



Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural

From Pantheon

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As we approach the twenty-first century, biracialism and biculturalism are becoming increasingly common. Skin color and place of birth are no longer reliable signifiers of one's identity or origin. Simple questions like What are you? and Where are you from? aren't answered--they are discussed. These eighteen essays, joined by a shared sense of duality, address the difficulties of not fitting into and the benefits of being part of two worlds. Through the lens of personal experience, they offer a broader spectrum of meaning for race and culture. And in the process, they map a new ethnic terrain that transcends racial and cultural division.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

New Yorker O'Hearn, who was born in Hong Kong of an Irish-American father and a Chinese mother, first tells her own story?she found she could pass as Hawaiian, Italian or even Russian?then goes on to collect first-person accounts of 17 others with biracial or bicultural backgrounds who grew up in the U.S. or emigrated here. The multicultural combinations are complex and varied: a woman with a Chinese-Jamaican mother and a Chinese-American father, a man with an English father and a Jamaican mother ("They are not two shades of brown. They are black and white"), a woman with a mother from Brooklyn and a father from Bombay. Other contributors do not have a racially mixed background but write as strangers in a strange land: a South Vietnamese who escaped by boat and grew up in Southern California; a Hindu from Calcutta who attends school in America. Others reflect Mexican, Iranian and Japanese cultures. The names of some of the contributors are familiar?Gish Jen, Bharati Mukherjee, James McBride, Roxane Farmanfarmaian, Lisa See?but many are not, and although the tone throughout ranges from bitter and self-absorbed to satirical, most reveal a quiet sense of humor. Several of the entries have been published previously in anthologies or magazines.

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From [Booklist](#)

Gr. 7^-12. Where are you from? When do you use "we" ? The answers aren't simple for the 18 writers of these personal essays who live and work in the U.S. but aren't sure where they belong. Some are immigrants; most are children or parents of biracial, bicultural families. In her introduction, editor O'Hearn (part Irish American, part Chinese) says she is always a foreigner, wherever she is ("Suspended, I can go anywhere but home"). David Mura writes with tenderness about his daughter: he is third-generation Japanese American, his wife is WASP and a small part Jewish; he sees little of his family's mixed race and culture reflected in the media. Danzy Senna's hilarious parody ("Make Mulattos, not War") says it clearly: multiculturalism is about dealing with racism and power, not about plates of ethnic food. Other contributors include the well-known writers Gish Jen and Francisco Goldman and novelist Julia Alvarez, who makes the point that Latinos as a group embrace many races and differences. Whether they feel part of the mainstream or on the edge, many teens will find themselves in these eloquent memoirs that speak about coming of age and finding a place to call home. *Hazel Rochman*

From Kirkus Reviews

paper 0-375-70011-0 A lively collection of essays on the theme of being biracial and bicultural in contemporary American society. Editor O'Hearn, herself born in Hong Kong and raised in Asia and Europe, has assembled a passionate medley of writings by 18 authors who share a bicultural or biracial identity. Despite vast differences in their social, economic, and racial backgrounds, a number of subtopics emerge. Among these is the sense of alienation experienced by them as children. The need to belong was in many cases intensified by prejudice as a pressure all too frequently encountered. Meri Nana-Ama Dunquah, a native of Ghana who grew up in Washington, D.C., faced her crudest hostility from black American kids who taunted her with shouts of ``You-you-you African! Go back to Africa!'' Journalist Danzy Senna, the daughter of a WASP mother and a black-Mexican father, identifies herself as black, but passes for white often enough to hear whites including well-meaning white liberals--speak in ``smug disdain'' about blacks. And the prejudice, of course, is not exclusive to childhood or to America. Francisco Goldman, the brown-skinned son of a Jewish father and a Guatemalan mother, encountered the worst display of prejudice when visiting Madrid, where taxis wouldn't stop for him but police officers did. Still, its also apparent that many

biracial and bicultural people have enjoyed an enviable edge. Though not totally at home in any one world, they seem better able to adapt to many, as Meri Nana-Ama Dunquah observes: ``Like a chameleon I am ever-changing. The essays make it plain, too, just how obsessed we Americans are with matters of race and identity. Replete with candid accounts and sensitive musings. -- *Copyright ©1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.*

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Lindsey Putman:

The actual book Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural will bring you to definitely the new experience of reading any book. The author style to explain the idea is very unique. When you try to find new book to study, this book very ideal to you. The book Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural is much recommended to you to learn. You can also get the e-book in the official web site, so you can quickly to read the book.

Robert Carlson:

Precisely why? Because this Half and Half: Writers on Growing Up Biracial and Bicultural is an unordinary book that the inside of the reserve waiting for you to snap this but latter it will shock you with the secret it inside. Reading this book adjacent to it was fantastic author who else write the book in such incredible way makes the content on the inside easier to understand, entertaining means but still convey the meaning fully. So , it is good for you for not hesitating having this nowadays or you going to regret it. This excellent book will give you a lot of gains than the other book have such as help improving your ability and your critical thinking way. So , still want to hold up having that book? If I were you I will go to the reserve store hurriedly.

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