

Goin' cholita essay sample

[Art & Culture](#)



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Goin' Gangsta, Choosin' Cholita, by Nell Bernstein, is claiming identity and describing how the youth in certain parts of the country are choosing their preferred identity rather than accepting their own. For example, in Bernstein's essay a girl named April, living in California, wants to be Mexican; therefore, she dresses like and attempts to talk in the same accent as a true Mexican, even though she is Anglo. I agree with Bernstein that people are influenced by what they see and hear. April portrays a perfect "cholita," with her "dark lipstick," "even darker lip liner," and "baggy pants, blue plaid Pendleton and her bangs pulled back tight off her forehead." I also believe, like Bernstein, that people claim only part of their ethnicity to fit in. Even though April looks and acts like a Cholita she is of "Anglo" descent. The essay also specifically talks about the state of California, where all this identity changing is happening due to the great diversity of race here. Bernstein claims that this is a positive situation when youths choose an identity other than their own identity. Whatever makes them feel better or boosts their self-esteem is okay, I guess? However, they still have to face the facts; they cannot change their identity. I do not know what dictionary Bernstein is reading, but the definition of identity does not include the word "appearance."

Identity is who a person is, not who they appear to be. Nell Bernstein does a very good job in describing the "glamour," associated with race. It seems, there is always a particular culture that many people want to be associated with and hang around. In the case of Goin' Gangsta, Choosin' Cholita Bernstein talks about how teens choose and define their identity, what "claiming," an ethnic identity is, and what the concept of "city" is according

to these teens. Bernstein explains that as time goes by the suburbs are becoming more diverse, and people in the suburbs have become infatuated with the “ city life”.

The glamour of this may be media-generated. We come from a society that pushed for the concept of “ white is right,” for such a long time that now there are backlashes from other cultures, races, and minorities. Many great strides have been made by various ethnic groups. Accomplished actors and actresses of these ethnic cultures make most often these strive for all to see because of the glamour and prestige that they hold in Hollywood. Actresses such as Jennifer Lopez, and Halle Berry are most often credited with moving ahead both women, and those of Latino and African descent. Men such as Denzel Washington and John Leguizamo are very well respected actors in the field as well. With the success of these role models, as well as the acceptance of diversity has become many “ Caucasian” students are now being rejected.

Many of the relatives and ancestors had to fight very hard for their rights and this may be why many younger generations want to be like them because they can identify with them and also because of how “ glamorous” their lives seemed, and because of portrayal in the media. They “ claim” these cultures to be accepted and more respected. Actually many generations of these cultures do press the importance of filial piety (respect for their elders), deep within their cultures as opposed to those of Caucasian families who viewed by other cultures, do not know “ their” place. Because of the emphasis on heritage of the quickly populating cultures in their areas, many feel they do

not belong. Because of this nuclear family as opposed to multi-generational, many cultures could clash.

Glamorous is a life where everyone else belongs because of how he or she looks or what ancestor they have which entitles them to prestige, finally because of the long awaited freedom and hardships that they had to endure to get there. Embrace your family; you are one of us if you are in any group of people. Look at movies like *The Godfather*. Italian-Americans involved with the Mafia worked hard for family to be able to provide for them, but were also caught up in some bad stuff. Italians/ Italian-Americans who ran around shooting on behalf of who they were, as well as against those of the same culture that was at odds with them.

It seemed like a very glamorous life even though those involved would say that it was far from it. Many cultures today or those who want to be involved in these cultures, adorn themselves with stereotypes and simply to be accepted, as Bernstein states, “ they are very young but may not understand the full comprehension of all that was involved, it may be the influence of being tough, bad, and able to bounce back with a greater force that these teens look for.” They are at a very young age and are still growing. The ability to take on these preset identities (stereotypes) may feel that it helps them find out who they are because adolescence is a very unsure time. The ability to fit-in such as school, friends, and communities also play a very critical role in the development of an adolescent.

Many kids who are raised in the suburbs now a days feel as if they have to choose a “ crew” to hang around. Even the white kids do not feel safe in

their own streets unless they are hanging with the bad crew. Kids feel the need to choose what group they belong to based on the way they dress, what music they listen to, and whom they see as a role model figure. Kids should not be forced at such a young age to claim something they are not. Children should be proud of the race they originally are.

With the growing amount of races becoming more diverse in not only in the suburbs but around the world, it is important for parents to enforce the values of nationality. The author made it very important to write this article in order to show people the truth behind color. Although it may be easier for a child to join a group and feel accepted, they should also know that they would not truly be accepted until they accept themselves. Cultures are becoming more and more diverse. Although culture is constantly changing, people should not change their personal values in order to feel accepted.

In conclusion, I feel the media does play a role in stereotyping these cultures and making them seem more glamorous, but the actual families of those from the actual cultures (Latino, African, etc.) stress the importance of filial piety. This respect for ancestors joined with expectations and role models in the media can make this seem more glamorous. Adolescents that are trying to find out who they are in a very critical time in their lives often fall back onto this because identity already seems “ preset,” and is easier to follow than finding out one for their self. Many Caucasian teens are being ridiculed because of what they are and history, so they often desperately pull from what they know to be able to fit in better and not be ridiculed as much, but more accepted.

With cultures melting together today and many marriages creating children of various backgrounds, it can be very confusing for children of these higher populated states to find out who they are. The glamorous look may come from the comradely that these cultures have for members within. It may be looked at as glamorous because of the popularity of its members or even how it is shown in the media, but it is most glamorous for those who are not of the decent because they finally have a place to belong among those who accept them because of it.