

Cultural superstition essay

[Environment](#), [Animals](#)



Introduction

After all the enlightenment and modernization that has actually taken place in the modern world, the superstitious beliefs still exist in our societies. Each individual to some extent believe in these absurd superstitious beliefs.

Cultural superstition is therefore a belief in the supernatural causality (Owens-Meyerson 17). Thus, one event contributes to the cause of another event without any physical process that links the two particular events.

These events include; omens, witchcraft, astrology among others and which contradicts the natural science. For that reason, superstitious belief is the notion that an activity or a ritual can have a negative or positive impact on the events that are present in one's life. However, there is no empirical evidence which exists to support superstitious beliefs. The attempts to both define and explain the superstitious beliefs have essentially appeared throughout the western history especially in anthropology, religion, and psychology areas.

During the period of enlightenment, there was an argument by the philosophers that superstitious beliefs and religious beliefs were synonymous. Philosophers like John Trenchard in his book “ A natural history of superstition” argued that the unending religion primacy in the society was essentially a victory for superstition forces over reason forces. Therefore, during that period, any non-Christian religion was a mere superstition. In all the cultures, there are both positive and negative superstitions; positive superstitions bring good luck while negative superstitions bring bad luck. Cultural superstitious beliefs are in fact a result of the operant conditioning, which is an idea that negative and positive reinforcement dictates behavior.

Certain superstitions may be for fun while others may affect someone deeply enough to affect his or her choices in life (Owens-Meyerson 105). Therefore, it is crucial for one to determine whether believing in a particular superstition is beneficial or not in his or her life.

In my objective of knowing more about the cultural superstition, I interviewed my grandfather who believes in a number of superstitions. I realized that he believes in a number of superstitions but the one that I found more interesting was the one about cats and in particular black cats (Fiske 56). These animals in many cultures seem to play a crucial role in their superstitions. In almost all the cultures cats are associated with both positive and negative superstitions. He informed me that in our culture if a black cat crosses a car that one is driving or that carries someone, this means that something bad will happen during that journey. In addition, I learned something interesting about the same animals that they are not allowed to be present when discussing the private matters since they have a tendency of spreading gossips.

I realized that this superstition in the United States and most European countries is believed. Therefore, the superstitions centering on these black cats are the most popular and well known throughout the world. Something interesting that I learned from my grand father was that the bad or good luck that these cats possess is actually dependent on where one comes from. For in stance, a black cat crossing your path is essentially considered as good luck in Japan and Britain (O'Mara 90) . The origin of this superstition is Ancient Egypt where I learned from my grandfather that Christians believed that black cats were disguise of demons and when it crossed some ones path

it was believed to create evil barrier. Therefore, this superstition emerged during the ancient times and has continued to dominate in the modern society where people still believe in these superstitions about a black cat. I learned that there are numerous superstitions which are associated with cats. May be the main reason for this is partly due to the fact that these animals have lived alongside human beings for many millennia (Crocker 47). As mentioned, these animals are associated with both positive and negative superstitions. For instance, in Egypt a cat was worshipped and killing one was in fact considered to be a capital crime. However, by the 17th century this animal began to be associated with bad things like witchcraft hence its luck turned from good luck to bad luck (Fiske 109).

There are various incidences in the earlier times where the superstition about a black cat was used. For instance, the 19th century Pirates believed that this cat would bring various kinds of luck (Crocker 47). It was believed that if this cat walked towards someone, that person would experience bad luck. On the other hand, if a black cat walked away from someone, that person was believed to experience good luck. Thus, this shows the various superstitions associated with a cat.

In my opinion, I view this superstition as explained to me by my grand father as something that is detrimental. I believe that those cats that are black are neither lucky nor unlucky. Thus, a cat of any color in this world is just a cat hence cannot influence someone's fortune unless someone believe it can. However, these superstitions exist even in this modernization era. May be they are associated with evil due to their mysterious and dark appearance. I consider this as harmful and there is no any need for one to believe in them.

Sadly, there are some reports that people act wickedly towards these animals which in my opinion is not good at all. Often these people give feeble excuses that are based on this superstition. To me this is wickedness hence its something that is detrimental. There is no any need of believing in them as various people even loser their lives through road accidents as a result of believing in the negative superstitions about a black cat.

Based on the above argument, I do not believe this superstition. The reason why I do not believe it is because believing in it only brings bad omen to those who believe in it. In addition, my religion does not believe in them as it believes in the existence of the creator of the earth. Furthermore, the superstition is closely related to the witches that I personally hate. With modernization and enlightenment, I think that we should not believe in superstitions since they prevent us from believing in ourselves since when one is about to do something and a black cat crosses that person will fail to do what he or she was doing due to this superstition.

In this belief there is faulty logic. The fallacious reasoning that allows people to believe in this superstition is the assumption that what the superstition is claiming is true because there is no one who have proved it false or cannot essentially be proven as false. In simple terms this is an informal fallacy by the name argumentum ad ignorantiam or simply appeal to ignorance.

Works cited

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