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Brownness

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Brownness

By: Ariana Bucio

I have never felt more Brown than being in Humboldt. Growing up around Brown faces gave me the confidence I wear every day to help me survive. I have never been more racialized in my life than when I moved here 3 years ago. Even in spaces curated for BIPOC, I have been met with infiltrators who feel intimidated by the way I wear my Brownness. Si soy timida, soy amargada. Si hablo de mas, soy creida. When I show up in spaces, my Brownness adorned with joy as and colorful textures, I am told I should do less. For me, to be Brown means to constantly be criticized on how I live in my Brownness. In the eyes of the colonial empire, my role as a Brown Chicana woman is to live submissively- to give myself entirely to the comfort and convenience of others. And every day I fight against what is expected of me. Being Brown in Humboldt has turned me more into a fighter than I've ever been. It's part of my weekly routine now to hear my mother say "Nomas andas de peleonera" over the phone.

I can't recall every racist incident I've had because I am hyper aware of my Brownness now more than ever. No microaggression, weird stares, or performative behavior goes unnoticed. An incident I specifically recall that foreshadowed my overall experience in Humboldt was when my friends and I were assaulted at a Halloween party my sophomore year of college. After a quick interaction for what lasted about 5 seconds, a white girl began to beat on me and my Black and Brown friends. In what felt like pent-up rage from every racist I have encountered, I blacked out. No one protected us. I remember looking around the room seeing white faces staring back feeling so scared, angry, and alone. I remember a girl blowing a whistle at us while white fists lunged at us- asking US to stop. Blowing a whistle as if we were animals to be tamed. It felt so dehumanizing. As we ran out scared, every Black and Brown person that has lost their lives due to white woman tears ran through my brain. We ran home and I heard the boos of the white party-goers echoed

by police sirens, who could give less of a fuck that they just witnessed a group of Black and Brown people get assaulted for absolutely no reason. That was the first time I had ever gotten into a physical altercation.

Madre Naturaleza has given me the blueprint and the tools to heal from this situation. It is through our shared marginalization under white supremacist capitalist-colonialism that she inspires my everyday resistance. It is the way she lives in her Brownness that inspires me to live in mine through community, love, activism, solidarity work, and cultura. I will continue to proudly wear my Brownness as a reflection of all the powerful Brown matriarchs before me. I will continue to use my Brownness as a bridge to empathize and connect over shared experiences. It is my Brownness through which I perceive the world, and it is what moves me everyday. It is mi identidad como mujer y Chicana en que lucho por seguir adelante. I will continue to experience my happiness and rage Brownly.

Inspo:

Brown skin
Piel canela
Never been
More aware of
Esta piel
than being
in Humboldt

Safe spaces
In ethnic places
Not always
the case