

Student #2

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### **Essay: What is a Cultural Narrative?**

Since the main theme of this class is cultural narratives, it is essential to capture what my point of view is before reading and analyzing the upcoming course material. Throughout the semester, I will look back at this essay and see how my perception of both the cultural and narrative aspects changes within time. When first thinking about the definition of culture, I was surprised how hard it was for me to come to a conclusion. The word “culture” can be found over and over again in our parlance. We use it to describe other people, countries, and habits. We also identify with specific cultural aspects and feel like we belong to a certain group of people. However, it was very challenging to find an explanation for a word that is so broad. For me, culture can be described as follows. In general, I believe that culture is the behavior of different groups of people. On top of that, I am thinking about different aspects such as types of food, clothing, languages, communication, music, social norms, etc. This shows that there are a lot of different aspects, which include culture. People have different ways of living and they pass down their beliefs and morals from generation to generation. Moreover, I believe that culture unites people. To put it in other words, people have the feeling of belongingness when they share the same lifestyle, opinion, physical appearance, behavior etc.

On the contrary, my definition of a narrative is that it is a story with sequences of events which are told or written about. The interesting aspect is how the terms “culture”

and “narrative” are connected to one another. Narratives are a method of communication and that is why people use them in order to discuss and reflect on different cultures. It can therefore serve as an exchange for any kind of communication. I associate a narrative of place with putting together geographic location with cultural aspects. For instance, cultural meanings of a narrative are intertwined with specific places in literature and movies.

But why do I have this idea of culture and how did I create these definitions? I find this a really challenging question and I had a hard time answering it. Even though there are different lifestyles, everyone grows up differently, but somehow, I assume that our definition of culture is quite similar. I think that I created my personal definition by realizing that I am part of a culture and that my values, beliefs, customs, and traditions differ from others. I formed it by thinking about who I am and who I belong to as an individual that belongs to a certain group.

Furthermore, I have to admit that my definition of “culture narratives” has changed since going to Converse University in August 2021. Personally, it is not only the college experience that was new for me, but also coming to a country that I have never been to before. Furthermore, the environment here is shaped by a different culture, which made me have a new perspective on cultural aspects. Before coming here, I was scared of challenges that come with living the American culture and I thought that I would never get used to the way of living. But I was wrong. Within time, I realized that I am able to successfully adapt to a new culture and that is what makes it special. I also learned that culture never remains the same, since future generations are going to change their beliefs, opinions, and views on the world. That being said, cultures are in constant change. Another aspect I have noticed is how culture plays a major role in the lives of everyone in our society. I had basic knowledge of the existence of different cultures around the world before coming to the United States. However,

I never realized how much the culture we live in impacts our lifestyle and way of thinking.

Now, I can say that I am more aware of different cultures' individuality. For example, I know how the American culture differs from the European way of living, even though both continents belong to the western world. For example, whereas Americans put more emphasis on patriotism, Europeans rarely use the term. In America, sports like football, basketball, ice hockey, and baseball are very popular, but in Europe it is soccer, tennis, basketball, and rugby that receive a lot of attention. I have been more conscious of being part of a culture since coming to Converse and it made me experience living in a different way than I used to be the rest of my life.