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## Daniel De Andrade Culture Quilt

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Daniel De Andrade

Professor Roman-Odio

Productions of the Borderlands

6 November 2017

### My Cultural Quilt

2) What's the most important thing you've gained or learned from your parents growing up?

In my father's obsessive work ethic I found that love demands sacrifice, and that the sacrifice is only worth giving if it gives you the meaning you most desire. My dad, for example, tries his hardest to be a provider. His emotional state suffers from the fact that he's been hardened by extensive manual labor his entire life, and by the cold pragmatism of being a boss overseeing employees. From these experiences he impressed on me his value of being the best in what you do, and constantly doing everything to rise higher. If it wasn't for my mother's value of devoting yourself to something divine, I would probably be a capitalist in training. Her deep religious faith, habitual prayer, and healthy solitude impressed on me the need to base one's life on a higher ideal.

3) What's the most prominent border you have experienced in your life and how has it affected you?

The most prominent border I've experienced in my life was between myself and the white communities I went to school with. From 5th to 8th grade I happily attended a wealthy white school, but after graduating my old classmates increasingly became racist. To be more specific, they became obsessively racist, as if it was a new form of

entertainment. They simultaneously became obsessed with girls, and spending time with them made me feel extremely alienated, and ashamed. After leaving this school, however, I went to an all-boys Catholic school. The boys at this school were just as hyper-racist as my past classmates. High School, therefore, became an experience of learning to be outspoken about racism so students knew that not to say certain things around me. I created a border between myself and both communities throughout this time for the sake preserving my sense of self.

6) At Kenyon, what parts of your identity are the most celebrated and which are the most suppressed?

The parts of my identity that are the most celebrated are intellectual. Although being at Kenyon can be very difficult, the fact that this place contains so many diverse ideas provides a meaning on my experience that sustains my motivations. Office hours and Professors have taught me completely new outlooks on the world, and I have been shown the importance of asking difficult questions. Kenyon has, more importantly, taught me to how to create complex and structured answers to these questions. One side of me, however, that is most suppressed at Kenyon is the social side. Parties, here for example, don't capture me at all. I come from a culture of dance, salsa music, and drinking as an embellishment of an already great night. I find parties at Kenyon, however, completely inaccessible and unhealthy. I try to make up for this by having one-on-one conversations for recreation because people become more personable and willing to have interesting conversations.

12) One moment that has impacted you or changed you.

Over the summer, I was in Washington D.C. and a man was yelling, to who I presumed was his girlfriend, on the sidewalk. He wasn't being violent but his tone was extremely

aggressive, and he was denouncing her for almost hitting him with her car. I was with my co-workers and decided to walk right by it. All the men in the group kept walking but most of the women in the group stopped to talk to her. He immediately calmed down and they took the conversation somewhere else. I felt very impacted by my inaction. I had thought that I would only be inviting more aggression from him, but the women I was with made me realize that making sure the victim of aggression is safe can actually stabilize a situation.

10) What are some of your most important rituals and why?

My most important ritual is writing or journaling. This exercise allows me to reflect and not let an emotion or concern unknowingly grip me. Reflecting on my fears and desires has taught me a lot about how my social education has formed my understanding of everything. Taking time to explore these things, however, has also taught me to learn how to break away from toxic concepts, beliefs, fears, and desires that I was taught to believe as good. Moving my body, whether through dance, soccer, or exercise, is also an important ritual. Dance, when I feel confident enough to do so, allows me to express myself. Soccer is fun because it teaches me about movement, balance and instinct. These rituals inspire an energy in me that solely thinking cannot do.

7) What values or characteristics are most important to you?

Self-sufficiency has always attracted me and been very important to me. I truly hate seeing people try to be like others out of shame, or a need to have people love them. Although I fall into these traps as well, I vehemently try to be genuine and courageous, even when I know I might be accused as wrong or shameful if I do. I measure my own self-sufficiency and others by seeing how they engage with their solitude. When I embrace my own I feel the most powerful and happy, and when I am running to others it

is usually because I am running away from something inside me. I believe I must have formed this value from growing up alienated and seeing people of color whiten themselves in order to be accepted. I have a lot of respect for those individuals that are surrounded by a culture they reject, and subsequently create a value system of their own.