

Kwame Anthony Appiah, from "The Case for Contamination"

MULTIPLE CHOICE

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On Kumasi's Wednesday festival day, I've seen visitors from England and the United States wince at what they regard as the intrusion of modernity on timeless, traditional rituals — more evidence, they think, of a pressure in the modern world toward uniformity. They react like the assistant on the film set who's supposed to check that the extras in a sword-and-sandals movie aren't wearing wristwatches. And such purists are not alone. In the past couple of years, Unesco's members have spent a great deal of time trying to hammer out a convention on the "protection and promotion" of cultural diversity. (It was finally approved at the Unesco General Conference in October 2005.) The drafters worried that "the processes of globalization...represent a challenge for cultural diversity, namely in view of risks of imbalances between rich and poor countries." The fear is that the values and images of Western mass culture, like some invasive weed, are threatening to choke out the world's native flora. The contradictions in this argument aren't hard to find. This same Unesco document is careful to affirm the importance of the free flow of ideas, the freedom of thought and expression and human rights — values that, we know, will become universal only if we make them so. What's really important, then, cultures or people? In a world where Kumasi and New York — and Cairo and Leeds and Istanbul — are being drawn ever closer together, an ethics of globalization has proved elusive.

The right approach, I think, starts by taking individuals — not nations, tribes or "peoples" — as the proper object of moral concern. It doesn't much matter what we call such a creed, but in homage to Diogenes, the fourth-century Greek Cynic and the first philosopher to call himself a "citizen of the world," we could call it cosmopolitan. Cosmopolitans take cultural difference seriously, because they take the choices individual people make seriously. But because cultural difference is not the only thing that concerns them, they suspect that many of globalization's cultural critics are aiming at the wrong targets.

Yes, globalization can produce homogeneity. But globalization is also a threat to homogeneity. You can see this as clearly in Kumasi as anywhere. One thing Kumasi isn't — simply because it's a city — is homogeneous. English, German, Chinese, Syrian, Lebanese, Burkinabe, Ivorian, Nigerian, Indian: I can find you families of each description. I can find you Asante people, whose ancestors have lived in this town for centuries, but also Hausa households that have been around for centuries, too. There are people there from every region of the country as well, speaking scores of languages. But if you travel just a little way outside Kumasi — 20 miles, say, in the right direction — and if you drive off the main road down one of the many potholed side roads of red laterite, you won't have difficulty finding villages that are fairly monocultural. The people have mostly been to Kumasi and seen the big, polyglot, diverse world of the city. Where they live, though, there is one everyday language (aside from the English in the government schools) and an agrarian way of life based on some old crops, like yams, and some newer ones, like cocoa, which arrived in the late 19th century as a product for export. They may or may not have electricity. (This close to Kumasi, they probably do.) When people talk of the homogeneity produced by globalization, what they are talking about is this: Even here, the villagers will have radios (though the language will be local); you will be able to get a discussion going about Ronaldo, Mike Tyson or Tupac; and you will probably be able to find a bottle of Guinness or Coca-Cola (as well as of Star or Club, Ghana's own fine lagers). But has access to these things made the place more homogeneous or less? And what can you tell about people's souls from the fact that they drink Coca-Cola?

It's true that the enclaves of homogeneity you find these days — in Asante as in Pennsylvania — are less distinctive than they were a century ago, but mostly in good

ways. More of them have access to effective medicines. More of them have access to 51
clean drinking water, and more of them have schools. Where, as is still too common, 52
they don't have these things, it's something not to celebrate but to deplore. And what- 53
ever loss of difference there has been, they are constantly inventing new forms of 54
difference: new hairstyles, new slang, even, from time to time, new religions. No one 55
could say that the world's villages are becoming anything like the same. 56

1. Which of the following best states the subject of the passage?
 - a. the impact of American culture on Kumasi, Ghana
 - b. the importance of cultural integration to local business
 - c. the local influence of globalization
 - d. the negative consequences of homogeneity
 - e. the historical development of globalization

2. In line 2, "modernity" refers to
 - a. "visitors from England and the United States" (lines 1-2)
 - b. "the assistant on the film set" (line 4)
 - c. "cultural diversity" (line 9)
 - d. "values and images of Western mass culture" (lines 11-12)
 - e. "world's native flora" (line 12)

3. In context, the word "cosmopolitan" (line 22) is best interpreted to mean
 - a. blurred
 - b. ethnocentric
 - c. urban
 - d. pluralistic
 - e. interdependent

4. The "wrong targets" referred to in line 26 are referred to elsewhere as which of the following?
 - a. "Western mass culture" (lines 11-12)
 - b. "Unesco" (line 13)
 - c. "Kumasi and New York . . . and Cairo and Leeds and Istanbul" (line 17)
 - d. "nations, tribes or 'peoples'" (lines 19-20)
 - e. "Cosmopolitans" (line 23)

5. In context, the word "homogeneous" (line 29) is best interpreted to mean
 - a. uniform
 - b. harmonic
 - c. gawky
 - d. dependable
 - e. intractable

6. The author's tone in the passage is best described as
 - a. pleading and understated
 - b. didactic and straightforward
 - c. contemplative and investigative
 - d. incendiary and moralistic
 - e. nostalgic and apathetic

7. In context, the word “polyglot” (line 37) is best interpreted to mean
- a. many-sided
 - b. disparate
 - c. multilingual
 - d. obfuscated
 - e. monolithic
8. The sentence structure and diction of lines 28–41 (“One thing . . . may not have electricity”) suggest that the scene is viewed by
- a. a cautious newcomer
 - b. a bemused tourist
 - c. an argumentative apologist
 - d. an objective observer
 - e. a confident insider
9. The principal contrast employed by the author in lines 42–48 is
- a. past and present
 - b. local and global
 - c. sameness and diversity
 - d. civilization and barbarism
 - e. technology and popular culture
10. The author’s overall argument implies which of the following?
- I. Modern influences on traditional practices and rituals are irreverent.
 - II. Globalization creates a dangerous interdependence.
 - III. Cultural diversity is a crucial measurement of social progress.
- a. I only
 - b. II only
 - c. III only
 - d. II and III only
 - e. I, II, and III