Who Are We? Haley Benjamin

When we are born, socialization takes an instant effect on each and everyone of us, both positive and negative. As Warren Farrell, a writer has said “In fact, socialization gives us the tools to fill our evolutionary rolls. They are our building blocks.” To me socialization is they way we are brought up to what we are now, through ideas, religion, and other personality factors, and it’s different for everyone. What type of socialization is created for us is all based on six different identity categories; race, age, sexual orientation, economic class, and physical ability. Socialization, is every person’s “template” for their life, it’s the way we all try to fit in with those around us. To try and be exceptional for what society calls “normal” or “cool.” Yet, my personality within my own life has been negatively affected based on my gender, race, and economic class; and I have been socialized to stereotype those who I don’t know. While trying to fight to become perfection

ai No flaws, you must be PERFECT, clear skin, skinny figure, good hair, nothing out of place. an impossible goal that I, as a young women have been faced with, it’s my norm. Only because it’s what expected of me. One example of being “perfect” is the movie “mean girls.” The three most popular girls in school, one in particular (Regina George) is looked upon by others as almost a god like figure, as the others say (even boys) “she’s flawless, I hear she does car commercials, in Japan! She has a silver Lexus, etc.” Then when a new girls arrives, she is willing to change herself for the other girl’s own happiness. To make them like her for something she wasn’t. Even her grades. This shows that we look up to those we find popular, I find myself doing this at times. I will look upon these people to make an attempt to make *myself* like these people, in a constant “fight” to be “cool” or accepted in that way. Also, it’s an illustration of how I tend to feel day to day; I’m scared to be who I really am in worry that those who I am trying to be more like will judge me. I feel that forms of jealousy tends to drive my want to be perfect, because I see these other girls who seem this way to me and I crave to be like them so much that this happens.I do this only to please them when more often than not they probably don’t care; yet, I’m not actually happy with myself day to day because of this. Furthermore, over time, I compare myself to people who I find in any way socially higher up than me; I find flaws in myself that I constantly try to put an end to. Overall, the movie “mean girls” shows how being “perfect” in a norm and your body, face, hair, etc. must all be perfect as well, and I as a young girl feel like I’m in a cage and no matter what I do this unreachable goal of being perfect will always be a norm for me, because who doesn’t love a pretty girl?

The second way I have been socialized is through race, I have known almost all my life that white is a “superior” race, because there are more white people then there are colored; and I must remain oblivious to racism because of *my own color.* In the video “Black Men Ski” Stew is singing about racial stereotypes. He says, “giggle at their mere presence seems to raise.” As well as, “get intake from men we resemble in the least.” Clearly knowing this it almost proves that we make assumptions about those who aren’t in the place of being a superior race. And I am sorry to say that I have been socialized enough to do this almost on a day to day basis; and in places like Aspen Colorado, I would find it out of the ordinary in such a place where light skinned people are so common to see colored people skiing. Why should we even question something like this? Lastly, in a country in which almost fully consists of white people, I feel I have been taught (along with most others) to make assumptions and/or stereotypes about those of color, because when we see them it’s not “normal” and I feel that this is happening because throughout all of my life I have lived in, and been exposed to through media and other forms of it, because I notice from early on that there’s not a high amount of people who are colored. As a final point, at my age I feel it is somewhat wrong for me to have been taught so early, not on purpose, but to feel the need to make comments on things such as seeing “black men ski” or other people’s race.

To continue, I have been shown through time to think that a person’s economic class makes who they are, purely based on how much money they have. Once again “Mean Girls” is a great example of this. Regina George, is clearly rich. She seems to be portrayed as “snooty” and sort of out of control; and her parents seem to never really know what she’s up to. I tend to look down on myself because I know that I don’t have as much as people like this or others in general. But, after all Regina’s mommy and daddy’s little girl, so she gets whatever she wants. As shown in the movie, she has a very nice car, a huge house, she clearly has all of the new things,nice clothes, etc. and everybody is in love with her because of this. I’ll be honest I do judge people based on what economic class they are in; I think that just because someone is rich, that means they’re “snooty.” As well I as I assume that those who are identified as “poor” are not as “well made” (you could say) I have also learned to make myself think that the rich come across as so perfect that, “well they must not have many problems because they’re rich!” which is very far from the truth. Lastly, based on others financial places in life I have been taught to make stereotypes off of this, and think of them as something that they’re not.

Thus, as individuals, we should ask the question, “how do we break the cycle of socialization?” We should no longer make stereotypes of others based on another’s life that we know nothing about; and to stop lying to ourselves, and being someone we aren’t only to please others! We can break the chain of socialization and test what is “normal” and have a new start, one where people aren’t nervous to show who they really are. The author George Eliot states, “One can begin so many things with a new person!-even begin to be a better man.”

My mask has two main symbols, words on the left, and “the perfect person” on the right. The words symbolize that we are really only a reflection of the media, social networks, and other things like this that we see on a daily basis that would give us the drive to be perfect. and what we feel like we need to be to fit in. Also to include, the unreachable goal of perfection, the “perfect person” this is what we all try to be, and what society wants us to be, yet they always find something wrong with everyone of us.