

Culture affects the relationships of the main characters in 'country lovers' and ...

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Culture in my opinion is a part of every ones lives; it affects the way in which a group of people behave to one another. All Cultures have certain traditions, rules and regulations; all of this is a part of what is called a Custom. Cultures can dictate the way one leads their life. In some cultures when you reach a particular age you are able to get married for example in Countries like in India and the Middle East when a young girl becomes a mature age she has a choice if she wants to get married, a lot of the time they have an arranged marriage, this is when the parents choose a partner for them, However quite often they are forced to marry some one who their parents have chosen, this is called a forced marriage.

Culture can be described in many ways, One can tell what culture or religion an individual belongs to by the way they dress, the language they speak, the different ceremonies that they celebrate how they lead their life, the religion that they follow, the food they eat and many more. There are many things that culture contains that moulds a group of people in to who they are and their way of life. Religion, traditional values and customs are all aspects of culture.

Some times different cultures can clash because people from one culture might not understand or respect another culture , this lack of understanding of each others culture can cause huge problems in society and eventually segregation between the two cultures emerge and can turn into Racism. A lot of the time cultures change because of problems that they are faced with in society , this can effect their way of life so must find a way to get around these problems. For example a lot of first generation Asian people who live in Britain may find it hard to mix in with other people because there are many <https://assignbuster.com/culture-affects-the-relationships-of-the-main-characters-in-country-lovers-and-veronica-essay-sample/>

differences between the two like the language barrier or they might have different beliefs that not every one understands, the solution to the problem is that they need to learn about one another and respect what they believe in and their way of life, most importantly to create mutual understanding and respect for each other's beliefs and way of life.

In my opinion culture can influence many aspects of life. Even when living in a diverse country it can be seen that cultures can mix in together very well because of the way people integrate, like the diverse words from different languages are used by different people.

This leads on to the story 'country lovers' which demonstrates how culture affects the lives of a group of people and individuals. In the story Country lovers the setting is situated in South Africa where there is an apartheid, meaning that a certain degree of segregation is put in place, where by the black people are not allowed to integrate with the white people - who are in control of South Africa. The black people live in one place- in the story known as the 'Karal' and the white people in another. The apartheid meant that the black people were not allowed to get married to white people and that they could not have a relationship. In the story we learn that the children do actually mix in together but as soon as the white children grow up and go to school they stop playing together. For example in the text it says: "The farm children play together when they are small; but once the white children go away to school they soon don't play together any more."

In the country lovers the main characters are: Paulus -a white boy and Thebedi -a black girl . Thebedi and Paulus as young children are good

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friends, they have so much fun together as they spend their time playing games and having fun. Time goes by and they both are grown up, Paulus goes to boarding school and Thebedi stays at the Karaal. When Paulus comes back from boarding school, he would give her presents in secret and both of them would wonder off far beyond the Kraal to spend time together. As they grow up they spend more time together but no one knows of their relationship, soon Thebedi and Paulus are in love and meet each other more frequently. Paulus and Thebedi make love, this carries on more and more. It was until one day, Paulus leaves the farm for good to go to College, at the same time Thebedi thinks that she is pregnant and will have a baby but is silent about it.

Then when Paulus comes back and hears that Thebedi had a baby, he goes to visit Thebedi in desperation, to see if the rumors are true. He visits her in Najobos hut because she got married to him when Paulus was away. He sees the baby and feels so ashamed and tells her not to show the baby to any one. Paulus knew that he could not let any one know about the baby and finally decided to poison it; the baby died the next day, Najubo is surprised of the baby's death. They bury the baby on the same day, but soon after the police get involved, wanting to know exactly how it died they examine the body and find that it is poisoned; they question Paulus who is accused of killing the child. In the end the jury rules out that he is not guilty because there is no evidence that he poisoned the baby.

The story 'Veronica' is about a young girl called Veronica who grows up in a small poor village she experiences a lot of hardship through her life and

Okeke is friend that lives. The main characters are Okeke- the narrator and Veronica.

The story starts off in a small poverty stricken village where Okeke and Veronica grow up. Okeke the narrator describes how Veronica has most of the responsibilities of bringing up the family on her shoulders, in the first paragraph we learn that she leads a very sad and upsetting life as it says that her mother is weak and her father abuses and beats Veronica night after night. Veronica devotes her life towards her family so much that she refuses her chance of an education because she feels that it is her destiny to stay in the hut and look after her siblings. Okeke and Veronica are grown up now and when they have time they would spend time together and she would ask him intelligent questions and what he wants to be when he grows up. Then one day Okeke has to go away from the village in to the town because he gets a scholar ship which allows him to go the university, before he leaves the village they meet by the river side and gives her the address of his new home in the town.

Okeke goes away for a very long time and when his parents were moving in with him he would ask his mother about Veronica and if any thing in the village has changed. Veronica has a family of her own now. She has a husband and a baby boy. One day okeke goes back to the village for his work because he is a doctor and meets Veronica with joy, he would see her every day and sometimes her husband, and before okeke leaves the village he gives veronica some money as a present. A war brakes out after okeke returns to the town and he loses contact with veronica because she is in the

war zone. Three years later it was safe to visit the village again, when he got there he saw all the destruction and found Veronica in her hut, she was lying on the floor and was weak and told Okeke that she didn't want to live any more, her family are all dead and before he could do anything she died. The next day he buried her by the river side.

Like Okeke and Veronica are the main characters in 'Veronica', The main characters in 'Country Lovers' are Paulus Eysendyk a white boy who lives on a farm and Thebedi a black girl, Paulus from the 'Country Lovers' is a close friend to Thebedi. He shows that he doesn't care about the segregation and doesn't take the apartheid seriously. Paulus shows that he cares for Thebedi because he gives presents to her for example in the text it says: "the first Christmas holidays after he had gone to boarding school he brought home for Thebedi a painted box he had made in his wood work class." Another example where Paulus gives Thebedi a present is when he is fifteen and comes back to the farm.

for the holidays: "he brought home from a shop in town a red plastic belt and guilt hoop ear-rings for the black girl, Thebedi." This shows that he is generous because he gives Thebedi presents and despite what happens at school he still manages to bring home a

present for Thebedi. I think after when Thebedi and Paulus make love, Paulus is always ordering her where they should meet next to have sex. This shows that he is also dominant and that he is very authoritative because he orders her where to meet next and she cannot really say anything to that. Thebedi's character is different she asks Paulus questions about school and she listens

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to what he has to say. I think that she is modest in the way that she dresses, in the text it says: " her dress bunched up modestly tucked into her pants." This tells us that the way she dresses is modest and isn't very revealing. I think that she is quite helpful because she sometimes helps out in the farm house but she is not very chaste because she doesn't care about when they first make love and she doesn't say any thing about when they keep on doing it, this shows that she doesn't mind what is happening between them and doesn't really want to stop meeting Paulus , when they are at the river side they are sitting down together under a tree on a hot summers day and they have something emotional going on between them: " he could see in her dark face that was part of the shade , with her big dark eyes shiny as soft water , watching him attentively." This shows that she isn't very chaste not dutiful.

Veronica's character differs from Thebedi's character because veronica is much more hard working and is more mature and responsible than Thebedi, veronica plays an important role in her family and adapts a very grown up attitude because she is the responsible one. Veronica shows that she has an interest in the outside world and is always asking okeke questions about school and what he wants to be when he grows up.

She is also unselfish and cares about her family. I think that Veronica isn't very optimistic and believes that there is no way out.

The difference between Veronica and Thebedi is that Thebedi is more open and she isn't oppressed, where as Veronica is oppressed although she had a chance of education she refuse it and prioritized her responsibility. Veronica

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resigns to her fate showing that there is nothing else in life that could help her to get out of her misery.

Okeke who is the narrator of the story 'Veronica' is caring and helpful, unselfish, generous and persistent in telling Veronica to do something with her life. I think that he is helpful and caring because in the text Okeke says that he would sometimes help out with her chaws for example: " I helped her fetch water from the stream and occasionally chopped firewood, but that was all." This shows that he tries to help her when he could. He is also generous and always tries to help, he says: " on the day I left I had to force her to accept a present of some money. It was as much as I could afford, but not as much as I would have liked to have been able to give." I think that he is a caring character towards Veronica as he tries to do whatever he has in his power to help Veronica out, but despite all his efforts, it's just not enough although he wishes he could give more.

Okeke and Paulus have different characters because Paulus is more compassionate and brave because he doesn't really care about the apartheid and is fully driven by his love for Thebedi, whereas Okeke is caring but more concerned about Veronica.

The relationship between Paulus and Thebedi is a compassionate and loving one at first, in the story we get an idea that they've known each other always and they are very friendly with each other, we also get the idea that they are very close to each other because the text describes the natural surroundings and that it's only Paulus and Thebedi together walking around.

As they grow up they spend more time with each other when they could

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although they both know they aren't supposed to. Paulus shows to Thebedi they have a special relationship and bond because he secretly gives her presents with out

any one knowing , this is because there are other children where Thebedi lives so it would look suspicious if he gives her a present for her and not every one else. They eventually fall in love and experience something which both of them have never experienced before in their relationship, for example: " the school girls he went swimming with at dams or pools on neighboring farms wore bikinies but the sight of their bellies and thighs in sunlight had never made him fell what he felt now, when the girl (Thebedi) came up the bank and sat beside him, the drops of water beading off her dark legs the only point of light in the earth- smelling , deep shade." This tells us that the environment that they are in is natural, bright and sunny. We can also tell that there is something going on between them and that they are having stronger emotions.

I think that the way Thebedi is described is explicit and shows that her appearance is natural and beautiful. Another example shows what they experienced: " he did what he had done that time in the store room at the wedding, and this time it was lovely he was surprised by it And she was surprised too." this tells us that they make love for the first time and that both of them are surprised by how wonderful it is. After the first time they make love their relation ship alters and becomes a sexual relation ship instead of just being emotional. When their relationship becomes sexual they stop talking to each other and he would tell her where that will meet next to

have sex. Here we see that Paulus is dominant over Thebedi because he orders her where they would meet next.

Soon after they keep on having sex Thebedi becomes pregnant but doesn't tell Paulus. I think that their relationship weakens because before it was about what they both felt inside but then it just fades away and becomes all about sex.

The relationship between Okeke and Veronica is different, they are friends and even though they've grown up together they don't have sex or show love in their relationship. They have a plutonic relationship meaning that there is no sex involved. I think that their relationship is purely friendship. I think their relationship is strong because they both talk to each other and Okeke helps her out with her chaws.

Towards the end of the story after he visits the village many times he asks about her how her husband is like and if he is good to her.

Okeke shows many times that he cares for Veronica although in the text it doesn't really say what Veronica feels about him. Okeke is the narrator of the story and always says it from his perspective; Veronica is more passive because it doesn't say how she feels.

Okeke shows that he is concerned about Veronica and her future and what's going to happen to her for example in the text Okeke and Veronica are having a conversation: “‘ what about you?’ I asked”.

" Me!" she replied. This shows that Okeke is interested to know what she's going to do with her life.

The main differences between Paulus and Thebedi's relationship and Okeke and Veronica's relationship is that Paulus and Thebedi have a deeper caring for each other and love each other at one time but their love for each other fades away when Thebedi

Becomes pregnant, their relationship at first is purely friendship and love then it changes into a sexual relationship and this is the point where their relationship becomes weaker.

Okeke and Veronica have a plutonic relationship, Okeke shows that he cares about Veronica and her future and is always thinking about her and eventually goes back to the village whenever he could to see how she is.

In both stories we see how the aspect of culture affects the main characters and their lives. In Paulus and Thebedi's relationship the apartheid deprives them of having an open relationship and at the time black people were not allowed to marry with white people or even have sex with them, this was apart of the culture in South Africa. I think if the apartheid was not implemented and if black and white people could mix together, then they would have got married and been open about their relationship, but because the apartheid meant they couldn't mix together they had to keep their relationship a secret. I think that Paulus wouldn't have had to kill the baby if the apartheid wasn't there; he poisoned the baby because he didn't want

any one to know that Thebedi had a relationship with him, he knew he would have bought shame upon his family.

Culture affected their relationship because they both knew about their culture and that the Apartheid was the root cause of their secret relationship. I think because their relationship transformed into an intimate one, they both decided it was acceptable so long as no one knows.

Unlike ' the country lovers' the aspect of culture that affects Veronica's and Okeke's relationship is that Veronica has to look after the family has a responsibility over them. She could have got an education to then lead a better life, she has no hope and thinks that it's her fate to stay at home and look after the family. The culture affected their relationship because if veronica wasn't beaten and ill treated at home and if she had an education then Okeke wouldn't have had to be concerned about her future. I think in the culture , the women have the responsibility to In the ' Veronica' it shows that the village where they live is very poor and the people live in small huts, this suggests that the way she is living causes her to believe that this is her fate and no one can do any thing about it.

Reading through both of the stories, one can say that culture is a big aspect of life and the main characters in both stories are affected by it. This shows that what ever culture an individual comes from, it influences the way they act and the way they are towards each other. This can be found in both of the stories because we learn in ' the country lovers' that due to the strict laws being implemented it causes Paulus and Thebedi to have a secret relationship and in ' Veronica ' culture effects her because she feels its her

duty to look after her family, this makes her think that it is her only way forward and its her ultimate destiny.