

The anthropologist studies human dynamic and culture throughout known and unknown societies. Anthropological standpoints on culture are highly valued in the intellectual world as they provide depictive insight on “unusual” cultural norms. The “Nacirema” culture as comically depicted by anthropologist Horace Miner in *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* is a barbaric compilation of individuals who find themselves encompassing their time with ludicrous rituals to “beautify” themselves; in conjunction with ridiculous stereotypical male and female gender roles. With ideas of absurd ritual conventions and uncanny gender roles, it is prevalent that Nacirema culture is that of extreme human behavior. Consideration of this can be taken into account when studying variant factors within unknown societies.

Many a society studied by anthropologists undergo impeccable observation of ritual and social normalities; this can be supported from the study of Nacirema culture. Human culture is learned behaviour and beliefs that shape ones experience (Mcgarry 2017). The people of Nacirema partake in peculiar cultural rituals evoking the questioning of sanity within the population. Rituals include shines devoted to the aversion of the human bodies natural tendency of debility and disease, as well as obsession with mouth cleanliness (Miner 1956, 503). Organized ritual can be seen as a foreign concept to modern North American culture until further investigation. It is evident that the conceptual theories of ritual presented in the Nacirema culture are not as far off from Canadian culture as one might initially think.

In par with atypical societal norms, ideas of gender bias and principle gender roles play significant figures within Nacirema culture. Miner speaks of “medicine men” and “holy mouth men” (Miner 1956, 504) which set prevalent ideas that persons of

intellect and high class occupations tend to be men; while some women within Nacirema culture are termed “vessel maidens” of less intellectual success (affiliated with North American doctors, dentists and nurses respectively). These terms support ideas of gender bias as persons of intellect are often thought to be men without question otherwise. Men are known to be stoic and provide for their family whilst maintaining a competitive edge (McGarry 2017). While women are emotional, nurturing and passive individuals who are thought to stay home and raise offspring (McGarry 2017). Miner speaks on the competitive side of the male gender, as medicine men will not treat patients who “cannot give a rich gift” (Miner 1956, 505). Although, modern society governs that genders are equal without bias towards the women or man; Miner brilliantly brings question to these concepts and implants question of societal values in both Nacirema culture as well as modern Canadian culture.

In brief, it is seen that the oddity of the Nacirema people may not be as far from modern society as one might assume. Through study of absurd ritual participation and comical gender roles; ideas of extreme human behavior can be noted throughout. The study of anthropology can greatly influence modern societies despite their facades. As shown in *Body Ritual Among the Nacirema* individuals venture to conform to societal norms to ensure their place in society is holistic and faultless. When relating to modern Canadian society it is alarming to surmise how quickly a society can become corrupted by the obsession of self and unsettling gender bias.