a hold of me and I went up to this child. Keep in mind that she was only not more than 7, while I was a fully grown man, a little more than 20. I had asked her what she was doing, but she halted and never gave a direct response. Instead, after a minute or so of waiting for her to speak or to make a single sound, her eyes glowed a soft hue of purple, and she impulsively grabbed my wrist and a somewhat kind of portal appeared in front of us. I tried to free myself but her grip was surprisingly strong like steel. And I was dragged into a portal of darkness...or so I thought.

Next thing I knew I was falling and landed on soft sand. I get up wearily, my eyes blurred. All I see is a blur of bright colours. As my eyes get adjusted to this strange view, I see a long corridor of doors. They are filled with vibrant colours, all intricate designs with signs on the front saying different words. I turn to my right and see a door which attracts me. It has various bright colours with designs and in the centre it was written 'Maōri' on a green and brown sign, as if it was leaves and wood on a tree. I tentatively open the door, little by little,

and I catch tiny details. A green field out in the open and some burly guys with shoulder garments and some kind of ragged kilt standing there with spear-like weapons. I quickly close it.

Another door catches my eye. This had a more icy theme, a swirl of icy blue hues adorned a darker blue sign which said 'Sami'. I open it and immediately experience a freezing touch on my skin. I watch as people in layers of clothes stand close together, families, watching some reindeer walk around. Yet fascinated by this, I close it after a few seconds, now chilled to the bone.

After collecting myself, I see another door. It's designed in various coloured stripes, but a dominant red is painted on the door. I open it and see many llamas in a vast grassland. A few children stand watching them in red hats with designs, and some others have colourful dresses.

"It's beautiful, isn't it?"

I swivel around to see who said it, and see myself standing before a tall, graceful woman in a grand colourful dress, small butterflies fluttering above her hair, which had streaks of colours through it. She wore different rings around each finger on one hand, one gold, one silver, one bronze, one a strange metal but with a jewel attached on top of it. Her dress was multicoloured with little designs all over it, forming a beautiful pattern of patterns in itself. In other words, she looked pretty much like...a goddess, in some sorts of ways.

She smiles warmly at me, but I stand in silent shock, surprised.

She walks up to a door and looks at it. "Each culture is unique and beautiful in their own ways. They all have different beliefs, different gods they were devoted to, just different in everything. And so, they stand out in different ways, and each is quite a marvel, don't you think?" Her voice is graceful and soft, but also had a tone of domination, as if she knew her place.

All I can manage is a slight nod and a quiet mumble, which she did not pay heed to. She does, however, turn to me, and for a second, her eyes turn a familiar purple I had seen not long ago. Right then, I realised that she was the little girl who led me to this long corridor of doors.

"Y-you're the girl?" I stutter in her dominant presence in the corridor.

She chuckles softly. "I am indeed." She doesn't say anything more, and in a blink of an eye, I find myself back at the park again. I'm sitting on the cold, wet grass. It seems like no time has passed. The birds soaring through the sky from before were still flying above the grassy area in a messy frenzy.

The experience was unique, and you may not believe what I'm saying is to be true, but it is something I will never forget in millions of lifetimes.

Written by: James Lloyd-Thomas

Tongues are shrivelled into snares,
Words dissolved in hemlock.
Where is unity where units are Stifled?
Bridles and girdles and fetters and laws
Can raze and mangle the singular light.
Where the many is enslaved by the one, and
The abyss begets only the mire.

What could spring from a vessel of wind?
To craft a sanctuary, one must have
A smoke for his kindling.
A sea for his ice.
Scythes cannot conjure the silt
Abounding in the murky depths
Of swamps,
Nor dredges imprison their water.

When man is inflamed, and
Encompassed in walls of speech. Words
Knife with chilled empathy.
Shibboleths mark him for destruction,
What words can he muster in defence?

He cannot stand alone amid
The invisible ziggurats that man constructs
to gain knowledge. To escape the
Ignorance that chills,
And knives, and bridles.

So, what is a unit without a unity?
It's behoved to subsist In folly.
And what is unity without culture?
An illusion. Yet, unity rolls,
And kicks and protests.
Evading and escaping,
Yearning to return to the ether.

So we drag it out. In pen,
And lyre and script.
To seek and search,
And cajole knowing from the bowels of
Our being.

Culture by Ethan Molloy, 7CT

Culture. A different thing for everybody. For myself it is Christianity, agriculture, Rugby, Cricket and colonisation yet for other people it may be Hinduism, education, textiles, Cricket, food and all these other things. It all depends upon who is in question. I am a white British passport holder with Kiwi parents and I am sure others like me would regard what I said as right or at least share similar ideas. An Indian boy on the other hand would not at all consider those attributes as part of his culture (apart from Cricket) and probably consider things that I already mentioned.

Culture can define how you act around others, how you perceive yourself, what goals you aim to achieve and ultimately what type of person you want to be. If you were told that the things your culture respects are maths not sport, would you focus on sport and try to be really good at it, probably not. If you were told maths is not important and you should focus on sport then would you try in maths, probably not. It is so important and yet never is talked about.

Think about a world where everyone has the same culture. Would it be better or worse? This really just is another way of expressing the thing that we all have been repetitively told by teachers. Everyone is unique and that is what makes our society interesting. While this may be true it is not like everyone is going to be the exact same and the culture question is more realistic. If everyone was told that the things their people respect were the same I would estimate 90% of the population would try to be the best at and do a lot of whatever the culture may be about. While not everyone would be the same, and you still have the 10%, there would be a lot less differences. Some wars might not have happened yet the world might be less interesting, we could all agree on some things yet civilization might be economically at a loss because so many people want to do certain things. When you think about this you slowly start to realise this is not just a black and white thing but more grey.

Britain is an extremely multicultural country and we follow shared values across cultures of democracy, liberty, tolerance, rule of law and equality. If we were an entirely white country like we ethnically are would things be better? While black and Asian communities have their own unique problems including them in our society and not shipping them off to Rwanda or building a massive wall around our border, are we doing the better thing for us? I would say yes. What is key to making our society work is community cohesion, without it everything would fall apart. The concept that all ethnic groups are valued, welcomed and get along well is essential to our and many other countries.

We can hone this in even further still. At Tiffin we are very culturally diverse. Take my form for example. There are 9 ethnically white people, 15 Indian/Sri

Lankan/Pakistani, 5 Chinese/Korean, 1 ethnically Middle Eastern and 1 ethnic African. Bear in mind this is England, an ethnically white country. Even then that is still generalising because within white people I counted people of Russian and Azerbaijani descent. Pakistan has a different main religion to India and Sri Lanka as well. Because of this we learn all about other people's culture and are benefited for it.

Poem by Shayan Ansari 8PP

In the mosaic of humanity, culture thrives
An abode for all, from where we derive
An array of customs, a scripture of beliefs
This gargantuan world, where uniqueness weaves.

From ancient palaces to forgotten lands
Across seven seas, savannahs and sands
Paints a picture of a thousand lives
Generation to generation tradition survives.

Vendors at stalls, proffer their wares
Tunics and togas, dresses and flares,
Oud and incense punctuate the breeze,
Wafting and drifting towards houses with ease,

In the spice-scented markets of distant bazaars,
The beatings of drums and pluckings of guitars
Each word we speak, each note of a song
Carries the essence of where we belong

In languages spoken words convey
Expansion in diversity day by day
In mosques adorned with calligraphy and prayer
Or amidst skyscrapers that pierce the air.

Through bustling streets and markets fair,
Different vehicles ply with care.
From sleek cars to cycles swift,
Each holds a tale, a cultural gift.

Yet amid the rush and lively flow,
The rickshaw's charm begins to show.
With its colourful frame and rhythmic sway,
It carries a story through the day.

So let us embrace the colours, the hues,
The myriad expressions of cultures, infused,
For in understanding, in respect and grace,
We find the beauty of our shared human race.

Culture Week Writing Entry **Bruce Strain 8PT**

The blue and green tartan colours criss-crossed the red wool, woven subtly to complement the other hues. This wasn't my first time, of course. Kilts are very traditional to Scotland and aren't worn every day—I only wear mine on special occasions. The kilt shows unmistakable masculinity and originates from the traditional garb of the Celts. Each tartan represents a different Scottish clan. However, I have heritage from many different Scottish clans, so I have freedom to choose which kilt I wear.

So today I am trying on the kilt again. You're probably wondering what special occasion might this be? Well, today is the marriage of my distant cousin Fiona who I have never met and, no disrespect, I am not too keen on going to the weddings of those I barely know. I put on my kilt along with a shirt, suit and tie, and went downstairs. The wedding itself was in Wales, and we had to leave at 6am to drive there—so waking up at 5am was very early for all of us.

I sat down and tucked into my food. Everyone in my family was wearing a kilt, apart from my mum who was wearing a tartan skirt (yes, there's a difference). My brother was wearing a kilt, my dad was wearing a kilt and I was wearing a kilt. We all had a black leather sporran clipped to the waist of our kilts, topped with badger fur. They're often used to hold whisky flasks if you were going on a long trek, but apparently I'm not allowed to drink whisky. As I shovelled a spoonful of cheerios into my mouth, I thought I saw a shirtless figure in the garden from my peripheral vision. I whipped my head round and was surprised to see that there was nothing there apart from the football net and

the shed that took up quite a bit of space in my backyard. I shrugged it off, coming to the conclusion that the early hour was making me see things. It was quite dark in the garden so maybe it was just a fox.

The car journey was deadly. The heat trapped in the red Citroen was debilitating, and the air conditioning, although good for those sitting in the front seats, rarely reached my brother and me in the back seats. The car was great, but it was fourteen years old and, although being in good condition for a car that old, could do with a little touch up. I wriggled in my seat to try and adjust myself, but as I did I noticed another shirtless figure running along the motorway and vaulting over car roofs. I peered out the car window and was greeted with, again, nothing. I knew this was a result of the inevitable tiredness I was facing. So, to solve my boredom and hallucinations, I closed my eyes and went to sleep in the stuffy car.

I wasn't expecting to sleep for so long. I opened my eyes and, unsurprisingly, continued to be suffocated by the monstrous heat swimming around the car. This was about to end though, because we were entering the driveway to some sort of golf course. The luscious green grass spreads around the wedding guests, and the club house where they can mingle and talk to their friends afterwards is convenient. However, they must be sure to avoid match days in case they get hit in the head while saying their vows!

We sat in the white fold-out chairs laid in neat pews across the area as the priest read the wedding vows. They each said "I do" beneath the beautiful white arch above their heads. Without warning, a rumble sounded from the other end of the golf course. It sounded like a stampede. We stood up as the chairs beneath us rocked back and forth but couldn't see what was causing the noise because of the large hill blocking our view.

"It's an earthquake!" The bride exclaimed, trying to recover from her wedding day mayhem. I peered over the hill once more and frowned as I saw heads poke above the horizon. Human heads. Then shoulders, then torsos and now hundreds of angry, savage, shirtless people tore up the hill and roared. They were wearing kilts and were clearly the cause of the noise. I tried to get the bride's attention by tugging on her beautiful white sleeve but she jerked her arm away and didn't even look—she was just trying to calm all the panicking guests.

I didn't even have to squint anymore. These savages were the ones I had been seeing all day! In the garden, on the motorway, on our journey here, and now! I thought it was my tiredness making me see things at first, but surely this can't be a hallucination?

"What are those people doing?" The priest stuttered. I was glad that someone else saw them too. Suddenly, everyone turned to the boisterous Scots running towards us. They came to a halt, and the kilted man at the front of the large group pointed his long muddy spear towards us.

"Don't fret," he growled. His kilt was dark blue, just like my dad's. "We have come here from the past because I've always wanted to attend my great-great-great-great granddaughter's wedding."

The not-so-savages all sat down and laid their spears on their laps.

"Well? What are you waiting for? Get going then!" The man in the kilt at the front chuckled.

I guess time travel *is* real. This is a truly traditional Scottish wedding, when the past meets the present.

The end.

Culture Poem by Tom Joseph Cheriean 9BB

In Kerala's land where backwaters flow,
Lie cultures, rich and slow.
A land of spices and song,
Where traditions are old and young.

To festivals that light the scene,
To spices that flavour our cuisine.
From curry to sweet, sweet payasam,
Everyone would love to try some.

In every corner, a temple's grace,
Where devotion echoes in sacred space,
The rhythm of life, a dance divine,

In Kerala's culture, a sacred shrine.

In harmonious blend, religions coexist,
A mosaic of faiths, none shall resist.
Where mosques, churches, and temples stand tall,
Unity thrives, embracing one and all.

Oh Kerala, land of beauty and grace,
Your culture, none could erase.
In your hold, diversity thrives,
Oh Kerala, God's own.

Culture by Shreyank Tonpe 7CT

Culture is a very interesting word. If I heard this word for the first time in context, I would assume culture is mainly about festivals and holy food. Then, I would be wrong. Culture is not only about the festivities, but is about beliefs, ideas, arts, traditions and way people view the world. Like I said, culture has different variations and meanings to different people. Culture was made to give meaning to the world and make humans understand it. For example, people want to know the creation of the world and the universe, along with learning about what happens to a person after death. Culture can never be defined as one word or concept. That is why I am going to explain culture to you in the best way possible.

Secondly, I am going to talk about my culture that has existed for over 5 millenia and originated in India: Hinduism. According to many scholars, Hinduism is the oldest religion today with over 1 billion followers. That is approximately $\frac{1}{8}$ of the current population. Hinduism is based on the concept of polytheism, which is made from word 'poly' meaning 'many' and 'theo' meaning 'god' or 'gods' in Latin. Hinduism has 33 main or supreme deities but the most important ones are the three main gods of the creation of the universe. They are also called the Trimurti but I won't go into too much detail about them. Brahma is the creator of the universe, Vishnu is the preserver, and Shiva is the destroyer and Hindus worship each of them in temples, which are also called mandirs.

Thirdly, I will explain the different festivals and traditions each culture has. Hinduism has many festivals, some of which are Holi, the Festival of Colours,

which is where people throw pigments of colour at each other to forgive and forget about past errors. Another festival is Diwali, the Festival of Lights, which celebrates the overpowering of an important Hindu figure over a demon by using fireworks and sparklers, as mentioned by the name 'Festival of Lights.' The biggest cultural festival is Carnival in Rio de Janeiro, which is celebrated by Brazilians for the change from darkness to light, winter to summer. Furthermore, another one is Oktoberfest, celebrated from September to October. It commemorates the marriage of King Louis the First and a princess.

Furthermore, I am going to state the beliefs and ideas different cultures have. Firstly, the Aztecs believe in the concept of polytheism, like many other cultures, which means worshipping many gods or goddesses. Here are the main gods in Aztec mythology: Quetzalcoatl, the snake god of wind, air and learning; Huitzilopochtli, the god of war; Tlaloc, the god of rain; Tonatiuh, the god of the sun. Another interesting culture is Greek mythology. Their auspicious days are usually on solstices, which are days where either the day is longest or shortest in the time period of a year. For example, the winter solstice is the shortest day of the year and the summer solstice is the longest day. Again, the Ancient Greeks also believe in polytheism and 12 main or supreme gods called the Olympians. The Greeks additionally believed in primordial gods, which are the gods of the creation of the universe and some of them are personifications of superior entities, such as light, the Earth, the Sun, night, darkness, sky and chaos.

Some cultures also have sacred animals, sometimes representing a deity. For example, Hindus find the cow and elephant holy animals because the cow is the favourite animal of a famous Hindu figures and elephants are holy because they represent loyalty, power, wisdom and fertility. Greeks find dolphins holy because it symbolises hope and compassion. They also find the eagle sacred because it is the sacred animal of the most powerful Olympian, which was one of the 12 supreme Greek gods.

The Culture Cook Off by Alexander Jim John 11CET

Listen up folks as I will begin to tell you a tale about my Friday afternoon at Tiffin Boys. The sun was shining brightly as the air was filled with chatter and excitement. Today was the day that everyone was waiting for and it was time for the great culture cook-off. Students were piling up, eager to show off their culinary delights from every corner of the globe. I found myself drawn into a

world of diverse cultures, each dish promising a delicious journey through vibrant flavours and captivating aromas.

So there I was, ready to judge the plethora of dishes. Although, I must admit I was quite nervous, not sure what to expect from a teenage chef, yet still excited. Being such an upholding culinarian like myself, I was ready to taste dishes from lands far and wide. As my stomach began to grumble, I was keen to begin to sample each plate, yet little did I know I was in for a surprise.

The first stop was the mighty India, known for its spectacular curries, rich with spices and flavours. Having cooked up some curries in my time, I felt excited to taste butter chicken. I wondered at the succulent pieces of tender chicken, marinated in a fragrant blend of spices and finished with some coriander for a touch of elegance. As I took my first bite, my face suddenly dropped, as my taste buds had been destroyed by an inferno of spice. My body was overwhelmed as I drastically began to gulp water down my throat to quench the fiery sensation. When I realised I was too weak to try anymore, I inquired about the spice level, only to learn that a staggering 15 chilies had been used and that was my cue to swiftly move on.

Having acknowledged my defeat, I found myself in the well-known country of Italy. Surely, I thought there would be nothing wrong with some spaghetti. However, my anticipation turned to disappointment when I laid eyes on the offering: not just any pizza, but chocolate pizza. As I questioned whether this was truly representing Italian culture, I found myself hesitantly trying this concoction. Bite after bite, the more sickly I felt knowing if I didn't stop it would end badly. I could not explain the odd sensation of an uncontrollable addiction yet a queasy feeling with each bite.

However, the culinary calamities did not end there, as my next destination was the lands of South Korea. Hoping to finally find a dish to fulfil my hunger I walked over with cautious optimism. However, once again I was acquainted with an unexpected sight: kimchi ice cream. Yes, you heard that right, kimchi, the iconic Korean fermented vegetables, transformed into a frozen dessert. Once again, disgusted by the thought, I tried the ice cream, and realised it wasn't even half-bad. Soon after, the after-tast came in like a ton of bricks, taking over my mouth and it wasn't long before I moved along.

After a while, the culinary roller coaster eventually came to an end; I'll spare you the details of the remaining dishes. Although they were not up to a high

standard, I could embrace the diverse cultures of the school; a sense of community from everyone of different backgrounds all having fun. I thought about how having such a diverse culture helped students interact with others, created new friendships and allowed them to try something new. The great culture cook off allowed everyone to unite together and created memories which would be cherished for years to come.