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Race And Me

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Race and Me

Mia Haro

I am privileged to be half white in America and that part of my “ethnic” half is Asian because, I am relatively accepted in today’s society. I am privileged that my Korean side is light-skinned. My life would be completely different if I looked more Mexican than Korean and I am the same percentage of both. But I don’t “look Mexican,” or should I say, I don’t look like what people assume Mexican people look like.

My life would be different if my Korean side was dark-skinned. I am privileged because the ethnic side that people do see is Asian, which is the “good” kind of ethnic to be in America. Even better, I am East Asian, which is thought to be better than Southern Asian, because of our lighter skin tone. Being Asian has “positive stereotypes” – if that is even possible. Smart, good at math, high achiever. I’m actually terrible at math.

Asians are seen as the “good ethnicity” because, I think, they have most successfully assimilated to American culture. They are hard workers who have made enough money to be accepted into the middle class that is typically white. But this doesn’t compare to the stereotypes attached to Mexican people: lazy, criminals, and rapists.

These could have been the stereotypes of me if I looked more Mexican. These are the kinds of stereotypes that ruin lives and limit opportunities in life. Things shouldn’t be this way, but they are, and we all have to do our best despite the stereotypes. We have to prove those stereotypes wrong every single day. I am privileged to look the way I do, but I can only imagine what my life would be like if I didn’t.

REFLECTION

I really enjoyed the daily freewrites during class. I used to be pretty good at writing when I was younger but then I stopped during middle school. I think the freewrites have helped me begin writing again, which is really exciting for me. I am a perfectionist so if I am afraid that something isn't going to turn out well, I don't even want to start it. I think this expectation has something to do with why I hadn't taken up writing again until this class. I didn't want to start writing again because I didn't know what to write about and I didn't think what I wrote would be good enough. This class has helped me with both of those issues.

I am grateful for the thoughtful prompts because I don't think I would have come up with those ideas on my own. The prompts got me writing about things I don't think I would have written about otherwise. I didn't like everything I wrote during this class but at least it got me writing. This class has helped me realize that I'm not a terrible writer and that I just need to practice. Writing in class felt like writing in a journal, where I was able to write whatever I wanted without the fear of it being read if I didn't want it to be. I even wrote about some things that I've only told a few people in my life about and it felt good to get those thoughts down on paper, somehow it felt more real after writing it down.

Freewrites were a great opportunity for me to put words to all the ideas I have in my head and I'm sure I will continue to write more often after this class. I'm sure I am not the only one who feels this way in the class and I think the freewrites are a great opportunity for everyone to discover, or rediscover, that they can write.