

Student

Professor Kuhn

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Try to Look Twice

There is intense separation of culture in certain parts of the world, but in America there is an immense amount of diversity. Although there has been an attempt to create an atmosphere where differences are celebrated, many individuals pay attention to the stereotypes of cultures or races. There is not a single group of people that does not suffer from quick conclusions, but groups do not commonly share the same difficulties. Latino is a broad term to categorize the cultures from Latin America. Many of the cultures are different; however, less knowledgeable people believe the cultural groups are all extremely similar. Latinos suffer from negative stereotypes that rob them from potential jobs, education and pleasant experiences.

At times there is difficulty identifying why a person is receiving different treatment; however, after some time people can realize the reason behind their treatment. Anna Raya writes in her essay, "The fact that she spoke spanish was constantly used against her; it prevented her from getting good jobs," (Raya 122). Although Raya does not speak about her mother's appearance, she does state that "I [she] don't even look Latina." (Raya 122). This is probably why Raya does not say her mother's appearance limited her from getting "good jobs," but instead she says her speaking spanish limited her. Any characteristic suggesting Latin American culture turns off people because of the negative stereotype it carries. People underestimate individuals not because they can speak a second language, but because their second language

belongs to a group of people with stories of “fleecing the healthcare system, sneaking across the border, [and] being arrested at the border,” (Adichie 8:21).

Those negative connotations are tagged with Latin Americans and there is some truth to those statements, but it is unfair to apply those truths to only and all Latinos. Takaki write his essay about how asians suffer from being the “model minority.” In his essay he writes, “while thousands of Vietnamese American young people attend universities, other are on the streets,” (Takaki 124). Although Asian have a somewhat positive stereotype, Takaki argues against the fact that the stereotype applies to all Asians because there are motivated and unmotivated people everywhere. Just as Asians can join gangs, Latinos can be honest members of communities, pursue higher education, and want better for themselves and family. Latin Americans are just like any other culture in the sense that they want what is best for themselves; even so, individuals still limit Latinos because of their negative stereotype.

Some Latinos who do pursue higher education become confronted by several issues. Raya speaks from experience when she says, “now I feel pushed into a corner, always defining, defending, and proving myself to classmates, professors or employers,” (Raya 123). The pressure is immense even for Latinos who try to improve their lives. They are robbed from experiencing College for what it is supposed to be, a place to expand knowledge and acquire a profession. Instead of only being pressure by the copious amounts of work, Raya is pressured to prove she is meant to be where she is because of her race and cultural. The pressure can sprout from her Latina name, her admittance to being Latina, or the mere fact that people do not believe she is Latina. Raya writes that she “can’t count how many times people have just assumed that I’m

[she's] white or asked me [her] if I'm Asian," (Raya 122). Raya does not specify this happened when she was in college, but her aspirations are enough for individuals to not believe she could be a "wetback." This is possible because people find it difficult to believe that a Latina could appear so clean or that her personality is not that of a trouble maker. Her looks also do not follow the pattern of dark skin straight black hair most Latinos are expected to have. Constantly being questioned pressures a person because they realize people do not fully believe in them just because of their skin color, or nationality. People place their blind faith into individuals based off their stereotype or they expect failure based off their stereotype.

It is in human nature to survive, but in a world where survival is normal, human nature turns to selfishness. People are constantly trying to justify their selfishness because individuals also care immensely about their image. This is important to understand because people justify their limitations on Latinos due to their fear of them being dangerous individuals or their fear of turning their back on America by breaking the law. Offering opportunities to Latinos potentially put employers at risk because the stereotype of all Latinos being immigrants. Employers justify their discrimination against Latinos because they do not want to support immigrants. Immigrants in America are frowned upon because they are said to be abusers of the country; when in fact, immigrants break the law to come into America so they may offer their family a better: life. Adichie discusses how " immigration became synonymous with Mexicans," (Adichie 8:21). The problem with this is because Americans settled near borders of Latin America are weary of hiring Latinos due to this synonym created by extensive media coverage. Although some may be immigrants, people need to realize that not only Latinos are immigrants.

In Takaki's essay he incorporates a quote from a Chinese immigrant, "Most immigrants coming into China town with a language barrier cannot go outside this confined area into the mainstream of American industry," (Takaki 125). Immigrants do not equal Latin Americans because Takaki even admits that there are clusters of Chinese immigrants settling in America, so Latinos are not the only race seeking a new home in the United States. This is extremely important because many Americans complain of Latinos taking valuable jobs away from Americans; however, American citizens should not magnify in on Latin Americans stealing occupations because Latinos are obtaining jobs certain Americans do not want and they are obtaining them against all odds of discrimination.

Latin Americans are not the only race that suffers from stereotypes. All races and cultures are affected by the ideas permanently molded into the majority of persons minds. Takaki asked a question about his race's stereotype, "But are they as successful as claimed? And for whom are they supposed to be a model?" (Takaki 124). It is not about the questions he asked, but the idea of questioning something. People should not just accept an idea or stereotype because the majority of people believe it. Latin Americans are discriminated and struggle everyday just as many other races do. Individuals should not question other people, but they should question their beliefs that do not have a factual foundation.

Works Cited

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