Topic:

Compare and contrast popular culture in China and UK

Culture is an important part of a country. It is often considered that differen t countries have different culture. China, the most populous country, has the oldest successive culture in the world. UK, the earliest industrialized country, had the most modern culture in the history. However, their popular culture as much as their old culture, and probably more, is extremely diverse and richly complex. This essay will focus on the similarities and differences between British popular culture and Chinese popular culture. For this purpose, it will provide three parts, including the religion, food and lifestyle,

According to Denis McQuail (2005:5), the word 'culture' refers "to ideas, beliefs, identity, symbolic expressions of all kinds, including language, art, information and entertainment, plus customs and rituals ." Thus, the popular culture can be defined as the majority of people's thoughts. From the definition of 'popular culture', it is clear to see the similarity between China and UK. They two can reflect most people's minds, draw people's attention and entertain. Therefore, popular culture is a link between people, which can feedback the real minds people thought.

However, due to the different social system, China and UK have different popular culture. It can be seen in every field.

Firstly, it must point out the different religions between China and UK. The Chinese principle known to the world is that of the story of Nvwa (a famous female who created the human). Buddhism was then introduced from India. So it is very common that the Chinese believe in Taoism and Buddhism. For this reason, there are many temples in China; people always go to the temple to pray. As opposition to this, in western culture, the main religion is Christianity. In the UK, churches can been found everywhere. A well-known example of this culture phenomenon is wedding. In the UK, the wedding always has been held in the church, and a churchman will oversee the ceremony. However, more and more Chinese people wear the white wedding veils, and they will hold the ceremony in a big hotel, not in the church, because most of them believe in Buddhism.

Secondly, food is very different in these two countries. According to Johnson, Nathan, and Rawski (1985), popular culture means "the aspects of culture that are shared widely by different groups within a large society." With this definition, songs, foods, stories, and the like, all c an be a part of popular culture. (Wu Dingbo and Patrick D, Murphy, 1994:35) Hence, "popular culture" can have many forms, and it is hard to separate, particularly with regard to food. This is not the same to the people living in western areas, Chinese are used to having their dinners together with all the family members, and each person will use a pair of chopsticks, while, the British people are likely to use a knife and fork. The food people eat in these two countries is also very different. Chinese diet may be the most nutritious diet in the world. The Chinese will have many dishes during dinner, including vegetables and meat, like potatoes,

tomatoes, mushrooms, chicken, pork, and fish. The main food in China can be divided into 2 parts. The people living in Southern China will have rice, congee or rice noodle as their main food, and people in Northern China will have wheat made products like pancakes and noodles. There is a special habit in the meal: Chinese always have soup during or after dining. By contrast, in the UK, people often have soup before the main food. In addition, the British people often eat cheese (Caerphilly, Cheddar, Double Gloucester, Red Leicester, and Stilton), cereals, vegetables, salads, pies, eggs, meat, and with beer or red wine. (British Culture---Food, website) It is common to find Chinese restaurants in the UK and English foods in China. However they may change some of the tastes, much closer to the local taste.

Thirdly, the most obvious difference is the diversity of Chinese and British lifestyles, which means the way they relax, work, and study. The contemporary popular culture is always including the media, music, arts, shopping, travelling, chatting, sports, and DIY, etc. The distinction in these two countries is quite large. In the mid 1980s, theatre attendance began to drop off in China, because television first became commonplace in Chinese households. As time has gone on, people had fewer and fewer cause to buy tickets and go to live theatre performances. Now, cable and satellite TV, followed by VCDs, DVDs, and the Internet, have brought huge changes in Chinese people's lifestyles. (China Today, Nov.2005)In China, most people watch TV at home with their family, use Internet for chatting, playing games, downloading the music and films. They are always at home. However, in the UK, pubs and football are the most important things for British people, especially men. The majority of British

people have their familiar pub (the 'familiar' pub is referred to as the 'local')
and their adoring football team. In the pub, British people talk with their friends,
or watch the football matches on TV, while in Chinese pubs, people mainly
drink a lot with noisy music. (Christopher, David, 1999:131) Another interesting
phenomenon is the choices of travelling. Chinese people always choose the
modern cities to visit, but British people often go to the countryside for
travelling. However, the popular music is very similar in these two countries,
with the result of culture globalization. For example, in China, people,
especially the youths, like the British music, like Westlife, Backstreet boy s. In
the UK, many Chinese singers can been found on BBC websites, such as
Xiangxiang, Cui Jian, etc.

To conclude, it is clear that there are many differences between Chinese
popular culture and British popular culture, though they have some similarities.
It must be pointed out that with the development of globalization, the
divergence of these two cultures will be reduced and might be more alike in
the future.

(Words: 986)

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