A Tardy Reflection on Reflections

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I enjoyed the essays. Particularly Hooks’ essay because it talked about concepts that apply broadly across society like feminism, power structures, and the implicit patriarchy that exists. While I felt that Grande’s struggle is widely relatable to many Californians, it felt more similar to a college admissions essay that I’ve heard from other immigrants, my grandfather included. This is not to say that the experience is, in any way, less important. It’s just that the ideas there are less novel to me. I, uh, I couldn’t think of very much to write for each prompt given so I’m, once again, going to deliberately stray off-course and take any penalty that comes with it. I mean it’s already late so I’m not really sure how much I have to lose.

Hooks was particularly keen in showcasing the conflicting nature of academia and non-academia. In order to move farther within any college environment, she felt pressure to “adapt” to certain styles of presenting writing. Out of anything, Hooks noticed that the language used to express ideas was not only the most noticeable difference but rather the deciding factor on whether ideas could proliferate. This makes sense; complex thought is necessarily grounded in the language of which we speak. Those who were unfamiliar with academic language (and in all honesty, pretentiousness) felt that this way of speaking made ideas too obtuse or out-of-reach to grasp.

When going to college, both authors found themselves experiencing quite a bit of culture shock. It’s easier to see in Grande’s writing than it is in Hooks’ but there’s a shared sense of being somewhat out of place. For Hooks’, though, it seemed to creep up on her a bit more than it did Grande. Perhaps this is because of the nature of each passage. Grande’s writing is a memoir, lacking the (perhaps) expected clinicality of Hooks’ entire book. In my opinion, though this is not a contest, Hooks’ writing feels much more confident and full-body in its composition, which is perhaps why I felt it harder to detect feelings of uncertainty from her past self.

Grande’s life before college didn’t sound particularly enjoyable. She went to college to prove a point, and to essentially move past an era. College started as her father’s way out but she transformed it into her own, once her relationship with her father changed. She was able to ease into the culture shock by finding bits and pieces of familiar things. It starts off with a leap of faith and then peters back into something a tad more comfortable.

If there’s one skill, trait, or attribute (whatever you want to call it) that would help one with relationships, learning, and strength, it’d be confidence. When I speak of confidence, I mainly talk more about purposefulness rather than arrogance. Having purposefulness in one’s writing, for instance, helps the delivery feel maybe just a little more sharper, you know? I dunno.