

On Writing and Not Writing as an Asian American



As an Asian American writer, I have often been asked why I don't write more about my Asian American identity. The implication is that there is something inherently interesting or important about being Asian American, and that I am somehow neglecting my duty as a writer by not exploring this aspect of my identity in my work.



The Children of 1965: On Writing, and Not Writing, as an Asian American by Phyllis A. Whitney

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I understand the impulse behind this question. Asian Americans are a relatively new and visible minority group in the United States, and there is a lot of interest in learning more about our experiences. However, I believe that the question of whether or not an Asian American writer should write about their Asian American identity is a false dichotomy. There is no one right way to be an Asian American writer, and no one right way to write about Asian American experiences.

The Importance of Diversity

One of the most important things that Asian American writers can do is to write about a wide range of experiences. Our stories are not all the same, and we should not be expected to write only about the experiences that are most familiar to white readers. We need to write about our own experiences, in our own voices, and in our own ways.

This diversity of voices is essential for creating a more inclusive and representative American literature. It is only by hearing from a wide range of perspectives that we can truly understand the complexity of the American experience.

The Danger of Stereotypes

One of the dangers of writing about Asian American identity is the risk of perpetuating stereotypes. There are a number of stereotypes about Asian Americans, such as the model minority myth, the perpetual foreigner stereotype, and the dragon lady stereotype. These stereotypes can be harmful, as they can lead to discrimination and prejudice.

As Asian American writers, we need to be aware of these stereotypes and avoid perpetuating them in our work. We need to write about our own experiences, in our own voices, and in our own ways. We should not feel pressured to write about our Asian American identity, but we should also not shy away from it.

The Power of Literature

Literature has the power to change the world. It can educate, inspire, and empower people. It can also challenge stereotypes and promote understanding. As Asian American writers, we have a unique opportunity to use our voices to make a difference in the world.

We can write stories that challenge stereotypes, promote understanding, and inspire others. We can write stories that celebrate the diversity of the Asian American experience and that show the world that we are more than just a model minority.

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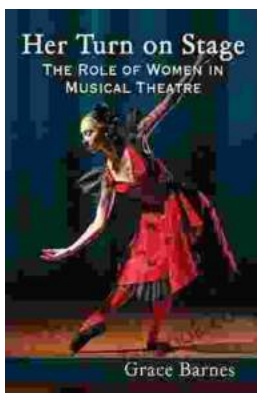
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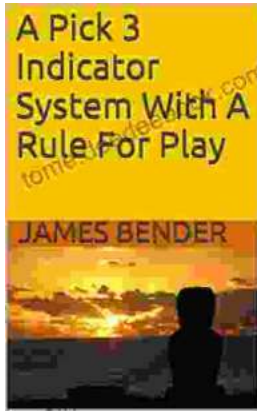
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