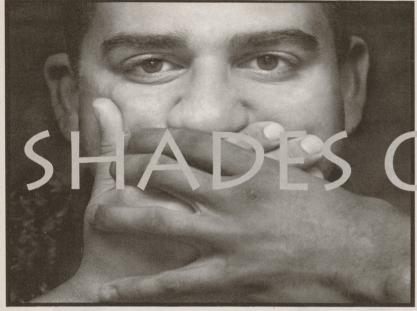
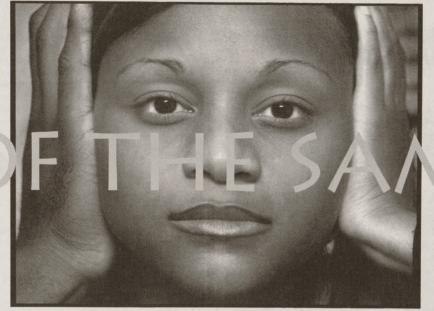
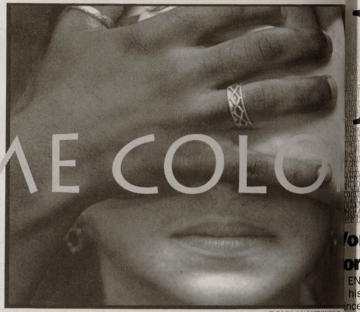
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Ethnically diverse heritages give Texas A&M students unique perspective on trying to fit into a black and white society

ack, White, Red, Yellow, Brown, Other: For most people, the choice of which box to place a check mark in is reflexive. The world fits into a nice scheme of black and white, night and day, yin and yang. Some people fit comfortably in a pre-technicolor square hole for which they are the square peg.

However, as racial barriers slowly degrade and interracial relationships become more common, a new generation of multiracial children emerges and becomes sizable enough to defy the classification of "Other."

The number of interracial marriages and births of multiracial children increases every year. The magazine Interrace posted the following figures: From 1976 to 1996, the number of interracial marriages quadrupled.

According to the United States Census Bureau, there were 1.2 million interracial marriages in 1992, accounting for 2.2 percent of the total marriages for that year. The number of interracial births reflects these statistics. Interracial births are currently increasing 26 times faster than single ethnicity births.

Nadim Nabi, a Jordanian Mexican-American and a sophomore business administration major, said he only thinks about his racial identity if he is asked blunt-

"I don't feel my color unless somebody points it out,"

Being raised in a multicultural environment can also

Nabi said. "I get a lot out of it. I'm more informed about the world.

Just as in other families, the children of interracial relationships pick up different traits from their parents. Paul Klein, a Filipino Caucasian-American and a

freshman chemical engineering major, said his family life is probably similar to most students. 'I think it's an even mix [of personality] as far as the family goes," Klein said. "I got a lot of my mother's traits and I got a lot of my dad's traits, too. A lot of my friends

were from single ethnicity families. They had the same Klein said his parents have always stressed his suc-

"My mom's side of the family all went to college and became successful and my dad is the only one from his family that graduated college," Klein said. "If I don't graduate from college, I think both of my parents might

Sheri Schmidt, Coordinator of Diversity Education, said growing up in a multicultural environment can be beneficial to a child

There are a lot of benefits to being involved with people different from yourself," Schmidt said. "When you get the chance to be around a variety of people with different ways of thinking about things and doing things, it helps you to see the world more clearly.'

Schmidt adds that being raised in a multi-ethnic environment can help eliminate stereotypes later in life.

in our culture - to not believe stereotypes and not internalize them," Schmidt said. "Overall, it [being around other cultures] can be a very positive experience for that person. For a person whose parents are from different racial groups, it is a good thing because they can see firsthand through those differences and not base their thoughts on stereotypes.

I love having different cultural backgrounds. I get a lot out of it. I'm more informed about the world."

Nadim Nabi

Jordanian-Mexican American Sophomore business administration major

Attending Texas A&M may pose problems for multicultural students. As difficult as the transition is for all new students, multiracial students said they notice one

You go to U.T. and you see all kinds of races," Nabi said. "Here it's all the 'white male' type. I'm not dissing A&M, it's just that there's less diversity here than on some other campuses.'

Texas A&M has diversity programs in placet er universities lack. Retreats like the Universities ness for Cultural Togetherness (U-ACT) where students gather to freely discuss their di and MOSAIC, which teaches people to create any sive environment in the workplace, are two choices dents have to learn about each other.

'We at Texas A&M have opportunities available cultures to thrive," Schmidt said. "We've takens creating this office (Diversity Education) and the grams, but there's still more we can do. Howev ally glad the administration supports our depart and these programs.'

As homogeneous as Texas A&M can seem, fe dents encounter racism than suspected.

"I've never faced racism." Nabi said. "I never deal with racism because I grew up in an interschool. As far as racism here at A&M, I've never Cust

Klein said racism is expressed toward som • Reg combinations more than others.

"It depends on what the ethnicity is," Klein: sad as it seems, some people don't think blad \$764.9 white people should mix, but people like my people 3601 are okay. Some people just think that some mis socially taboo.

All of a sudden, checking in a box to describe dividual's past becomes something of a moot There are enough "others" to justify casting off ticular box to a bureaucratic afterlife and accept round pegs can fit in square holes.

REVIEW

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"Stereotypes held about other groups do influence Staff writer "I love having the different cultural backgrounds," us, and that's probably one of the hardest things to do