

My Understanding of Multiculturalism

Modern society has become one of many different changes. We have different cultures, races and different feelings of these cultures. People from different countries have become citizens of our country, the United States. I am certain our government has made the process of becoming a citizen a rewarding one. I believe in our country and I believe that other cultures can be part of our country, for example, Indians, Mexican-Americans, Chinese, Japanese; just to name a few. Still others do not share my opinion and will dictate, write, and/or share their points of view.

In "Sleeping with the Dictionary", Harryett Mullen feels that California does not believe or allow the bilingual language in schools or for voting. I am sure this is not the case. There are many cultures in California. The Hispanic or Mexican-American can be greatly found in California and hold different jobs, high quality jobs, not just garbage workers or grass cutters as quoted by Ms. Mullen "...*Californians say Yes to bilingual instructions on curbside waste receptacles*". (Lines 5-6). I interpret this to mean that California does not welcome bilingual recipients into their government which I believe to be a false statement.

Of course, we can look at things in another way. People of other cultures, Hispanic or Indian, look at others who are not of their origin as being not like them. In Pat Mora's "Chants", she quotes "*viewed by Anglos as perhaps exotic*." (Line 9).

Additionally, then *viewed by Mexicans as alien*. (11). Are these views really this bad? I doubt it. We can work on their aspects of behavior and speak their languages. (12-13). Attitudes of others as being racism and of being different are not as bad as these quotes set out to be. Ms. Mora goes on to quote “...*able to order in fluent Spanish at a Mexican restaurant...*”. (6-7). In our Mexican restaurants, we do not need to know how to order in Spanish as our waitresses speak our language which is English. They grew up here. I speak both English and Spanish, but not fluent Spanish. I learned most of what I know speaking to others who can only speak the language, but little English. I did not grow up with the Spanish language. I have a white complexion but am of Hispanic origin.

My husband is Indian and slightly Hispanic but refuses to claim the Hispanic part. When I read the poem from Sherman Alexie, “How to Write the Great American Indian Novel,” I chuckled a little bit. It is true I crave for my husband and he does keep secrets. I guess that is the white part of me and the Indian in him. “*There must be one murder, one suicide, one attempted rape. Alcohol should be consumed. Cars must be driven at high speeds.*” (Lines 28-29). I know there is no murder, suicide, or even rape in my relationship but alcohol is definitely consumed. I drive kind of fast so I guess I do have a little Indian in me. What does this poem really say? There is Indian in all of us. Perhaps, true. It is not a culture placed in a separate way and definitely is not characterized.

As a whole we have done our best to welcome all cultures as one. Some of us still try to separate the issue but it will never work. The three poems seem to create the notion that people have to do certain things to be labeled with their origin for example, how people view each other and how our relationships should be if we are from different

cultures. We may never be from their country, but we are able to learn a culture and any culture can be adapted. To me, all of these cultures can be viewed as only one...*American*.