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Everywhere, everyone is different, yet in this diverse society people aren't so accepting of others. Looking at people as different or separate only fuels the already burning fire of hate and fear for people who are deemed "different." The articles "Age, Race, Class, and Sex: Women Redefining Difference" by Audre Lorde and "La conciencia de la mestiza/ Towards a New Consciousness" by Gloria Anzaldúa both talk about the discrimination faced by people who are deemed deviant or different from the norm. Both scholars want to work with the complex differences people have, focusing on intersectionality— "a sociological theory about how an individual can face multiple threats of discrimination when their identities overlap a number of minority classes, such as race, gender, age, ethnicity, health and other characteristics" (Williams). They also emphasize the importance of these differences and how they are an asset rather than a hindrance. We must work with the different facets of who we are in order to overcome our differences and utilize them for the prosperity of our future whilst making our society a more accepting place.

If white feminists only acknowledge women's struggle as only gender based, then they are missing a whole other part of feminism, intersectionality. Lorde focuses on the issues among women and how white feminism often overlooks all the different identities womankind takes on. Lorde wouldn't be considered privileged by our society's standards when it comes to her race, gender, and sexual orientation. She says, "[a]s a forty-nine-year-old Black feminist socialist mother of two, including one boy, and a member of an interracial couple, I usually find myself a

part of some group defined as other, deviant, inferior, or just plain wrong” (Lorde 111). Being a part of the more oppressed social identities, Lorde knows she isn’t part of the “mythical norm” (Lorde 116). According to Lorde, the mythical norm is defined as a “white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure” (Lorde 116). Lorde believes that if one doesn’t meet these certain standards, then they are bound to encounter some sort of oppression in their lifetime. She focuses specifically on women and the different identities among women in relation to class, race, and age. Lorde’s critique of white feminism is blindness to the racial inequalities that women of color face. Lorde believes that this is detrimental to the advancement of women’s rights and equality for human kind. Without intersectional feminism, all women of color have to go on their own and face their own struggles as women of color, because white feminism does not include them. She later goes on to say, “[t]he need for unity is often misnamed as a need for homogeneity...” (Lorde 119). There is a big difference... between being united and being the same. Lorde provides insight into how wanting to be the same is a flawed way of thinking. Everyone is different, and there is good in accepting the differences and utilizing them to benefit the group as a whole, in this case, womankind. We must find “ways to use each others’ difference to enrich our visions and our joint struggles” (Lorde 122). All women will face some sort of oppression as a woman whether it is solely gender based or multifaceted (including race, age, class, etc.). It is important to come together as women with acceptance of one another and with the desire to fight for the rights and equality of all womankind, or else the problems women face will continue indefinitely.

Similarly, there is a struggle within oneself when multiple cultures play a part in one’s identity. Gloria Anzaldúa calls this “*un choque*, a cultural collision” (Anzaldúa 159). Gloria Anzaldúa is a Latina poet, scholar, and feminist activist. In her article, she focuses on the issues

surrounding being multicultural and how it causes one to be on what she describes as “the border.” She also describes the plight of “*la mestiza*” —a woman who is white, Mexican, and indigenous by culture. She describes *la mestiza* as being stuck between many cultures, “[c]radled in one culture, sandwiched between two cultures, straddling all three cultures and their values systems” (Anzaldúa 159). Being multicultural puts oneself at a border. One is neither here nor there, only caught between two or more identities. Yet, she believes that “the future will belong to the *mestiza*. Because the future depends on the breaking down of the paradigms, it depends on the straddling of two or more cultures” (Anzaldúa 160). Anzaldúa focuses on the need to embrace the many unique cultures the world has to offer in order to overcome our differences to make the world a safer and more accepting place to live in. Anzaldúa believes in the breaking down of binaries (man and woman, white and colored) and embracing the differences people and their cultures have to offer. With acceptance of differences, the new views are what will stop things from prejudice to crimes against humanity—like rape, murder, and war from happening. As Anzaldúa says, “we come from all colors, all races, all time periods. Our role is to link people with each other ... It is to transfer ideas and inform from one culture to another” (Anzaldúa 162). Informing one another of our differences leads to a more tolerant society. And with tolerance, there is less fear of the unknown, and more acceptance of differences. If we as a society accepted one’s differences, we would all live in a safer and inclusive society.

I can relate to the complex identities described by the authors above. I identify as a Latina woman. I grew up with my Mexican mother here in America. She instilled the Mexican culture in me by taking me to visit family every year in Mexico and putting me in a dual language program starting at the age of 5, so that I would know how to communicate with my extended family. Despite all this, I am racially ambiguous. I am a half Mexican, a quarter Black, and a

quarter White, yet I don't look like any of those races. The people who say "Oh! You don't look _(blank)_. I thought you were _(blank)_" tend to say I look Pacific Islander, Asian, or some other mix.

Growing up, I never really felt like I fit into one category. I felt more at home with my Mexican American friends because we shared the same cultures and values. But, I didn't look like them, and often people would question my identity. Being of mixed race, my fellow Mexican Americans hesitated to include me because they didn't know what I was. When I was with a group of Mexican people, they would talk amongst themselves acting a little standoffish towards me. I had to prove my "Mexicanness" for them to include me. I had to say something like "Oh my mom is from Mexico", "I'm half Mexican", or "I speak Spanish too". It was crazy to believe that because of the facial features, my hair texture, the color of my skin and my height, I would be treated differently. Just like Anzaldúa, living on the border between my races made me feel like I had to choose one and ignore the rest, and that I would never truly fit in with the people I felt most at home with. It was already hard to do since I didn't fit in with the identities I saw in myself, and no one else saw them either. Despite this, I realized that it was important to acknowledge my roots and embrace my racial ambiguity.

From this experience, I realized that other people go through similar feelings of not belonging, whether its due to race, class, sex, age, gender, etc. This feeling of not belonging divides people, which is where we start to see the problems that ensue from the different people not fitting into the "mythical norm." People shouldn't have to prove that they belong or feel left out. They should just belong. In a world with social acceptance of differences, maybe I wouldn't have felt so lost because my race wouldn't have mattered, or better yet, people would be able to learn and be aware of my culture, while I learned of theirs. Using these differences is what will

help future people be a more tolerant society, and maybe then will the discrimination and oppression of people cease to exist.

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