

Why I Want to be White

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Here is why: it's not that I'm not proud of my cultural heritage, because I absolutely am, but it's because being white is so much (or so it seems) easier.

If you're white, you can be whoever you want. You can be white *and* be Asian apparently. I mean, that must be why Scarlett Johansson is cast as Motoko Kusanagi for *Ghost in the Shell*, right? (That's Japanese by the way.) But it doesn't seem to work in a vice-versa case because you never see Asians out there playing the roles of Jack and Rose in *Titanic*. If you're Asian, you can't be anything *but* Asian.

If you're white, you can do anything you want. There are no stereotypes confining white people to be only teachers, or athletes, or ... anything. What you do, if you're white, has nothing to do with your skin color. While being Asian, so many stereotypes try to lock me in the single story that we are all STEM geniuses, Asian nerds with small eyes who aren't athletic and get perfect SAT scores. Unfortunately, for god-knows-what reason, all these stereotypes do not apply to me at all. First of all, I dread math and science, and the subjects I *do* excel in are history and english. Second of all, SAT scores. Um... let's just skip to the next topic.

If I were white, I wouldn't have to deal with the dilemma of staying true to being a "real" Asian. I wouldn't have to switch into another mode when I go home. I wouldn't need to be careful of how much English I speak, or how crappy my Cantonese is, or how much skin I'm showing (which really isn't much in American standards). I wouldn't have to be so cautious about being too American, or too Asian, whatever those two terms really mean. Am I American? I was born here, so legally I am. I study here. I love and believe in the American ideals of equality, freedom, and democracy. So ... does that count? I don't know. Maybe it's because I wasn't raised here, so whenever I think of "American", I can only think of the white-black racial spectrum.

Sometimes I feel that Asians are so left out of the racial discussion, as though we don't belong here. Am I Asian? Yes. There's no denying that. Yet when I think of what my country stands for—things I really disagree with—I don't want to be Asian. I can't bring myself to feel proud of being Asian, or Chinese. It's a horrible feeling to despise part of who you are, to not being proud of who you are. The worst part, however, is having to ask myself: "Who am I?"

I want to be white so I don't have to deal with whitewashing. So I can do whatever I want without being boxed into the model-minority myth. I want to be white so I don't have to engage in an identity crisis every other day.

I want to be white so I can be free. Free from my—apparently—"yellow" skin.