



# SAT LONG READING 1



## 1 Reading passage

To some scholars, the European baroque is not merely an aesthetic style characterized by extravagant forms and elaborate ornamentation, but also a political, social, and cultural mentality prevalent in Europe from approximately 1600 to 1680. This larger view was held by the late Spanish historian José Antonio Maravall, whose writings trace aspects of the modern world—especially the principle of individual liberty in opposition to the state’s power—back to the baroque era as it unfolded in Spain.

Maravall argues that the baroque period was characterized by “monarchical absolutism”: monarchs, having suppressed the worst excesses of aristocratic disorder, could now ally themselves with their nobilities to defend traditional order and values in societies unsettled by the Renaissance’s liberating forces of criticism and opposition. These forces appeared especially threatening because deteriorating economic conditions heightened conflict among different elements of society. For Maravall, baroque culture was the response of the ruling class (including crown, Church, and nobility) to the European social and economic crisis, although that crisis was more acute, and the social structure more frozen, in imperial Spain than elsewhere. Maravall regards the baroque as a culture of control and containment, or, more dynamically, as a directive culture, designed to reintegrate and unite a society living under the shadow of social and intellectual disruption.

Maravall suggests that even though all the political controls were centralized in the monarchical sys-

tem, this system of authority was not simply repressive. It was also enticing, promoting a public delight in grandiose artifice by means of devices that ranged from fireworks displays to theater to religious festivals. Operating upon an urban culture that already possessed characteristics of modern mass culture, these entitlements deflected the desire for novelty into areas of life where it represented no challenge to the political order. Maravall concludes that every aspect of the baroque emerged from the necessity, as public opinion grew increasingly important, of manipulating opinions and feelings on a broad public scale.

Perhaps, however, Maravall’s interpretation is overly influenced by his quest for baroque foreshadowings of “modernity” and by his experience of living under the Spanish dictator Franco. He tends to exaggerate the capacity of those in authority to manipulate a society for their own ideological ends. A look at the seventeenth-century courts of Charles I in England or Philip IV in Spain suggests that efforts at manipulation were at times wholly counterproductive. In England and Spain during the 1630s, the rulers themselves, not the subjects, succumbed to the illusions carefully sustained by ceremony, theater, and symbol. The result was that members of the ruling class became dangerously isolated from the outside world, and as the gulf between illusion and reality widened, the monarchy and aristocracy fell headlong into a credibility gap of their own creation.

## 2 Question

1. Which one of the following best expresses the main idea of the passage?

- (A) Until recently, the baroque has been regarded simply as an aesthetic style; however, Maravall has shown that it was a cultural mentality serving to reinforce monarchical absolutism.

- (B) Maravall views baroque culture as a strategy for dissipating opposition and managing public opinion; however, he overestimates the strategy's success.
- (C) Maravall interprets European baroque culture as an expansion of the social and intellectual developments of the Renaissance; however, his view of the seventeenth century is colored by his focus on Spain.
- (D) Maravall's theory about the intent of the ruling class to control society via baroque culture is refuted by the examples of specific baroque-era monarchies.
- (E) According to the historian Maravall, baroque culture was a political construct designed essentially to control society and repress dissent.
2. Which one of the following phrases, in the context in which it occurs, most accurately indicates the author's attitude toward Maravall's concept of baroque culture?
- (A) "This larger view" (line 5)
- (B) "grandiose artifice" (line 33)
- (C) "tends to exaggerate" (lines 46-47)
- (D) "own ideological ends" (line 48)
- (E) "wholly counterproductive" (line 51)
3. Which one of the following words best expresses the meaning of "directive" as that word is used in line 26 of the passage?
- (A) straightforward
- (B) evolving
- (C) codified
- (D) guiding
- (E) compelling
4. It can be inferred from the passage that Maravall regarded monarchs of the baroque era as
- (A) increasingly indifferent to unfavorable public opinion
- (B) concerned with the political threat posed by the aristocracy
- (C) captivated by the cultural devices designed to control their subjects
- (D) somewhat successful in countering the disruptive legacy of the Renaissance
- (E) preoccupied with the goal of attaining cultural preeminence for their respective countries
5. In Maravall's view, baroque theater was intended to
- (A) spur economic growth
- (B) echo the consensus of public opinion
- (C) entertain and divert the urban population
- (D) express the emerging principle of individual liberty
- (E) terrify the citizenry with the threat of monarchical repression
6. The main purpose of the passage is to
- (A) contrast two competing theories and offer an evaluation
- (B) challenge a widely accepted viewpoint by means of a counterexample
- (C) explicate an interpretation and introduce a qualification
- (D) articulate opposing arguments and propose a reconciliation
- (E) explain the unprecedented consequences of a political construct
7. Which one of the following pieces of evidence, if it existed, would most weaken Maravall's interpretation of baroque culture?

- (A) confirmation that Maravall himself participated in opposing Franco's authoritarian regime
- (B) the discovery that baroque-era nobility commissioned far more works of art than did the monarchs
- (C) an analysis of baroque art that emphasizes its idealized depiction of the monarchy and aristocracy
- (D) documents indicating that many baroque-era works of art expressed opposition to the monarchy
- (E) documents indicating a conscious attempt on the part of Franco to control Spanish society by cultural means

### 3 Answer

Question	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Answer	B	C	D	D	C	C	D