Discussion Forum Assignment #3

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Subculture defines a culture that exists within a larger group of culture, while a counterculture opposes the way of life adopted by a certain section of society that is poles apart from the existing social norms. If we think about the American culture alone, both forms of segments of culture not only exist but reign side by side (King, 2009). The people living in America are so used to the American way that they do not bat an eyelash when they observe a behavior among their fellow citizens, knowing how diverse they are. This diversity is something we take for granted. However, if we are to travel outside North America and get a look at the indigenous Asian culture, we go through an astounding culture shock, and not in a good way (Schein, 2015).

We see Gloria in the *Modern Family* trying to acclimate to the American way of life while remembering how things used to be back home in Columbia time and again. We have Raj Koothrappali in the *Big Bang Theory*, who is too shy for words. Yet, his parents back home believe that he is spending his time drinking and living the high life. The Guatemalan Florencia from the *Pitch Perfect* series has a one-liner that sums up the situation perfectly, stating, “Why do Americans ever leave America?” while walking through the rain in Copenhagen, Denmark. However, the culture shock felt by Rachel Chu from *Crazy Rich Asians* is one that the people from the states can relate to as well. She gets a chance to go back home, the land that she belongs to, yet everything there is unfamiliar to her. She speaks Chinese, knows the customs and traditions of her land, yet everything is completely foreign to her. As her month said, “You may look Chinese, you may speak Chinese, but in your heart, you are not one of them.” This raises the question regarding the definition of culture itself. Is the definition defined by the culture that you grew up in or the culture you are native to?

One way to look at this would be through the dramaturgical theory. Developed by the sociologist called Erving Goffman, the concept states that life is like a never-ending play where people are like actors. We spend most of our life center stage, thus we take on queues from our surroundings and follow a narrative. We play the role assigned to us and play it well. It is this assigned role by our surrounding that decides the cultural norms we adhere to, not the ones we belong to (Edgley, 2016). Thus, a culture, given the American society, is defined by the native society as it controls the narrative of that person’s life.

# References

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