

rr

by Rr Rr

Submission date: 14-Apr-2021 12:36PM (UTC-0500)

Submission ID: 1559198192

File name: revision.docx (19.7K)

Word count: 1163

Character count: 5730

Oral History Essay

Even though I have interacted with the western culture, I still feel that my Arabic Islamic culture is still a significant part of me. My culture is based on diversity of lifestyle, customs, politics, and literature. My interviewee, on the other hand, comes from the United States (western). He is an African American. He is also a Christian. Being a Muslim is a huge and significant part of my life. In my culture, religion and culture are intertwined, and it is impossible to separate the two. Therefore, I feel that as much as I cannot separate from the culture, I cannot separate from religion as well.

Being part of Arabic Islamic culture has been part of my life since I was born. I was born in a family of Muslims. Being strict observers and conservatives of Islamic culture, I was brought up in the Arabic Islamic culture's values and norms. For my interviewee, he feels that he is an African American and the fact that culture and religion in America are very separate; it was easy for him to describe his understanding of cultural belonging. He said that "unlike you, I am not into religion that much, but I like to consider myself a Christian." However, he felt strongly identified with the African American group. He always said, "I am black even in eyeballs-that should be enough to tell you that I am an African American."

My first encounter and understanding of cultural/ethnic differences are when I first arrived in the United States. I realized that my Islamic culture had distinct elements that provided meaning to me and not to many whom I interacted with. This was challenging for me, and it significantly reduced my sense of belonging in the U.S. For my interviewee, his first encounter with ethnic differences was when he was in grade six. He described for me an incident about a shootout in his neighborhood that was racially motivated. "They targeted any black person who

was walking on the streets," he explained in a sad tone. He also described how he lost his elder brother in the shooting.

My relationship with the neighborhood has significantly improved since I arrived in the United States, even though it has been difficult transitioning. At first, I experienced some prejudice towards the way I dressed and sometimes when I had to take off to pray. I lived in a neighborhood with an integrated cultural population, and the majority were Christians. My relationship with the neighborhood has been cordial for my interviewee most of the times he has lived there. Since the incident that left his brother dead, the neighborhood has become peaceful, and since most of the people around are African Americans, he finds it peaceful and pleasant. My neighborhood has changed me culturally in the sense that it has opened my eyes to the possibilities of how to live with different groups. Before I came to the United States, I lived in a neighborhood with only Muslims, and everyone spoke Arabic. My Islamic culture has played a critical role in the way I relate and interact with my neighborhood. Islamic culture provides guidelines that every follower must follow in regards to various issues we encounter in our neighborhoods. However, two principles stand; privacy and avoiding breaking into another person's right. These principles promote peaceful coexistence between people.

Food is a unique cultural aspect that defines every culture. My favorite foods, which are probably also a favorite of any other Muslim, include rice with *halal* meat. *Halal* meat is a kind of meat that has been allowed by Islamic culture to be acceptable to be taken by people. This kind of meat includes a lamb or cow. Other foods that form this list include ² biryani, couscous, stuffed veggies, grape leaves, and garlic mustard fish. His favorite foods include chicken, collard greens, fried fish, sweet potato pie, and barbecued meat for my interviewee. Unlike my religion that limits us to *halal* meat, my interviewee can take barbecued meat from any source, including

pork. For my interviewee, barbecued meat is part of American culture in general, and it is one of the things that separate an American from the rest of the world cultures.

Every community or culture has a food that they are directly and uniquely associated with. However, some of these foods are shared among cultures, but they are very different in each culture. Authentic foods are those that take the elements of the culture in the way they are prepared to their ingredients, which influence their tastes. For example, food like tamales is widely known as Spanish food, but authentic tamales are associated with Mexican cultures. For my interviewee, an authentic food is that which bears the brand or mark of a culture with it. “The way it is prepared and how it tastes should reflect the concept of cultural involvement,” he said.

Even though I have not had much food fusion, I have tried to taste the foods from other cultures. For example, when I first arrived in the U.S, I got the opportunity to taste some of the American foods, including fried chicken and eggs tied. Fusion foods are not just an exchange of cultural foods but a cultural appropriation. It gives one an opportunity to understand the other culture through what we all share, our sense of taste. For my interviewee, he has tasted almost all the foods in different American cultures. He told me about the time he had tacos (Latino food) and noodles (Asian food) and how he got excited for the first time he had the taste.

Local foods serve a great role in promoting the identity of the local culture. Since food is an important part of cultural identity, local food plays a critical role in ensuring that even those who do not understand the culture can get the opportunity to learn and appreciate the diversity and uniqueness of the culture. For my interviewee, local food helps to support the local needs of the people.

Food technologies continue to affect cultures and communities, especially in shaping cultural integration and appropriation. American culture is known for its take-outs and life of

restaurants, which where I came from was not a common thing. The development of food technologies has made foods available in the market and can be easily accessed by consumers (Çakmakçioğlu, 2017). This availability makes it easy for someone from another culture to try it, thus, promoting cultural appropriation. My interviewee recalled about he ordered tacos from an online restaurant platform. He said that he did not have any idea about what would be delivered, but after the delivery he could stop but order another one the next day. “I don’t understand the recipe for tacos, but I definitely know how to eat it-thanks to online platforms,” he concluded.

Reference

- 1 Çakmakçiođlu, B. A. (2017). Effect of Digital Age on the Transmission of Cultural Values in Product Design. *The Design Journal*, 20(sup1), S3824-S3836.

rr

ORIGINALITY REPORT

3%

SIMILARITY INDEX

1%

INTERNET SOURCES

0%

PUBLICATIONS

3%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Submitted to Heriot-Watt University

Student Paper

2%

2

Submitted to Houston Community College

Student Paper

1%

Exclude quotes Off

Exclude matches Off

Exclude bibliography Off