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### Sexism Within Culture

Sexism is thought to be an issue of the past, however, the reality is that it is still strongly prevalent throughout many parts of the world. In modern times, women are breaking free from traditional roles and are making names for themselves out in the world. Despite this, many ethnic communities still hold onto traditional values because it is ingrained in the culture. Growing up in Pakistani culture, I witnessed how ways of the past are still prevalent today. Women have certain societal expectations they are pressured to meet. I found that these expectations are very similar to those described by Katrina, who comes from a Mexican background. Her parents immigrated from Mexico years ago, and she is deeply connected to her culture. She is very knowledgeable about the things that go on within her community. Katrina explains that in her culture, "women are pushed into being housewives because the ability of cooking cleaning is taught to them at a young age in order for them to satisfy their future husband." Women are urged to satisfy their husbands and put their needs above their own, which Katrina finds unfair. The more questions I asked, the more I realized how universal these experiences were for many women.

Gender roles are a large part of what keeps sexism alive and hold women back from their full potential. Growing up, Katrina saw what the family dynamics looked like in many households. Oftentimes the women of the household seemed unhappy with their position in life, but they were grateful that their children were provided for and did not have to face struggle. She

would see that the same life was encouraged for their daughters. They were taught to cook and clean and marry a man who would be able to provide for the family. Although there is nothing inherently wrong with wanting a secure future for your children, there is much more to being a woman than cooking and cleaning. I remember growing up and I would always hear the phrase “what would your future in-laws think?” I was also taught cooking and cleaning from a young age. This showed me that my value is determined by how good of a spouse I would be one day. In that way, we both witnessed similar things in our culture growing up.

Katrina believes that these gender roles are “old fashioned” and she states, “things should be more fair between the genders like letting a woman earn her own money if she wants a job as well as the men pitching in by helping around the house.” Due to her experiences, she wants to see change happen. She wants women to go out into the world and follow their dreams, and for men to be more involved in the housework. When asked if she has ever spoken out against inequality, she states “I always spoke out hoping to change (their) closed-minded thinking and give them some perspective.” Katrina finds it important to advocate against outdated misogynistic ways of thinking. Similarly, I always try my best to combat societal expectations. Completing my education, working, being independent, etc are all ways that I prevent myself from being pressured into gender roles. I want to prove that I am perfectly capable of supporting myself.

Sexism is an ongoing issue in the world. Within numerous cultures, there are many different ways in which women’s abilities are overlooked. Growing up, I saw how women were reduced to homemakers, as well as Katrina. My experiences mostly came from my own family, but for Katrina, she encountered sexism from people who are not related to her. She grew up in a more progressive home, but she observed a lot of inequality in her surroundings. These

experienced have shaped her to always speak out when she is faced with misogyny. Sexism is passed on from generation to generation and it will continue until the cycle is broken. By changing our ways, we can play a part in eliminating inequality for women.

Conducting my interview for the transcultural assignment was fun because I was able to choose the topic and who I did it with. There was a race and cultural difference between my subject and I but besides that we belong in the same class, age, and gender category. This meant that she was very approachable for me but I was hesitant because it was a sensitive topic and I did not want to misrepresent her culture or be offensive/ignorant in any way. I tried to erase this difference by connecting our experiences together to emphasize how universal sexism is and that it is not exclusive to her culture. I tried my best to accurately represent her and the information she gave me. I let her read the draft of my essay and let her know that she was free to correct me if anything was inaccurate. My interactions with my subject did change over time after talking with her. I had certain questions prepared but some of her answers to them at a certain point made me disregard it and instead ask new a new one on the spot because it did not go exactly how I was expecting it to. Upon completion, my view on the assignment did not change because at the end of the day, however cool the concept was or how meaningful the topic was to me, an assignment is an assignment. I personally felt neutral about whether it has meaning or not because it was solely something that I had to complete and that was my mindset.

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