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Creating High Culture in the Globalized "Cultural Desert" of Singapore

C.J.W.-L. Wee

This essay is dedicated to the memory of Kuo Pao Kun (1939–2002)

Singapore, with a population of 3.2 million (4 million, including foreigners) is distinct from other postcolonial societies in its desire to emulate the advancements of the West while forsaking not only many of the political dimensions of democratic life but also its cultural dimensions. The result is an industrial and commercial understanding of culture; manufacturing and productive institutions have become the collective basis of social life. And yet, de-

