

Recitation B

As an Asian-American

Every year thousands of people migrate to this country in hopes of a better life. My parents were among them over two decades ago. Although I was born in the US and have known only this place, I'm no stranger to their struggles and I can say that their culture and identity continues to live in me. As a first generation Asian-American, I have different experiences from my parents and from my white peers, but these have bestowed me with a unique perspective.

As a first generation Asian-American, my experiences are defined by otherness to two cultures — Chinese and American. I have gone through phases where I renounced one culture and embraced the other, but I never felt truly at home in either culture. Unlike my parents who were immersed in Chinese culture and spoke Mandarin, I grew up speaking English and was immersed in American culture. On the other hand, although I am well-versed in American pop culture, I'm constantly reminded that I'm Asian because of how I look. I learned that I'm somewhere between these two cultures, and I can't be defined by either. I don't need to choose one or the other, because I am both. I am Asian-American, and it comes with a whole new perspective and set of experiences.

As an Asian-American, I also experience the struggles faced by minorities. Although I speak English well, I'm regarded as a foreigner. However, I'm still in a position of privilege that lets me understand and communicate with people from minority American cultures. Not only can I provide a unique perspective for Americans, I can also tell minorities' stories and struggles in a way that Americans can appreciate. Learning to appreciate this duality has helped me accept and complete my identity and appreciate its strength, especially in a time like ours.

(303 words)