**Essay 1**

Cracking the Code

In the New Yorker article “Cracking the Code” by Jesmyn Ward, she discusses her family’s racial experiences as a minority in America. During those times minorities were faced with strenuous barriers, but perseverance drove her family to achieve great accomplishments. They still accepted their “presumed culture” despite the discrimination, but, nevertheless, there was still uncertainty in some of the details about her family’s ancestral background. They sent their DNA to 23andMe, a genetic testing center, and after a few weeks the results were finally revealed. They were surprised. Contrary to everyone’s belief, the results showed a diverse spectrum of cross cultures. Ward’s parents embraced their ancestry fairly quickly, and in due time she finally began to accept the data, and opened up to the belief that the results did not change the kind of person she was, or the morals and values that she stood for. This leads the readers to understand Ward’s argument that people’s ancestral background should not restrict them from accomplishing and fighting for what they believe. For this reason, Ward’s argument is agreeable, because people’s ancestral background should not determine their success, nor hinder their desires to fight for social justices and equality for all culture, because this will only increase their intelligence (Ward, 2015).

At the beginning of this article, Ward informs the audience of her great aunt’s experiences in trying to receive an education. It insinuates the idea that people should not let racial discrimination stop them from succeeding in life or from enhancing their intellect. The 1950’s and 1960’s brought a great deal of racial issues for minority families, and having the opportunity to accomplish an education was rare. This makes the story of Ward’s great aunt Eunice so inspiring. Despite the fact that she was denied the right to attend regular schools, her father started a school for African American children, where she received her full education (Ward, 2015). Not many minority families were able to receive a fair education during this time, therefore its remarkable that her father was able to provide the community with a school for all children, which makes this example so appealing to Ward’s argument. It shows the audience that Eunice’s father was determined for his child to succeed despite their racial background.

For this reason, Ward originally, struggled to connect with her test results, because growing up her and her family had always been immense advocates for the equality of the African American community. For instance, her “father was a member of the Black Panther Movement and her mother helped with the integration of an elementary school” (Ward, 2015). As a result of her family’s influences, Ward felt very passionate about standing up against the oppression of her fellow African ancestors, and making sure their stories were heard. Even after receiving the results, it did not stop Ward from feeling the most connection with this particular heritage, and still wanting to be a part of the fight for equality. Honorably, the results expressed her genuine character to stand up for what is morally acceptable even though there are other heritages in her blood line. These characteristics bring more validity to Ward’s argument.

Moreover, toward the end of the article, Ward expresses acceptance of her ancestral background, and how she embraces each culture into her life. Although some people adopt their culture traditions by trying a variety of music, foods, and exchanging stories, Ward found her way by learning to speak and translate in “French and Spanish”. She also attended “powwows where she ate fry bread, and observed some of her fellow Native Americans in the dancing circle (Ward, 2015). This opened up the pathway for her to see the importance in embracing all the different cultures that were in her ancestral line. Furthermore, this idea enhanced Ward’s argument, that when people become more intuitive in other cultures, it provides them with more intellectual concepts than just their own heritage.

In conclusion, this article implies the idea that people should not let their racial backgrounds deviate them from their morals or achieving their goals in life. People need to stop letting their stereotypical views about other cultures impact them from opening their minds to embracing different cultures. Therefore, racial backgrounds should not be used to undermine other cultures, but rather allow for inspiration, motivation, and collaboration to create a better world. It provides people with the potential to have positive combinations of heritages to create a diverse learning environment. This ideal concept is quite important to the progression of our society and the production of unification across the nation. Overall, the arguments presented in Ward’s article were very agreeable.

Works Cited

Ward, Jesmyn. “Cracking the Code.” *The New Yorker,* 14 May. 2015, http://www.newyorker.com/tech/elements/innovation-cracking-the-dna-code. Accessed 29 August 2016.