

EASTERN VS WESTERN CULTURE

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EASTERN VS WESTERN CULTURES

I. INTRODUCTION

A. Eastern Culture: Eastern culture includes Asia and the Middle East.

B. Western Culture: Western culture includes South and North America, European countries, New Zealand, and Australia.

Thesis Statement: There are various differences between Eastern and Western cultures including behaviors of daily life and the way each culture thinks.

II. BACKGROUND

A. Marriage: Eastern culture typically believes in arranged marriage, while Western culture believes in falling in love and then getting married.

B. Liberalism: Eastern cultures tend to be more conservative, whereas Western cultures are typically more liberal.

C. Women: In Eastern culture, women may be expected to play a traditional role. In Western culture, women may have a better place in society.

III. CONCLUSION

IV. REFERENCES

Introduction

The topic I chose to write about for my CLDV 100 (Introduction to Multicultural Studies in the 21st Century) paper is that of Eastern vs. Western cultures. One may ask: what exactly do Eastern culture and Western culture consist of? Well, Eastern culture includes Asia and the Middle East. Western culture includes South and North America, Europe, New Zealand, and Australia. “Eastern” and “Western” are umbrella terms for the various cultures or social structures, norms, and beliefs followed by our world. The term initially had a precise geographical meaning, referring to the eastern and western part of the ***Old World****, contrasting the customs and ways of life of Asia with those of Western Europe. This is no longer the case. The differences between “Eastern” and “Western” are no longer defined by their location, but by cultural followings. An example of this would be Australia, which is geographically located on the east, but is typically grouped in the west because of the cultural influence of the western world followed in Australia.

Now that we’ve cleared that up, one may say: well, what are the differences between these two worlds of culture? This can be a very broad topic and there can be many differences one can mention. I chose to speak on the following: Marriage, liberalism, and women’s role in society.

****Old World consists of Africa, Europe, and Asia; the world known before the Americas.***

Marriage

Marriage – a legally and socially sanctioned union that is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs, and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners.

Easterners value tradition and religion a lot and typically believe in arranged marriages.

Arranged marriage is a marital union of two individuals, typically of similar cultural backgrounds, planned by the families, such as parents, rather than by the individuals themselves. Arranged marriages began as a way of uniting and maintaining upper class families by preserving wealth and family reputation. People marry with the choice of their parents. Once the election is made, they will get married barely knowing each other. Compatibility for Easterners seems more important than romantic love in determining the success of a marriage. They trust and believe in the elder's judgment of what is best for them and their future.

Westerners, on the other hand, would usually define marriage as a product of love. Two people meet, form a relationship based on bonding and caring for each other, fall in love, and marry at the peak of that love. In western culture, we have a say on who we want to marry. Culture is an important factor in deciding which is better between "romantic"/ "love" marriage or arranged marriage. It is all about perspective. Once upon a time, arranged marriage existed all throughout the world, but this idea ceased on the Western side as it was greatly influenced by modernization.

Which is more successful? In the U.S., the divorce rate is estimated to be around 40 to 50 percent, while the divorce rate for arranged marriages is 4 percent. But is that

because they are happily in love and have a great marriage? Or can their culture and beliefs be playing a crucial role in which they strongly believe they cannot or should not get divorced no matter what? There is no right or wrong. Each system, whether it be arranged or not, has its pros and cons, I'm sure, but at the end of the day, it all comes down to one's cultural beliefs.

Liberalism

Lib·er·al·ism – a political and moral philosophy based on liberty.

When comparing Eastern and Western culture, one of the main differences that is usually brought up is that countries in the West are more liberal versus countries in the East tending to be more conservative.

Western culture allows people to be more open minded, blunt, and critical. They are able to discuss topics that are considered taboo in Eastern cultures, such as sex or abortion. People from the West are more open to expressing their feelings. If they are angry, they let it be known and vent it out. Whereas people in the East tend to usually hold it in to represent good manners and not come off as disrespectful. Another difference is that Westerners are typically free and flexible to make individual decisions.

Meanwhile, Easterners make collective decisions discussed with their family, for example. The population in Eastern countries is also more traditional when it comes down to clothing, rituals, etc. For instance, in India or the Middle East, they have their traditional wear and you will most likely see everyone dressed in this type of clothing.

On the other hand, Western countries don't really have conventional wear; they dress in more of a casual kind of style. This can include denim, tees, skirts, shorts, etc. Religion doesn't typically define the dress code.

Women's Social Role

The typical role of a woman used to be that of a housewife, mother, and caretaker. She usually did not have a job, much less a career. She cooked, cleaned, and took care of her family. She had little to no rights and was always inferior when presented next to the fellow *man*. However, women in Western society have come a long way. Women can now enjoy the same rights as men, like voting, education, driving, and so on. Women are now expected to enter the work force and thrive at whatever career they choose. Women are now able to become world leaders, like our Vice President Ms. Kamala Harris.

While this may seem like the right thing and should be enjoyed by all women, those not living in Westernized societies lack many of these freedoms. Not all women enjoy the right to education and their roles are set on by ancient and old-fashioned traditions. In other parts of the world, women have to fight for basic human rights.

Conclusion

All in all, this paper has talked about the differences between Eastern and Western cultures. There are many ways in which these two civilizations may differ. Some of the most common topics of discussion when this subject comes up are those of marriage, liberalism, and women's roles in society. There is no final verdict of whom or which is better, they are simply just different. What is more important is how people of both sides of the world, people of all cultures, respect and accept each other's values, beliefs, customs, and ideas. Although there are a vast majority of differences, there are more similarities than we may think. But we'll just leave that topic for another paper.

Why choose this topic?

The topic I chose to write my paper about is Eastern vs. Western cultures. This topic caught my attention and interested me because of the many differences between the two worlds of culture. From what I've learned and heard, they are exactly that, *two different worlds*. Depending on where you are from, you can look at the world with a completely different perspective. This of course, affects one's norms, values, customs, etc. As seen on a video I watched, a simple picture was shown to people in the street. Depending on what country the person was from or in, the answers they gave were total opposite. Furthermore, the way you view life as a whole differs depending on which side of the world you are located in. Cultures differ to extremes when we talk about marriage or liberalism. But if we zoom into the more simple things, like perspectives, Easterners and Westerners differ there, too. "To use a camera analogy, "the Americans are more zoom and the East Asians are more panoramic," said Dr. Denise Park of the Center for Brain Health at the University of Texas in Dallas. "The Easterner probably sees more, and the Westerner probably sees less, but in more detail." (The New York Times)

Things like these are what caught my attention. How cool is it how different things are in these two civilizations? This is why I decided to write my paper on this topic: To be able to find out more and learn more about Eastern vs. Western cultures.

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