

Cultural Analysis: Amish Culture vs. Contemporary Urban Culture

Student's Name

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### Cultural Analysis: Amish Culture vs. Contemporary Urban Culture

For my Independent Learning Assignment on Experiencing Diversity, I chose to participate in a cultural festival hosted by the local Vietnamese community. Held on the grounds of a vibrant neighborhood park on July 1st, this festival was a celebration of Vietnamese culture, featuring traditional music, dance performances, and a variety of culinary delights. The decision to attend this event stemmed from my curiosity about the rich cultural tapestry of Southeast Asia and a desire to deepen my understanding of a community that plays an integral role in the multicultural makeup of our city.

The experience was both enlightening and, at times, slightly uncomfortable. Throughout the festival, I was immersed in a sea of unfamiliar sounds, sights, and smells. The air was filled with the melodious tones of the đàn bầu (a traditional Vietnamese instrument) and the lively chatter of families enjoying the festivities. I participated in a workshop where we learned the basics of Vietnamese calligraphy. Here, I felt a distinct sense of being an outsider, struggling to maneuver the brush with the same fluidity as those around me. This discomfort was not due to the welcoming nature of the hosts but rather a personal realization of my lack of exposure to such rich cultural practices, which initially made me feel out of place.

Reflecting on these feelings, I believe they stemmed from my own insecurities about engaging with a culture so different from my own. It was a powerful reminder of the internal work required to approach diverse experiences with an open mind. I also pondered whether my discomfort was mirrored by the participants, possibly in anticipation of how their cultural expressions would be received by someone like me—an outsider. However, as the day progressed, shared smiles and encouraging nods from my workshop peers helped ease these

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feelings, highlighting the unspoken connection that shared experiences can foster, even among strangers.

This experience significantly broadened my perspective on diversity, particularly the importance of cultural celebrations in preserving identity and fostering community solidarity. It challenged my preconceived notions and highlighted unconscious biases I held toward cultural expressions that were not my own. Prior to this, my understanding of Vietnamese culture was superficial, limited to cuisine and broad historical knowledge. Engaging directly with the community allowed me to appreciate the depth and significance of their cultural practices and the pride with which they share them.

The poem "Behind the Color Blind" by Nordette Adams, which I revisited after my experience, resonated with me on a new level. Adams' poignant words on the superficiality of claiming colorblindness in a world rife with diversity struck a chord (Adams, 2005). Initially, I interpreted the poem as a critique of ignoring racial and cultural differences under the guise of equality. However, post-experience, I perceive it as a call to embrace and celebrate these differences actively. I now agree more profoundly with Adams' perspective, recognizing that true appreciation of diversity involves engaging with and respecting cultural differences, not overlooking them.

In conclusion, this diversity experience was invaluable, serving not only as a cultural immersion but also as a catalyst for personal growth. It taught me the importance of stepping out of my comfort zone and approaching different cultures with humility and openness. Such experiences are crucial for anyone committed to personal and professional growth in an increasingly globalized world. They remind us of the richness that diverse perspectives bring to our understanding of the world and of each other. As I move forward, I am committed to seeking

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more such opportunities, continuing to challenge my biases, and promoting inclusivity within my sphere of influence.

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### Reference

Adams, N. (2005). *Behind the Color Blind (poem) by Nordette Adams*.

<https://www.writingjunkie.net/colorblindpoem.html>