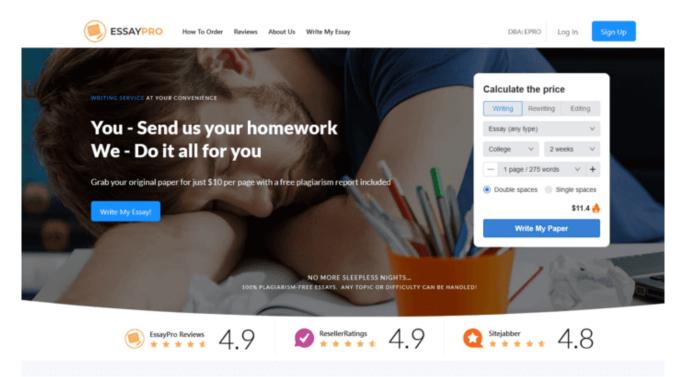
## Mirror for Man: Actions and Thoughts Follow Culture



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In a world where everyone has experienced "the same poignant life experiences, such as birth, helplessness, illness, old age, and death," it is incredible to think of the number of ways that peoples can go through these events in life. It is most common that their attitudes and responses are influenced by their environment and society. As <a href="Clyde">Clyde</a> Kluckhohn had explained in "Mirror for Man", the best explanation for any human action is the "concept of <a href="culture">culture</a>." One cannot clearly define this idea, but through the comparison of two different groups of people hopefully one can better understand the meaning of culture. By comparing Vietnam and the United States, two very contrasting nations, one can see the force behind the concept of culture in shaping people's lives.

In terms of education, the similarities between the two countries are few. Both aim at improving their people's lives, and yet the method in which this is achieved differs greatly. Vietnam, a small country with a large population, has to make do with the lack of technology. It stresses hard work rather than the use of machines. Children are encouraged to do math mentally rather than depend on calculators. As a result, the Vietnamese people do not consider it a sacrifice that they should lead a hard life. Also, their education emphasizes morality rather than independent thinking. Therefore, most Vietnamese children would never think of leaving their families before marriage, unlike the

Americans, who would leave for college right after high school or move out of their parents' house to live with friends. The Americans would also prefer to make their lives as easy as possible, which means that rather than adding mentally, they would turn to an adding machine or a computer. Their two ways of thinking differ as a result of different education methods.

One can also see how culture causes people to be different in their dress styles. In Vietnam, it is acceptable to wear clothes similar to pyjamas out in the street. Yet in America, one cannot do this. One has to dress properly, which means that pyjamas is worn at night and to bed only. However, it is incomprehensible to the Vietnamese why the Americans have to dress so well to go to sleep, why they have to wear nightgowns or pyjamas with fancy designs. They do not understand why it is important to put on a robe when one eats breakfast.

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