Homework

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[Name of the Institution]

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**Introduction**

In the article “Body Ritual Among the Nacirema” written by Horace Miner the main discussion is focused on how tribes function and the odd behaviors that they show. In the article Miner constantly emphasizes on how the people who are part of a tribe do strange rituals daily (Launer, 2018). When he talks about these tribes he is referring to Americans collectively. The reason why Miner chose to write in this particular manner is to prove his point that Americans indeed are ethnocentric. Most Americans look at other cultures in the light of their values and beliefs. Through this discussion ethnocentrism and the impact of culture will be pondered upon thoroughly.

**Discussion**

One of the most distinctive features of Miner's article is the way that he disguised the Nacirema as Americans. The way he hides things is quite interesting as he refers to the bathrooms as cleaning shrines. He keeps on the theme of camouflage by referring to the medicine chest as the main device which includes things like a magical potion and hog hair on a stick (basically a toothbrush). Miner's main goal behind writing this article was not to show how extreme human behavior can be, but to demonstrate how an outsider's opinion of a nation can have an impact on how a person might think of the alien culture. If a person who does not know the authentic Nacirema culture reads Miner’s article they will probably think that the people of this nation and their beliefs and values are quite bizarre.

Miner gave an in-depth forecast of the culture by talking about their rituals and beliefs and through this article he tried to project that the studies that have represented many cultures are quite narrow-minded. Lack of proper and appropriate comprehension of the foundation of any society can lead to the rise of major cultural misinterpretations (DeVita, 2015). Many anthropological approaches are included by Miner in this article; holism, symbols, behavior, culture, and material culture. The way he has described this unexplored culture is quite synchronized and projects the Nacirema mindset very well.

The psychology that is followed by the people of Nacirema is discontented. They believe the fact that the body is ugly and procedures need to be done to make it perfect. They have the concept that only the “medicine man” can beautify their appearance by poking needles in them. Nacirema believe that being in pain and unhappy is necessary that is why they let “holy-moth-men” make them go through torturous processes and the “herbalists” to give them charms and potions that will make their health better (DeVita, 2015). In short, general dissatisfaction with the body is an aspect of their daily routine.

Miner sheds light on the Nacirema culture in a manner that it does not have obvious similarities with the American culture. The way he describes the location of Nacirema, one cannot tell if it is America that Miner is talking about. As mentioned above the intricate words that he has used to describe the dentist and a doctor deviates the reader very well. The author is trying to prove a point, Miner wants Americans to read the article thinking it is not about them thus forming a low opinion about the Nacirema culture. After finding out that it was a disguised interpretation of the American culture, they will realize how they were judging themselves (Launer, 2018). Hence, Miner will be proving the fact that Americans are, in fact, ethnocentric.

**Conclusion**

In the article, Miner plays the role of an outsider and forms a judgment on Nacirema like we critic other cultures. Miner wants the readers to realize that when an anthropologist describes another culture, we can think that it is out of the ordinary, however, it is very normal. Even viewing our own culture as a stranger, there will be things that might seem extreme and out of the ordinary. Hence, there are certain values and beliefs that people all around the world follow that may seem odd. However, reflecting on those beliefs and behaviors without having an in-depth knowledge of their culture can end up in misinterpretation of the core values that those cultures might have.

**References**

Launer, J. (2018). The peculiar health beliefs of the Nacirema. *Postgraduate medical journal*, *94*(1113), 423-424.

DeVita, P. R. (2015). *Distant mirrors: America as a foreign culture*. Waveland Press.