

**Race: Asian**

**10/9/19**

**What words, definitions, or ideas do you associate with the word “citizen”?**

I associate it with a country, it you're talking about a citizen. For me personally, I am an American citizen, even though I lived in China, I was born here. I relate myself more to American because I have probably lived most of my life here now. The other part of me is kind of gone.

**How do these associations line up with your experience as someone who has lived in another country?**

I think my experiences with other people that came from China is a lot different. I know that a lot of other Asians tend to stay in their Asian circles so they would just hang out with people from China. Let's say, if a group of kids came from China, they would just hang out with the kids that only speak Chinese. I feel like I kind of put myself out there to be different, which has caused me to lose most of my Chinese, but I still remember some.

**Can you tell me a story about a time you felt pre-judged or discriminated against for being Asian?**

I feel this on the daily. Especially when I get a math test back, if you just simply know how to do a math problem people will be like, “oh, of course (name) knows how to do one, he's Asian.” There are so many stereotypes around Asians that it's just sad. Sometimes, you get made fun of for your eyes. And, I don't get made fun of for that, but I know my brother gets made fun of for it. There are just a lot of stereotypes against Asians, whether it be how smart they are or their appearances.

**Have their been any other experiences, like this, that you've witnessed?**

Yeah, I think I have witnessed this on the daily. To the point where you have to learn how to take it not offensively. I usually just laugh at it because, it's not funny, but it's just whatever at this point. Everyone is racist, I feel like. Even sometimes I, like oh, they're doing it so I don't really care about it at this point.

**Has your outward appearance ever caused you to feel invisible, hyper-visible, or both?**

Not necessarily because we live in such a diverse place. I feel like there are a good amount Asians, not to the point where it's like, oh it's an Asian, but it's not overwhelming. Maybe, in very high achieving classes there will occasionally be comments like, “oh, there's just a bunch of Asians in the class,” stuff like that.

**In the book *Citizen*, author Claudia Rankine uses many narratives of “micro-aggressions,” or individual acts of racism that collectively form the crushing experience of racism in America. Have you ever experienced or witnessed microaggressions directed at being Asian?**

What do you mean by microaggressions?

**Like, racist comments.**

I think I kinda talked about it. I remember in middle school, I came from China in 5th grade, so I was two years ahead of everyone in math, so I already learned Algebra I and stuff like that, so simple math was very easy. People were doing subtracting and addition and negative numbers, very simple. We would always do timed ones, and I was a shy kid back then, but still if there was work I would finish it. So I would always finish, let's say, a three minute timed one, I would finish in a minute and a half, and people would say, "oh, of course (name) finished, he's Asian," and stuff like that. Tiny comments and you just grow use to it.

**In which specific areas of American life/culture do you feel the most included or not included?**

I feel the least included in a white populated place. Like, if I attend a very white event, or something that is not Asian I will be the only Asian person in the room. There's nothing wrong with that but sometimes you feel like you're the only one there. Usually not, because I fit in pretty well I say, so I don't get excluded. But there are definitely a lot of people that get excluded if it's not their race.

**How has your childhood shaped who you are today?**

Good question. My childhood shaped my beliefs on what I view with racism and acceptance of other people. Growing up in China, in elementary school, a lot of stuff was not as open in American. Gay's were not accepted, if you see a white person on the street, or especially a black person, people would stare at them. So, it's like that. I am very appreciative of what I have here. Coming from a poorer place to a more advanced place, I am just glad that I have the opportunity to be here. I am very grateful for what I have.

**Has your childhood inspired your future in any way?**

Yeah, I just want to live a good life and never go back.

**In *Citizen*, Claudia Rankine uses many different visual images that serve as metaphors for the experience of being Black in America. What do you think could be a metaphor for your experience?**

A metaphor?

**For example, one of the quotes the author uses about black people is, "I feel the most black when I am thrown against a white background," so something like that for Asians.**

I can't think of any.

**How has your perception of yourself changed over time?**

I still see myself as the same, but I have definitely changed over the years. I am now a lot more confident, I don't think that relates to race. Actually, no, I remember it was kind of difficult to approach people who weren't your own race because they were different, but now it's like I've been here for so long that I have a lot of friends that aren't my race. I think I am just confident enough to approach people.

**What was one instance where you felt different from your surroundings, standing out in either a good or bad way?**

I do feel stood out sometimes because I don't relate to a lot of typical Asians. I feel like a lot of typical Asians living here are very wealthy because their parents are rich and have grown up around here, and their parents are educated. For my family, we just came from a really poor background, and they did not get the best education possible. Everything I do is kind of on my own instead of with help. So I feel like I am always on my own when it comes to doing anything. I feel pretty alone when I am doing things, I have to rely on myself instead of others. I feel like a lot of people put faith in parents and I just do it by myself.

**Thank you!**