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Puente 10
Burro Genius Essay

If you were a Mexican living in the U.S during the late '40s, you would probably have faced problems. Victor Villaseñor, author of "Burro Genius", is no stranger when it comes to the hardships faced for being born Mexican in a society where they disliked his own race. In his childhood, he was born into a wealthy Mexican family with an indigenous background in Oceanside. As soon as Victor attended school, he quickly realized the cruel reality of his situation. It was then where he began the ultimate battle against discrimination using his family as a backup. Victor's family and indigenous beliefs passed down from his ancestors became his treasure map to find out the treasure that is the truth. Ultimately, revealing that ancestral culture can be a weapon used to fight against stereotypes and discrimination.

Victor had been discriminated by others negative paradigms about his ethnicity. Throughout many negative experiences that Victor faced, he found a way to cope. Victor, in his free time, drew stars with pen and ink that he bought. But, when she went back to buy more pens and ink from the store, she was greeted by his best friend, discrimination. "Give me back that pen! You can't just take our merchandise! But ma'dam, I said...I didn't take it. I bought it last week. How can I know that? She said. You're a Mexican and everyone knows that Mexicans are thieves and can't be trusted! Now out of here!"(287). Here, we see that a store owner had taken Victor's pen because he was a Mexican and assumed that he stole it. This makes Victor so angry that he left, thinking that Mexicans are horrible. But this wasn't the only time he was discriminated. Even at school, Victor couldn't escape being discriminated. Ever since Victor repeated third grade a second time, he's been staying after school for extended reading practice every day. Each time he leaves, there were kids waiting to beat him up. It wasn't until Victor fought back and asked them why they did it, did they respond. "You did it! it's all your fault! Next year more Mexicans are coming to our school because of you!"(230). Ever since everyone found out that Victor's parents own and built their giant house Mexican families have now started to send their children to the school where Victor attends. This is what made the boys angry. The white boys didn't like Mexicans and when they found out that more were coming next year, they figured that Victor was the beacon. This reveals how discrimination doesn't only come from the public but the students at the school as well. This ultimately led Victor to try to find out the truth about his race.

Victor has been tough positive beliefs from his family members. The day before Victor went to school, his dad, Salvador knew what was going to go down to school. so he took Victor aside to tell him to embrace his ethnicity. "You are one Mexicano. and, Mexicanos are such a good strong people that everywhere, everyone wants to be Mexican."(49). At this moment, his father is easing Victor's brain a little in order to attend school proudly. Salvador knows the discrimination that will happen so he is planting the belief that Mexicanos are good into Victor's

mind. After a year of school, Victor's teacher recommended for him to repeat third grade. Victor felt really dumb and thought bad about himself. That's when his dad talked to him. "No, the good men never quit. Never! And yet we got to know when to stop and say *Manana es otro milagro de Dios.*"(45). We see here, that Salvador is trying to empower Victor by planting his belief of men. This exemplifies how in hard times, his family still gave him the strength to continue with his life. Through beliefs that Salvador has been taught, he is able to empower Victor with beliefs. Therefore illuminating, that societies cruel acknowledgments, turns one towards his family for coping and understanding.

Victor was really confused about what to believe about his race. Throughout all of the discrimination in public, their beliefs trickled their way into Victor's mind. "After all the negative crap that has been pounded into my brain at school about Mexicans, no one in my family could have changed my mind."(222). This is the end result when negative experiences hit you. It would be hard to change your mind, considering that Victor had been discriminated every day, and there was no way to escape it. But every so often, some people would show up and change Victor's perspective. Victor was about to run away from home until he ran into two Cowboys that wanted a place to stay tonight. Victor Linden back to his house, where both of Victor's parents let them stay for dinner and the night. This is where the cowboys changed Victor's perspective. "Maybe Mexicans really weren't bad people after all. So then, maybe, it was all right for me to love mi Familia".(82). A person would say "maybe" when facing a difficult decision. It usually means it's between "yes" and "no". So, the battle of coming up with the ultimate clear answer was still being fought back and forth in Victor's mind. It would continue this way; Society discriminates a race while love tries to fight back.

Victor came to an epiphany that his culture has taught him to love and embrace himself for who he is. At one point in your schooling experience, marbles grew up to be the most popular game to play during recess thanks to a Texan transfer named Gus. Gus was greatly admired as the best out of the whole school but Victor was planning to change that. Through hard work and practice and using his brother's tips and tricks, he felt ready. His brother had fueled him to beat everyone and to prove to the white students that Mexicans were as capable to become the best at something as they could. "I'd also found out that my mother was beautiful and my father was smart and that maybe I wasn't very good in the classroom, but still, I...un Mexicano... I was El King!"(123). He was able to prove to everyone and himself that being Mexicano was worth it. His brother, Joseph, had played a major role in Victor's satori. It was him who fed Victor's wisdom with ancestral culture to appreciate himself and where he comes from. "I couldn't stop crying. All these years since I'd started school. I'd always thought that my mother was ugly and my father was a fool. My brother took me in his arms..."(257). This moment depicts Victor recognizing Joseph as his savior; the one who taught him with beliefs derived from their parent's culture. This shows how even though oppression had been picking at someone's heart, it's a family's uplifting beliefs that can shield off from it and protect a human's love for himself.

In conclusion, Victor was taught positive beliefs through his parents but had been almost completely diminished to the powerful force of discrimination towards his ethnicity. This caused Victor to go back and forth; choosing what to believe about himself and his race. But during Victor's rough period of confusion, an epiphany arose, making it clear to Victor to pay attention to those who love him. Thanks to his family's wisdom, specifically Joseph's, Victor now understood how much he loves himself and being Mexican. Which then, Victor further calls himself "El King", which fuse both of the languages, symbolizing the balance between his soul, heart, and mind between both races. Further revealing that although discrimination in a non-appreciative society tries to corrupt one's soul, It will never penetrate with the wisdom of a family.