



The GAPS Think Piece - Issue 8

Daring culture ... as a lifelong learning process

François Carbon
Chargé de mission Culture University of Luxembourg
Member of the European Cultural Parliament

Continuously confronted to identify the deeper meaning of the word 'culture' originated from the Latin expression 'colere', which means as much as to cultivate or to take care of how to design our life, I would like to start my reflections with a quote from Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) satirical writer, essayist, historian & teacher, which since I've started my 'cultural journey' at the University of Luxembourg, became inescapably my 'leitmotif'.

"Culture is the process by which a person becomes all that they were created capable of being."

Culture is mostly defined by the creativeness of our society. If the level of culture, education and intellectual life rises, citizens will understand, manage and solve their daily problems much more easily and face life with greater confidence and understanding.

The disciplines of music, drama, poetry, dance, fine arts, new media, politics, religion & of course... science, are all expressions of culture. However, the meaning of culture is much wider and deeper. Civilizations are formed by what man has said and done over thousands of years, accepted and absorbed gradually by human societies and added into their habits, thoughts, memories, actions, visions and creativeness.

Culture builds on the past, molds the present and shapes the future.

Living in a 'cultured' manner and, respectively, to be 'cultured' is essential to form and develop our maturity.



Culture exists in all our doings, in all our acts.

It is and maintains knowledge, education, behavior, responsibility, understanding, tolerance and respect for the diversity and the opinion of others.

Many of us agree that culture is a complex process of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features that characterize each individual and that have created a distinctive image of each country and served as a solid foundation for social development.

In the framework of the human development process, educational impulses driven by creative entrepreneurship are much more politically efficient and powerful than we could imagine.

The concept of cultural maturity, for example, proposes that our times challenge us to a critical next stage in our collective human development - put most simply, to an essential, and now newly possible, "growing up" as a species. This growing up takes us beyond what has always before been a most natural relationship between culture and the individual. 'Cultural maturity' involves leaving behind the protective cultural absolutes of times past and assuming a new level of responsibility in all parts of our lives.

Most immediately, the concept of 'cultural maturity' provides a perspective for making sense of our confusing times. It offers a compelling picture of human possibilities. It also provides guidance for making good decisions in all parts of our personal and collective lives. It helps us delineate the new characteristics that effective thinking, relating and acting in times ahead must have. In addition, it helps us separate the wheat from the chaff in our ideas about the future and what times ahead will require of us.

I invite you to look closely around at what you see every day and place it in the context of your creative shaping, in order to inspire you to reconsider the complex landscape that affects your lifelong educational process.



The society that supports or *restrains* you, the media that informs or *misguides* you, the culture that fascinates and *challenges* you, these are just a few of the subtle, often invisible factors that influence your decisions as you develop your own cultural identity.

I strongly believe that cultural maturity, diversity and diversified cultural expressions are among the most wonderful and precious treasures of mankind built up in the 'Curriculum Vitae' of human development and that cultural diversity creates visionary identities, which distinguish one nation or ethnic group from another and makes our world and each individual human being so unique.

Culturally yours,

fc

François Carbon is cultural actor at the University of Luxembourg (UL) who seeks to add a creative dimension to the main tasks of the University, namely learning and research. With this in mind, he runs and coordinates cultural, intercultural events and contributes to life on campus, so as to promote and improve the quality of life at the UL, broaden horizons amongst UL community members (students, doctorates, administration, professors, researchers, and others), boost cross-cultural dialogue, and contribute to an exchange of ideas aimed at developing culture in Europe and the concept of European citizenship. As president of the Scenicae@uni.lu, a cultural association, created in September 2009, he coordinates the goals of an interdisciplinary cultural network which consists in promoting and framing the activities of the different artistic ensembles of the University within the multi-cultural society of Luxembourg and beyond; in developing and fortifying the links between the university and the cultural actors in Luxembourg; as well as in offering further training and education to the members of the UL ensembles through the collaboration with almost all national cultural partners.

Disclaimer

The views and opinions expressed in this article are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of GAPS.