







# City as Cultural Economy

## ‘Singapore and the Themed Landscape of Heritage Preservation’



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# **Singapore and the Themed Landscape of Heritage Preservation**

-  **Definition of “Cultural Economy”**
-  **Singapore and the Themed Landscape of Heritage Preservation**
-  **From Reconstructing the Past to Making of a New Nation**
-  **Heritage Mobilization for Urban Development**
-  **New Asia-Singapore**
-  **Conclusion**



# Definition of “Cultural Economy”

**“Cultural Economy” as goods and services that are extremely heterogeneous in their substance, appearance, and sectoral origins, flowing from traditional manufacturing sectors engaged in the transformation of physical inputs into final outputs**

**Allen J. Scott**



# Cultural Economy Products...

are made competitively marketable as modes of social display, forms of entertainment and distraction, or sources of information and self-awareness, i.e.

- Goods and services that involve some personalized transaction or the production and transmission of information, for example, tourist services, live theater, or advertising
- A hybrid form, such as music recording, book publishing, or film production



# City as Cultural Economy

■ Peter Hall (*Cities in Civilization, 1998*):

*“Cities have always played a privileged role as centers of cultural and economic activity. From their earliest origins, cities have exhibited a conspicuous capacity both to generate culture in the form of arts, ideas, styles and ways of life, and to induce high levels of economic innovation and growth...”*





# Singapore and the Themed Landscape of Heritage Preservation

- From Reconstructing the Past to Making of a New Nation
- Building a “Nation” in a Modern Cityscape



# Building a “Nation” in a Modern Cityscape

- **Public housing landscape through the Housing and Development Board (HDB) as the state’s most important tools for developing a modern city**
- **Housing-market regulatory mechanism to maintain particular goals, such as ensuring priority to particular types of family structures, particular mixes of races in estates, and particular orientation toward work**



# **Recreating the Past and Reconstructing the “Nation”:**

## **Heritage Mobilization for Urban Development**

- 5 Ms: State’s hegemonic ideologies of multiracialism, multilingualism, multiculturalism, multireligiosity and meritocracy, in reconstructing the sense of the “Nation”**
- Multiracializing the landscape: the heritage of street names and the rebuilding of ethnic quarters**
- Streets naming to reflect the multilingual, multiracial and multicultural context of the society and be easily translated or pronounced in the other official languages, namely English, Mandarin, Malay and Tamil**







# Singapore as the “Tourism Capital” with Multiculturalism

## Singapore’s Five Categories of Heritage:

■ The heritage of nation-building derived from and including the experience of living under the British colonial administration, the Japanese Occupation, the post-war struggle for independence, and the struggle against Communism

■ The heritage of economic success, focusing on the values of Singapore’s migrant predecessors and their economic achievements





# Singapore as the “Tourism Capital” with Multiculturalism

## Singapore’s Five Categories of Heritage:

- The multicultural heritage expressed in the lifestyles, customs and traditions of the different ethnic communities
- The heritage of the man-made environment comprising buildings, landmarks and other visible and tangible links to the country’s past in the physical landscape
- The heritage of the natural environment, defining Singapore’s territorial identity and its location within the Southeast Asian ecological region



# Singapore as the “Tourism Capital” with Multiculturalism

- **Heritage preservation as an element of multi-faceted redevelopment strategies designed to cater tourist demands for uniqueness and to improve urban aesthetics**
- **Thematic development through the Singapore Tourism Board (STB) transforming opportunity areas around suitable existing attractions into thematic zones**
- **Reformulation of the city’s cultural products to make Singapore a destination for memorable experiences by integrating activity clusters, services, facilities and street furniture in historic areas into a single themed development**



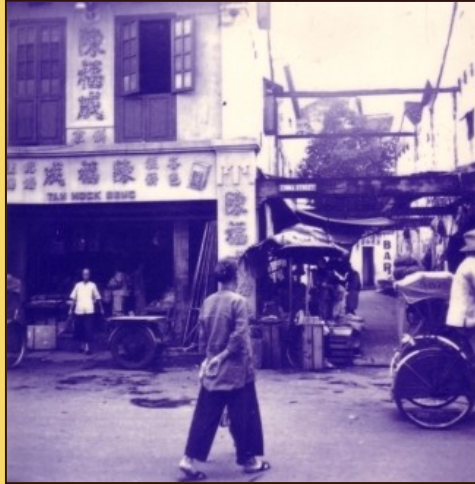
# Examples of Dynamics and Politics in the Shaping of Heritage Landscapes in Singapore

- **Chinatown: The Politics of Reinvention**
- **Kampong Glam: The Politics of Exclusion**
- **The Merlion: Monument and Myth**



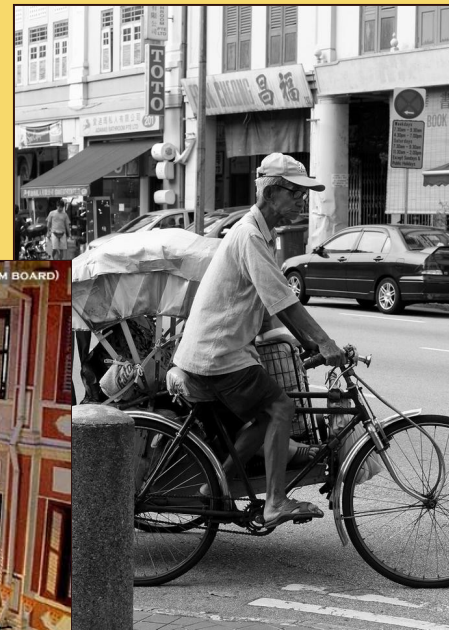


# Chinatown: The Politics of Reinvention



■ Singapore as new Asia, a city of many colors and contrasts, cultures and cuisines

■ Traditional shophouses refurbished for business purposes





# Kampong Glam: The Politics of Exclusion



- The demarcation between conservation and demolition of the Malay heritage
- The reinterpretation and reinvention of state-envisioned of Malay heritage as pieces of life and landscape that can be objectified, isolated and displayed according to aesthetic and political standards

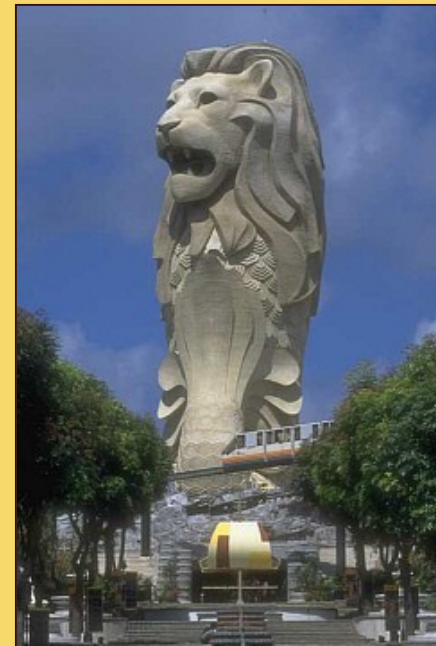


# The Merlion: Monument and Myth



■ The Merlion, a “half beast, half fish” as an iconographic feature of Singapore’s landscape reflecting the quest for national symbol

■ Merlion as a self-consciously styled attraction created for the express purpose of forging a tourism image and a part of rarefied objects tourists insist on seeing, photographing, and purchasing as proof of their having experienced Singapore





# New Asia-Singapore

- The Esplanade-Theater on the Singapore Bay to promote Singapore as a global city for the arts with multicultural Asian roots
- City branding against other cities in the region



# Conclusion

■ Symbiosis of place, culture and economy in modern capitalism reemerging in powerful new forms as cultural economies in certain countries

■ The “Uniquely Singapore” as social and spatial construct of a nation on the themed landscape of heritage preservation



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**Thank You  
For Your Attention**





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