11. Irina Bokva feels that cultural heritage belongs to all and must be protected by all. To what extent do you agree or disagree with her views? How applicable do you find her observations to yourself and your own society?

Although the writer’s view that **‘culture heritage belongs to all and must be protected by all’** is valid, it is only to a certain extent for others and it may be agreeable to some people. As for her observation on the role of state on cultural, it may be applicable to Singapore but in different way.

It is hard to disagree with the writer’s view as culture involves the preservation of our **‘values, identities and belongings’** and the destruction of our cultures will mean the loss of our cultural roots. As the values in our culture will form the identity that determines the community, the loss of cultural heritage will mean that we will not be linked to the community that holds our heritage. Without the cultural roots, we will not be able to feel a sense of belonging that defines how we shape us to be who we are now. As stated by the writer, the cultural preservation made on Museum collection is an effort that the global society must enact as it is the preservation of human civilization and heritage.

Nonetheless, in reality, cultural preservation will not be done by all as the meaning of universal culture does not apply to all and thus, not everyone will assume this responsibility to protect this notion of universal culture. **The act of the Taliban and ISIS members’ act of assault on cultural artifacts in Afghanistan and Syria and Iraq are proofs to show that cultural difference is the cause of conflicts**. Not all will preserve the cultural heritage of another culture that is not linked to them and in fact, they will see it as a source of their justification for the collateral damage on cultural heritage. It is simply too naïve to believe that all will preserve this universal culture.

As for her observation that ‘**states have obligation to protect their heritage**’, it is applicable to Singapore as there is a need of governmental organizations to fulfill this need by having ‘tighter coordination with all partners’ in the country with leadership taken by the governmental leadership. In Singapore, such an approach is needed as we have a multi-cultural society that needs the impartial role of the government to maintain social harmony while promoting cultural diversity. It is the decision of the government to make sure all cultural groups **have an equal share of public holidays to celebrate their festivals**. It is also the role of the government to preserve racial harmony and uphold the values of a multicultural society with **the introduction of Racial Harmony Day by our 2nd Prime Minister, Mr Goh Chok Tong in 1996** as a way to let students and the people know about their cultural heritage and diverse racial groups to understand the cultural heritage of others too.

While some may see that cultural heritage needs the role of the family and cultural organizations like clans or religious organizations to inculcate cultural values, it is quite difficult to expect these social entities to perform their roles in a modernized society. As the modern lifestyle becomes more hectic and sophisticated, more parents are adjusting their way of life to suit the modern lifestyles and has abandoned many traditions as they see less significance of them. As economic concerns are more important, most families will have both parents working and less time will be spent with their children. As a result, there will be less family interaction and cultural heritage will be diminished. At the same time, clan associations and racial institutions are becoming less relevant to youths as they are seen as archaic and trendy, diminishing their roles in shaping the minds of the youths. Consequently, they play a lesser role in the modern society in upholding cultural heritage. This can be seen from the diminishing enrolment of youths in these cultural organizations.

In sum, a source the writer’s view is agreeable if the world sees cultural heritage as a universal concept but it is usually disagreeable as culture is a slippery notion and will become of conflict. As for her observation about the role of state in cultural preservation, her view is applicable. The state’s role in cultural preservation is critical but it is applicable in a different way due to the nature of a modernized society and the multicultural framework in Singapore.