

Multiracial Society and Oral Tradition: A Study through Secondary Data

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Abstract : In the early days, myths and taboos were used by our ancestors to give explanations to the existence of nature and man, as well as to propitiate fortunes and to avoid unluckiness and harm. Myths and taboos are deeply rooted in our cultures and environment, and they form certain characteristics of any society, even in modern societies. With decades of the three main ethnic communities in Singapore – Malay, Indian and Chinese – living together, there has been intermingling and intermixing of traditions and practices. This may mean that what we think is a 'Malay' practice is actually one that is a hybrid of the Chinese and Malay. A good example would be the practice of covering all mirrors in a house of mourning. Therefore, the proposed seeks to explore and understand the underlying social influences of Singapore's oral tradition. As part of a bigger cultural research project: Designing Cultures, the proposed paper focused on using secondary data to contribute to the overall cultural understanding of the integral connections between oral traditions, people and landscapes. The proposed paper will discuss in details the initials findings of the research project, including the two manners that contributed to the intermixing of myths and taboos. The first is the presence of social institutions such as religions, and the second is the presence of cross-cultural minorities such as the Straits Chinese. As well as other observations included the use and influence of Chinese oral traditions such as folklore among the early Chinese immigrants through social institutions.

Keywords : cultural belief, multiracial society, myths, oral tradition

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