

# Free essay on western civilization breeds intolerance

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There have been many emergences of intense intolerance in the twentieth century. The most infamous of these being the atrocities of Nazi Germany, where the aim was to eradicate a group of people for thinking differently. Trying to explain these occurrences, one may take into account the fact that people are inherently different. Nothing can collect humans as a whole, even though there is a tendency to believe that they may be grouped. To fill this void, Western civilization has developed a discriminative and superior core, seen in many of its cultural expressions. These cultural coordinates lead to intolerance both of the self and of others. Western civilization breeds intolerance through the rejection of human uniqueness and of the structure of language, causing the rejection of individual differences.

Culture asserts that everyone is different. From children to adults, humans are taught that they are unique and that this makes them special. " At bottom every man knows well enough that he is a unique being, only once on this earth." (Nietzsche). Nevertheless, language allows for the categorization of humans into different groups through the recognition of certain similarities. While people are not exactly the same, language can associate the aspects that they do share, such as ethnicity, sex, stature and even hair color. One of the most visible differences is that between men and women, whose anatomical differences are reinforced by dissimilar cultural standards for both men and women. Furthermore, differences in sexual tastes are also prominent, in not only sexual orientation, as this may also be categorized, but also one may say that the satisfaction that one experiences during sexual activities is unique.

Even though nothing can universalize human experience, there is a tendency

to believe that there is some sort of essential human nature. The structure of language allows a paradoxical set to be formed: how can it be that everyone is different? “ Always remember that you are absolutely unique. Just like everyone else” (Hudson 117). Since Parmenides, Western civilization has had an ontological tradition, which has developed to the point where the essence is something almost material. This contradicts the essential void that was proposed earlier: human nature, as something that would unite humankind, a trait that all of its members would share, does not exist. However, because of these cultural parameters, there is a constant tendency to invent it.

In contemporary times, the unruly body is the site for a masochistic essence that culminates in corporal punishment. The aim of modern science is to study only perceivable phenomena. As a consequence, the study of humans has boiled down to their body and its behavior. This is especially notorious in the reduction of psychology, which etymologically means the study of the soul, to the science of human behavior. In addition, it looks to eradicate differences, seeking the normal human, which would work like a machine; this is never found. This joins another cultural parameter: the supposed presence of a supreme being that is intolerant and hateful, most notoriously seen in the God of Judeo-Christian tradition. All throughout the Bible, particularly in “ Leviticus”, one sees many rules set down that his followers must obey. “ You shall have no other gods before me” (King James Bible, Ex. 20. 3) and many other passages show that the exclusive nature of the submission that He requires, rejecting others. Furthermore, one may see the punishments that succeed if one does not follow these intolerant laws. This strictness and carnality reach their epitome in the appearance of Jesus

Christ, his son who must suffer corporally and even die for love. As these elements are in the culture, they affect people the people immersed in it, even if they do not practice these religions. Therefore, one may notice a rise in methods of corporal punishment and the need for the body to suffer during love in the past centuries.

All of these cultural elements lead to the expression of intolerance both of the self and of others, which is reflected on the emergence of authoritative figures. Modern science and religion look to eradicated differences, promulgating unachievable and almost mechanical ideals. This lead to an intolerance both of others, as they are radically different because everyone is unique, and even of the self, since to err is part of man; nevertheless, the cultural impulse is for these alterations to be inadmissible. The body is not tolerated either, for reason does not allow its full apprehension, leading people to harm their bodies. Thus, authoritative intolerant figures have ascended and people allow their rule, as it reflects the intolerance that is at the heart of society.

As one can see, there is a direct influence of Western civilization on the explosion of intolerance that occurred in the twentieth century. The tendency for everybody to believe that he or she is unique contrasts with language's impulse to categorize. The essential void that inhabits humans does not allow for a grouping of them through language into something that would become human nature. However, the influence of ontology leads people to believe that there should be something that characterizes humans as unique. The influence of modern science and Judeo-Christian tradition sustains the intolerance of differences that characterizes what fills this void

in contemporary society, leading to a purism that does not attack errors but the people that err. Therefore, if humankind is looking to stop these authoritative manifestations, it has to first recognize the problems that it holds, and reform itself from the inside.

## **Works Cited**

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- Nothing can collect them, even though there is a tendency to believe that something can
- Language as categorization
- Essential void vs. ontology
- Human nature does not exist and must be invented
- Western civilization holds an intolerant and hateful core
- Modern science and the human body
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- Corporal punishment
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