

A MANIFESTO ON THE SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF RACE AND ITS EFFECT ON OUR IDENTITY AND SENSE OF BELONGINGNESS

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DISCLAIMER: *Nonetheless, we do not want to dismiss any discourse about racial inequality. But we nevertheless think that race as an individual identifier comes with the problem of the nuances not taken into account.*

Besides the current pandemic, we are also going through another crisis. A crisis of meanings, in an age of apprehensions and division. Asking the question “where are you from?” has always felt insufficient in some way, it’s a question that is deeply personal, and equally complicated for people that exists in and beyond the rigid arbitrary lines that we have constructed for our society.

But unfortunately, in this era of speed, simplicity and fleeting glimpses, few people have either the time or the patience for such long explanations. Nor does the current power structure favor ambiguity when referring to such discourses.

Human beings are indisputably complicated beings - we are layers upon layers of ideas, feelings, experiences, perceptions, recollections, reactions, desires and dreams. By merely looking at individuals bureaucratically and placing them into boxes, we are being denied our own truth.

An individual’s race or nationality in this case, should not be a definitive claim to where one belongs because belongingness is not a once and for all condition, it is a constant self-examination and revision of where we are, who we are and where we want to be.

For far too long, in our social and political systems we have been implementing the same old “handbook”, with its rudimentary and rigid definitions and methods. But no longer is this a viable option for our ever-changing and intersecting society. We must redefine our fundamental concepts.

Our decisions from here on, will ultimately shape our view on “identity”. Why must we constrain ourselves into a single identity? based on race, nationality, religion, class gender or geography? Let’s carefully consider and ask ourselves, aren’t I essentially a mixture of multiple belongings, backgrounds and trajectories? **Aren’t I a human being, which is boundless and contains multitudes?**

PRACTICE ASSIGNMENT

OBJECTIVE:

In our practice assignment, we want to place the participants in a situation that forces them to examine an individual's profile in a rigid and ambiguous manner. Forcing them to act on the constraining "boxes", methods of identifying and biases we have socially constructed, which are nonetheless, influenced by the existing power structures in our society.

Moreover, we want to further highlight that by bureaucratically looking at individuals, we are constraining the vastness and complexity of our identity and essentially, denying our own truth. Overall, we want to advocate that a person's race can't be a definitive way to identify someone. We want people to reflect on how we frame a person's identity? and why do we choose to frame them in this way?

*GAME TITLE: **WHO'S WHO, WHERE'S WHERE?***

INSTRUCTIONS

PARTICIPANTS

Read the profile of the person you receive.

Then, in no more than 5 minutes:

Based on the information, try to define this person's race and locate where they're "from" by pinning your answer on the map.

After guessing, give a brief context for your decision.

PROFILE QUESTIONNAIRE

For all the questions below, add 2-3 adjectives in your answers.

PRONOUNS:

1) Describe your physical appearance:

HAIR: **STRAIGHT & DARK**

EYES: **ALMOND SHAPED & BROWN**

NOSE: **SMALL & ROUND**

SIZE: **MEDIUM**

2) Describe the usual weather conditions of the place where you feel at home:

- **COOL & OVERCAST**

3) Describe the geography of that place:

- **FLAT & COASTAL**

4) Describe the safety of your home

- **GOOD**

5) Describe your favourite flavours:

- **SWEET & SALTY**

6) Give yourself a stereotype that you can identify with:

BEING LATE FOR APPOINTMENTS OR MEETUPS

VISUALIZATION OF PROFILE

UNKNOWN PROFILE



Based on the information state this person's race and nationality

HE/HIM/THEY

HAIR: STRAIGHT & DARK

EYES: ALMOND SHAPED & BROWN

NOSE: SMALL & ROUND

SIZE: MEDIUM

WEATHER AT HOME:

COOL & OVERCAST

GEOGRAPHY:

FLAT & COASTAL

SAFETINESS OF HOME:

GOOD / BAD

FAVOURITE FLAVOURS:

SWEET & SALTY

STEREOTYPE TO IDENTIFY WITH:

BEING LATE FOR APPOINTMENTS OR MEETUPS

MAP FOR GUESSING



CONTEXT: (AFTER GUESSING GAME)

WHO IS THIS INDIVIDUAL?

The person you have identified as (*...* insert the participants answer)

is actually... Jacob! Our fellow classmate and our groupmate in this project.

He is ethnically from the Philippines. But has spent the majority of his life in the Middle-east, he grew up in the city of Dubai, UAE. He then moved to the Netherlands, to study here at the WDKA and the place which he now calls home for the time being. But his family has since moved and immigrated to North America, in Vancouver, Canada, which he will soon move to as well.