

Therese Quinto

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SPEAKERS

Therese Marie Quinto, Nasriya Witt

N Nasriya Witt 00:03

Today is the 25th of August, 2022. My name is Nasriya Witt, and I'm working as an oral history fellow for the Institute for Diversity and Civic Life. I am in Oldenburg, Germany on a Zoom call with Therese. Therese, would you like to introduce yourself and tell me where you're joining from?

T Therese Marie Quinto 00:23

Hi, my name is Theresa Marie Quinto, and I'm joining from San Antonio, Texas in the US.

N Nasriya Witt 00:31

Perfect. So to start with Therese, where were you born?

T Therese Marie Quinto 00:37

I was born in San Antonio, Texas in 1994, but my parents are from the Philippines.

N Nasriya Witt 00:46

Great. So when did your parents come to the US?

T Therese Marie Quinto 00:52

So my mom came to New York in 1985. And my dad came sometime in the 70s and 80s, but he went to Washington [DC].

N

Nasriya Witt 01:03

And what made the move to the US?

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Therese Marie Quinto 01:07

So basically, for better opportunity, specifically my dad. He comes from big family. There's ten siblings total. So a lot of his elder brothers joined the US Navy, the Coast Guard just to have a better life, and to feed all those siblings. Some of the eldest brothers joined, and my dad also tried to join the army, but because his eldest brothers joined, they petitioned for my dad to come over. But with my mom. She came over because it was more like her oldest sister had challenged her to - well, she was already becoming a nurse in the Philippines, but my mom's oldest sister, my aunt Marie, or I call her tita, tita Marie had told my mom to take the NCLEX [National Council Licensure Examination], and to come to the US. My mom actually didn't want to, but because her sister had already paid for it, she felt like she had to do it, and she wanted to show her sister she could do it. So she took it, and she came here, and she started sending money back home, but that's why she came over initially.

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Nasriya Witt 02:20

Interesting. Can you share some of the stories that your parents or relatives shared of their experiences here in the US? And related to that, what made them decide to live in Texas?

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Therese Marie Quinto 02:34

So my mom, she came over, like I said, because my aunt Marie had told her, "Hey, you should take the NCLEX." And so I talked to my mom the other day, and she had come over in 1985. I thought it was just one test, I thought she just had to take the NCLEX, the national boards here. But she actually had to take three tests: her nursing boards back home, and then there's this one called CGFNS [Commission on Graduates of Foreign Nursing Schools], and then she took the NCLEX here, but she came over because of that. And then when she was in New York, she went to different hospitals, but she first was working with a contract in - oh my goodness, give me one sec - he was working in New Rochelle for one, and then she also worked at Brookdale Hospital. I think Brookdale was in Brooklyn. And then for a time she worked in - sorry, I'm trying to remember. Okay, she worked in three different hospitals in three different cities in New York, and she was working contract nursing. And she was there with other Filipino nurses.

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Therese Marie Quinto 03:46

And basically her whole purpose there was just to send money back home. She was really homesick, honestly. And the whole reason she was doing it was just to have a better life, to make a better life for her parents and her siblings who were still back home. But her sister that encouraged her to come over, she was the eldest, and my mom is actually the youngest. So she was just sending money back home for my grandparents. And she was telling me that it wasn't in Brooklyn where she faced racism per se, because she pretty much just worked, sent

money back home, the majority of her paycheck was sent back home, and then she'd come home. Even though she had some Filipino friends and some Chinese-Filipino friends there, she was lonely because she just stared at the wall when she came home. It was like a boarding house of nurses and stuff. And she really wanted to go back home.

T Therese Marie Quinto 04:44

But she said after the first year, she felt more like, "Okay, I'm getting more comfortable here." Some of her memories that she told me that she really liked about New York was that she would eat a lot of fast food that she wasn't really quite used to yet. She'd have a lot of hot dogs and hamburgers to the point that her old nursing uniforms would get - she got really plumped up in her nursing uniform. And she's like, "Okay, I have to stop eating all these fast foods." But there's this word in Tagalog, it's "matakaw." So she likes to eat a lot. But it was just really good food that she wasn't necessarily exposed to, because she mostly had a lot of home cooking back home.

T Therese Marie Quinto 05:30

Anyways, and she was telling me that's why she came over, but then she actually didn't go home until a couple years later, when my grandfather was getting sick. And she went home to the Philippines when he passed for his funeral. But then, after that, she didn't go home for twenty-one years, until I was going home with her just to look at the Philippines. So backtracking, sorry, it's a little out of order. But she told me the reason when she realized this is really home was when she had me, and she's like, "Okay, I think I am going to stay here." Because her whole entire plan from the very beginning was just to make money, send it back home, and then she wanted to go home, because she was so homesick. I'm sorry, that was out of order. But with my father, he came because of, again, that military background with his older siblings. And then he came over for better opportunity, for a better life. So he initially came to Washington, or probably Maryland, but he was with his siblings. And then eventually after a time, he moved with his siblings also, and my grandma, to California. So they were in Vallejo for a while. I don't know if that answers your question.

N Nasriya Witt 06:59

It does. Thank you for sharing. It's also really interesting that it was you being born in Texas that influenced your mom to see Texas as home.

T Therese Marie Quinto 07:11

Yeah, so another part of it was because I was always curious. I was like, "New York's New York, Cali is Cali, how did you guys meet?" And this is something they actually - my mom is very shy, and she didn't like to talk about it. She was like, "Well, we met through a pen pal situation." I was like, "Oh, that's cool. That's so romantic." And then my dad's like, "No Therese, we actually met through -" You know the magazine *The National Enquirer*?

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Nasriya Witt 07:37

Yes.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 07:38

Yeah. So apparently, back then they had some sort of - I guess it's like when you see ads in the newspaper. And I think they had both written an ad about, "I'm from the space. I'm interested in meeting some person like this." So I guess they had seen each other's ad, and they were writing to each other. And then my mom went and actually flew to go see my dad, because I think by then, some of her siblings were here in the US, but my grandparents had passed. But she actually flew to go to Cali to see my dad, and then also meet his family, meet my grandma. And then they would have a lot of long phone conversations. And my dad would tell me that sometimes his siblings would listen in with the long, corded telephones, and then eventually they decided to move to Abilene. I'm not sure why. Maybe it's just a job opportunity.

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Therese Marie Quinto 07:40

But they moved to Abilene, and they got married by a justice of the peace, which surprised me when my mom was telling me that. I was like, "What? You didn't get married through the church?" But that was just in my head. But then one of her sisters was in Massachusetts and was working there also through a contract while the majority of her family, I think, was in the Philippines. But after she saved up enough money, and her husband and her kids came, she told my mom, "Hey, why don't we live closer to one another?" And she actually didn't like Massachusetts, because the weather was a little bit too cold compared to the tropical climate of the Philippines. She's like, "Let's go to Texas. It's warmer." And my aunt is also more used to bigger city life. I think the city she was living in in Massachusetts was a lot smaller. And since my aunt and my mom are from Manila - They're from this place called Mandaluyong, which is like our New Braunfels of San Antonio. It's a side city. It's a little bit smaller, more close knit. She wanted more things to do in a city.

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Therese Marie Quinto 09:52

And I think my mom had that same feeling, because she was telling me when she was in Abilene that, she's like, "Back then, it was just one hospital, one Walmart, that was it. There wasn't really -" One of her my mom's really good friends back then was a sixty-eight-year-old lady who would live by herself, and they would have long conversations. Really Texas, homey kind of thing. But then she agreed with my sister. And so my dad drove up to help her move down and bring their stuff down to San Antonio. And they decided to settle in San Antonio since it was a little bit more bigger city life than what they both were experiencing at the time.

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Nasriya Witt 10:38

Interesting. Do you think your parents immigration has affected your upbringing?

T Therese Marie Quinto 10:47

I think definitely. I feel part of it is more because of their experiences growing up. And then also, I guess, just the immigrant experience, and how they were raised. Because my grandparents were born like 1910, 1911 on my mom's side. They were a lot more stricter. Very religious. And so I feel like how my mom raised me trickled down. And my dad, he's a lot more chill. But I feel like in a way, because of what he listened to growing up - he loves Elvis. Both of my parents like Motown. But it's funny because I know, some Filipino songs and stuff, and I know how to sing them in Tagalog, because we're very big on karaoke, but I know a lot of old karaoke English songs, like Elvis and Beatles, all that genre and that time period. I know 50s and 60s a lot better than I know 70s, 80s, 90s music here in the US, which is, I feel like, indicative of because of how they raised me and their influence of American culture in the Philippines. And then also how they were raised by their parents.

N Nasriya Witt 12:08

Do you think your parents being immigrants has also impacted your personal values and choices you made with your life?

T Therese Marie Quinto 12:16

Yeah, definitely. For instance, right now I'm twenty-eight, right? I feel like sometimes the decisions I made, like right now I'm going to nursing school. For a long time, I rebelled against it, because I was like - I feel like a lot of either the immigrant experience or my experiences was like, "I don't want to just come here -" And this sounds very ungrateful. Just gonna put that out there. I was like, "I don't want to go to the same university my cousins went to," which is UTSA. I was like, "I want to get out of San Antonio, I want a bigger city," if that makes any sense, or just to get out of hometown, if that makes any sense. But my mom always wanted me to go into a career that was stable, reliable, and that points to nursing. But in my head, I felt like there's a lot of Filipinos that were nurses, and that just felt like a stereotype, and I didn't want to adhere to that. So instead, because of that want of reliability and stability, I rebelled and did something else, liberal arts, English and psychology.

T Therese Marie Quinto 13:27

But just to compare to it, it makes a little more sense when I think about it, because how my grandparents raised my mom and her siblings. For instance, my mom, she actually had to get two degrees, because the first degree, my grandfather, he told her, "Because your sister didn't finish her degree, and she didn't stick to what she had to do, you're going to take up education. You're going to be a teacher." And she was like, "But I don't want to be a teacher. I want to be a nurse." And he's like, "Okay, well, finish your degree, and if you do it, then I'll pay also for your nursing degree." So she actually had to do eight years total of school, not unsimilar to me, except I actually liked my English degree.

T Therese Marie Quinto 14:11

But back then it was kind of like, with my grandparents, what my grandfather said, or what my grandparents decided was what they're going to pursue as a career is what they did because

they paid for their schooling. And even if they didn't want to, they had to do it. It was the mentality. It's not like the American dream here where it's like, "Oh, it's what you love, go ahead and do it." In some ways, my mom always told me, she's like, "I'm raising you a lot more liberally than my parents would have raised me." Almost as if I got lucky. But then her and I have also had, I feel like, clashes sometimes, because of how I am an "American," quote, unquote. More loose - not loose in the sense of - just she thinks that how she raised me is a lot more liberal compared to how she was raised. And then sometimes when I talk to other people, they're like, "Oh, no, your parents are really strict." And so it's interesting, because I can see both sides. But then definitely when I was growing up, sometimes there was a lot of clashes, because I was like, "Well, my other friends are doing this, or why can't I do this?" And it would always be this conversation. Definitely wouldn't sound like a conversation, it would be an argument. But I think also, the fact that it was there's an age difference, because my mom had me when she was a lot older. So between her and I, there's a forty year age gap. And I guess that somehow factors into it, too.

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Nasriya Witt 15:54

Do you feel like you have a relationship with the country and culture of your heritage?

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Therese Marie Quinto 16:01

Honestly, not as much in the sense of not as much as I think I do, but at the same time, there's a lot of things that, as I've gotten older, realized are important to me. Growing up, I really liked Filipino food because of my dad. My dad and all my uncles are amazing in the kitchen. Because they come from big families, my dad and my uncles, their moms would pull them in the kitchen, and would be like, "Hey, you're gonna have to help me feed eight, ten, twelve kids, so get to work." And when we would have get-togethers, even our Thanksgivings and our Christmases, we don't have ham, we don't have turkey. We do, because that's what you're supposed to do if you're American, right? And we do it if there's guests and stuff, but our favorite dishes are more like fried tilapia, or because my parents and my aunts and uncles were from the Philippines, we have a lot of Spanish influence in our dishes. So we have menudo, but it's not a Spanish menudo, it's Filipino. And we have escabeche, which is a Spanish dish, but it's a fried tilapia with sweet and sour stir fry sauce on top of it. Or pancit and egg rolls. That's our traditional kind of food, and it's at every single gathering.

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Therese Marie Quinto 17:20

And some of the things we do, like how we celebrate birthdays. You invite family, and we all go to a buffet, because no one can decide. And then basically, it's the celebrant - I didn't realize we were different until I talked to my other friends, and I went to other people's birthdays. But the celebrant pays for everybody, which I actually realized is more of a Chinese tradition, because of the Philippines having influence from Spanish and Chinese, either immigrants or just the mix of cultures there. And I didn't realize that was - I was like, "Oh, that's what we do," until I went to one of my friend's birthday parties. And this was a lot later in life, like college, past college. And I was like, "Oh, she's gonna pay." It's in my head, like, "She's gonna pay for everybody." It was a much later realization in life, and I was like, "Oh, because she's American,

everyone pays for themselves." And my aunt and my uncle use this term - there's a word for it, but you pay for yourself. And I realized there's a difference in that, like how we just celebrate birthdays, but they're very slight.

T Therese Marie Quinto 18:32

I feel like some of my friends that are Filipino, some of them get really involved. There's a dancing troupe in San Antonio called Karilagán. My pronunciation sucks, but Karilagán, they do a lot of traditional Filipino dances, and they get together for meetings. And my mom asked me a long time ago if I wanted to do that, and I was like, "Nah." Just because, I don't know, I thought it was lame. I'm kind of bad like that. But I mean, even when it came to things like Girl Scouts, I think it's more of my personality. I didn't want to do braiding and go and sell cookies. I'm not really a group person like that. But a lot of my childhood, and I feel like, even my culture and my traditions are built up from more of the Filipino community here in San Antonio, but a closer community because of family friends. And then the aunts - I call them aunts, but some of them are just the older Filipino ladies that I grew up with, that we had parties at their houses. It's just a sign of respect that you call someone your tita or tito, tita being aunt and tito being uncle. I just will call them my aunts and uncles, but it's a sign of respect to your elders.

T Therese Marie Quinto 20:03

So much of my life I feel has been connected with these Filipino parties that I grew up going to with my mom and dad, and just playing with all these kids, and it's someone's birthday, a baptism, or it could just be a normal hangout of the week. And we go, and it's a potluck. So everyone will make the dish that they're best at, or the host will ask my dad to make his dinuguan, which is chocolate meat, which is another story for another time. And then we all get together, and the kids and the dogs are running around. And later on as the night wears on, people will be singing karaoke. And that was a normal thing growing up. Sometimes eventually, later on, the kids would be playing video games, and then everyone would be singing. And then sometimes kids were expected to sing if they had a good voice, or just because they're cute kind of thing. But that was a totally normal occurrence.

T Therese Marie Quinto 21:05

But how my aunt and my mom met, they're friends through church, because a lot of my family is very Catholic. But some of my family, some of the cousins and stuff, some of my cousins aren't very religious because of how much it was ingrained into us, or tried to be ingrained into us, that when we turned eighteen, or once we moved out, it was like, "Okay, so now we have a choice. We don't have to go to church," kind of thing. But now I definitely also realize how religion has played a factor into my life and what I should and shouldn't do, things like that.

N Nasriya Witt 21:52

It seems like food and music is a huge part of Filipino-American culture. Aside from that, could you elaborate a bit more about your relationship with religion and how it ties to how you were raised?

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Therese Marie Quinto 22:09

Yeah, so. So specifically with religion, a lot of my childhood was honestly being more involved in the church. So we went to this parish, and where I was raised, it was St. Brigid Catholic Church. And that's how my mom met another Filipino lady who I consider my tito. And then they got connected, and they're like, "Ah, you're Filipino," and then they're like, "Oh, we'll have get-togethers," kind of thing. But probably because of my parents' love of music, or my mom wanting me to be involved in stuff, she enrolled me in choir. And so in San Antonio, we have a really big Hispanic, Mexican Latino community. So that church that I went to - well first, the church, St. Brigid, she's an Irish saint. And second, we're predominantly in a Hispanic community. And third, my mom and my dad being Filipino, Sunday church is a very important thing? But then after church, they would be, for example, Knights of Columbus. They're this group, they fundraise and sell tacos. So we have breakfast tacos, and sometimes we go to mass.

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Therese Marie Quinto 23:35

Early morning mass at eight am is always a Spanish mass. So there'd be trumpets, violin, accordion. And then when we'd have our feast days, celebrating the church itself, that it was founded, and we'd have homecoming days, they'd always have Irish river dancers coming in. So it was kind of a mix and a blend. I personally have an affinity, I really like the Irish priest that I connected with growing up. But also my formation, a part of I feel like how I behave, and why my faith is really important to me, is because of the experiences I had at church, actually. And I think just because it was presented to me, but then also because of the friendships I made. My love of music and why I like to sing. And what else? I think I really like service. I like giving back because of the parish I went to, because their motto is always talking about, "there are no strangers here, only friends we have not yet met." So sometimes we do mission trips and go down to the valley, which is south going almost but not quite into Mexico and just helping do stuff there. I just like that aspect of service, probably because of my parish.

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Therese Marie Quinto 25:05

But I feel like there was a break - and sometimes it still kind of grates on me - for a time, I didn't really want to be part of organized religion, sometimes because of what I learned in college just about abuses of the Spanish priests and the conquistadores. And I'm like, "Man, why do we have to ascribe to Catholicism?" Because we were taken over, the Philippines was taken over by the Spanish, by Spain for almost 500 years. That's why we have Spanish words in Tagalog, in the national language. And then why a lot of our food is intermeshed with Spanish cuisine. And I was like, "Isn't it just impressed upon us throughout hundreds of years? Why does it have to be something I have to do?" And then when I heard and read about it in my native women writers studies, how they mistreated Native Americans, I was like, "Why do I have to be a part of that?"

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Therese Marie Quinto 26:21

I came home one day, and I was ranting to my mom, I was like, "You know what they did? Why

do we have to do that?" I feel like part of it is because of how she was also raised by her father and her mother and the grandfather. But also, I feel like there's a point where you have to make the decision for yourself. Sometimes she'll text me and tell me like, "Okay, remember to go to mass." In my opinion, I feel like faith should always be more of a freewill thing. You showed me this information, but I should be able to decide for myself what I want to do or what I don't want to do. So sometimes how I practice my faith - I am still Catholic. It's just I realize I've gone through ups and downs within it. But I feel like it's good to question and not always just be like, "Yes, I will do it because it's expected of me." More of a, "It's what I want to do, because it's what I choose to do."

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Nasriya Witt 27:30

Yes. Did your experience at experiences at St. Brigid influence your decision to go into the nonprofit world? Specifically, we met working at Catholic Charities in the refugee resettlement department, and I'm wondering if that's tied to some of your experiences volunteering at the church you went to.

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Therese Marie Quinto 27:52

Yeah, so I actually got connected to Catholic Charities because a cousin of mine worked with one of the nonprofits connected to Catholic Charities at Seton Home. And so I had graduated from UTSA, University of Texas San Antonio here with my degree in English and psychology. And I applied for a grant intern position. And then eventually I became a grant writer before I met you, Nasriya. So I did that position for a year, but there was a point where there was a lot of immigrants coming from Latin America. I think you remember that, it was a huge influx. And then at that point, Catholic Charities was like, along with other nonprofits, "We're wanting to help immigrants coming in." And the thing is, the grants office was right in the foyer of when people were coming in when people were dropping off donations. And I think I've always had a love of service, for one. And I like writing, don't get me wrong, I love English. But somehow, professional business writing doesn't always do it for me. You know that I prefer creative writing. So I'd get bored.

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Therese Marie Quinto 29:10

But when these immigrants are coming in, the whole nonprofit was like, "Okay, everybody, hands on deck. We're getting a lot of donations from different companies in San Antonio, from different hotels." Helping people get to where they need to get to safely to protect them from people trying to take advantage, like human traffickers, whatever. And it was a really beautiful moment, because it was an interfaith, crossing business, crossing nonprofit world. Even people that weren't religious were coming. They're like, "Hey, we want to help people." It's the human condition. There were points where it was past my eight hour shift, and I would be helping other volunteers organize, sort clothes, making sure immigrants passing through talked to caseworkers. It was round the clock. And I was not fully present in my job, and the grant director at the time, she was like, "Hey, I can see where your heart is, and I know this is your job, but you're really out there, but I need to here." But she's like, "But I know that's what you love, so I'm just being honest with you." I'm like, "No, I agree. I'm a lot more interested in helping people, helping them. But I still need to do my job."

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Therese Marie Quinto 30:39

Grant writing honestly burned me out. So once I finished my year, I took a break for a couple months, I looked around for a job. And then I had heard there was an opening through a friend in the refugee department tutoring kids in the school impact programs. So I was like, "Oh yeah, that sounds cool." I really like education, too. I was like, "I can tutor, that's fine." Because I used to do that before in Houston. But it was specifically working with refugees, and actually, I hadn't really worked too much with refugees. But I mean, growing up a lot of my classmates, we're all different. Even though there is a majority of a Hispanic population in San Antonio, but I think we're rather diverse here. So like, "Yeah, that sounds cool." So yeah, and that's how I met you. But actually, I met you later on in the education with adults, within ESL, but my roundabout way of explaining how I got into the refugee department at Catholic Charities.

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Nasriya Witt 31:41

Interesting. I did not know all of that. Okay, let's pivot for a bit. Do you speak Tagalog or any other Filipino languages?

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Therese Marie Quinto 31:51

So I speak Tagalog, but not well, not fluently. I speak like someone trying to speak Tagalog. I speak with an American accent. One time I went to the Philippines later on in 2018 myself on a mission trip. And I was trying to haggle. I was like, "Yeah, let me try to be like - let's go to the open air market." They have these places that are like secondhand stores. There's a word for it in Tagalog, and I was trying to bargain. And she's like, "Oh, are you Chinese?" And I was like, "No." She's like, "Ah, you're American." I was like, "Yeah." Whenever I speak sometimes, my mom and my dad, are like, "You sound like you're from the country." Because I guess how I speak, it's not as fast, as rapid. And then my pronunciation is not the best. So that's my bad. My mom was wanting to force me to learn a little bit when I was younger, eight or younger. But I was like, "No, I'm good."

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Therese Marie Quinto 32:56

But then the only reason I know a little bit is because my parents, they'd sometimes talk about me. So I'm an only child, for one. They'd sometimes talk about me, how to discipline me, what to do by themselves. And that's why I paid attention and keyed in, because I was like, "What are they talking about?" But my mom told me at one point some of my cousins had come from Japan. And they're brother/sister combo. One of my dad's nieces and nephews, they came, and we were playing, just playing together. And I think I must have been two. And she said she came in, and I was speaking Tagalog. She's like, "Before I brought you to school, you were actually speaking Tagalog. I went to Kids' Day Out, which is a nursery at church. And I was four something, that's when I started learning English, more than what they were teaching me at home. And she's like, "That's when you stopped." I still learned tidbits growing up, but she's like, "Before you were fluent, and then when you got to school, you stopped speaking fluently like that."

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Nasriya Witt 34:03

Interesting. Is there a Tagalog school in the Filipino San Antonio community?

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Therese Marie Quinto 34:09

That's a great question. Not that I'm aware of, because I feel like most Filipinos, if they want to, they learn at home. And then the joke was always that my mom would drop me off in the Philippines for two months to learn Tagalog really well. That's sometimes what some of my cousins would have done to them, but not that I know of. Yeah, I'm not sure.

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Nasriya Witt 34:39

Has the San Antonio or Texas Filipino community changed over time while you were growing up and after you moved?

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Therese Marie Quinto 34:51

Yeah, so I'm gonna be honest, I've grown up in San Antonio most of my life. I really lived in Houston just by myself right after college. But like I said, I didn't join the Karilagán group. I mostly heard about them and saw them when I would go to these festivals that we have, like the Asian festivals. At Institute of Texan Cultures I'd see the dances, and I'd hear about traditional dances from my mom and dad, like tinikling with bamboo sticks and stuff. But there's a Filipino church that we have here in San Antonio, and I've only been one, two, three times. And they sing a lot of traditional Filipino songs, but just because of how far it was from my house, I never really went.

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Therese Marie Quinto 35:41

But in regards to your question, I think I've mostly noticed the change in Filipino groups as I grew older. I wasn't involved in those communities per se, but I was more involved in the Filipino parties and stuff that I had growing up. But then my mom was a part of this other prayer group. So there's some prayer groups that are just Catholic. And one of them was for Our Lady of Fátima. So it's this prayer group where they pray on Saturdays, they pray the rosary. And then sometimes they invite a priest to say mass. But when we were a part of that community, someone would host the rosary to happen at their house on a Saturday. And that happened quite a few times at my mom, my aunt's house, and other aunt's house. It was a bigger Filipino community that we had, that we were part of back then too. And it was fun, it was a lot of, again, it's kind of the same thing. You just add some rosaries, some Catholicism into the mix. The kids would be running around. You'd have a lot of food. And then when I was a kid, I was like, "Man, it's boring because we can't be loud because they're praying." But then eventually, I was like, "Okay, no, praying is important."

T

Therese Marie Quinto 37:04

But then as I got older, things happened. My mom would sometimes not want to go because she thought that the focus was more about gathering, getting together, eating food, she's like, "The most important thing is the prayer aspects, and now we're making it a social gathering. It's not supposed to be that. It's just supposed to be a light snack, whatever, and then move on." So eventually, the person who was leading that community, the two leaders disagreed, and then it fractured. But still, because of the connections that were made as far as friends, whether through church, or my mom would meet other Filipino nurses when she was working at the hospital that she worked at in San Antonio. That's how I got connected to some of my best friends growing up. My mom's coworkers' kids. That's how we would meet them. And then we'd see each other at church, and it was a whole revolving door of parties, going to Fátima on Saturdays, seeing them on Sunday.

T Therese Marie Quinto 38:14

And then my aunt that moved down from Massachusetts, she would have big parties that were for New Year's. Our New Year's is really important to us. People's Thanksgiving - a lot of other Americans are like, "Oh, Thanksgiving is our holiday." And I in my opinion, I feel like Christmas because we're Catholic, but then also New Year's, which now I think, as I realized, is more of maybe a Chinese tradition. I mean, we wouldn't always blow up fireworks, but we'd more watch fireworks on the TV. But celebrating, being together, starting a whole new year, or even going to Christmas Eve mass and then going to Christmas Day mass. And then hanging out two, three days after because you have so many leftovers. It was like our Thanksgiving during those two celebrations. But as we've grown older, I feel like sometimes people drifted apart a little bit, and there's just a part of getting older, I guess, that it's changed in that aspect. We have less hangouts, but I think it's more up to the younger generation to start hosting those kinds of things. But because I wasn't involved in Karilagán or Santo Niño, I don't know about those. They're part of the Filipino community, but not the one that I grew up in as I grew up. Does that make sense?

N Nasriya Witt 39:39

It does. So you mentioned that the New Year's is a big celebration. Is that the New Year's that happens December 31st, or is it the Chinese New Year's?

T Therese Marie Quinto 39:51

Oh, no, you're right. It was December 31. So actually it's the American New Year, not Chinese New Year, my bad.

N Nasriya Witt 40:02

So can you describe your friends growing up a bit more? Who were they, and what resulted in these bonds?

T Therese Marie Quinto 40:12

So, one of my really good friends growing up is Christine San Jose. Her mom was one of my mom's friends when she worked at CHRISTUS Santa Rosa Hospital. So they met at the hospital and then they saw, again, each other at church. And then that nursery I was talking about that I went to where I started learning English, that's where I met her at growing up. So because I'm an only child, my mom would take me to friends' houses, like play dates, and Christine was one of those. She's literally across a major street, and then I would hang out with them several days a week. And because both my mom and her were night shift nurses, our dads would rotate bringing us, hanging out together. And so both of her parents are Filipino, and I'm hanging out with her and her brother. And sometimes when her mom would do extra shifts, or she would moonlight at a nursing home, some of my fondest memories are we're out there in the van while the dad's waiting for her to come off of her shift. But then the kids are there, and then I'm there, and we're playing in the car waiting for her mom to come out. And then some of my memories too, where they come over my house, and we're just running around the house. Just like that.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 41:33

But then one of my other close friends, her name is Reema, but her dad is Lebanese, and her mom's Filipino. And since she's an only child too, we'd hang out and get along and play. But I do have Filipino friends as well, but I feel like because we're in San Antonio, one of my other closest friends, she's Hispanic. But if you think about it, when I think about it as I grew up before her mom got divorced, her name was Gonzalez, so they're from Mexico. But then her maiden name is actually Hubbard. So my friend's name, Paloma Hubbard. She seems more German to me than anything, but I think she's pretty Hispanic, but I never gotten the full length extent of it. But it's funny because one of the teachers joked - we'd all hang out together on the playground and elementary school. And one of my teachers was like, "Oh, are you guys all sisters?" And me and Christine looked at each other. We definitely look Filipino. And then Paloma with curly brown hair, pale white skin, we're like, "How do you mistake that we're all sisters, other than we get along really, we all hang out?" What was I trying to say? I was like, "We look more like an Oreo, dark, light, dark." But anyways, it's a joke.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 41:57

But I feel like what I really liked about living in San Antonio is camaraderie. It's warm, in my opinion, with how some of the Hispanic friends that I have growing up that I've met in elementary, middle school, high school, even in college. Because of that Spanish influence, I feel like there's a lot of similarities in cultures between Hispanic, Tejano communities and cultures, with Filipino culture. And so when I met Paloma's mom, for instance, her mom and my mom, I feel like it was very American, they were talking like, "Okay, we're gonna meet each other, make sure we're good." But she also had that background of there's some Catholic influence, but it's mostly, when they had gatherings or get-togethers, it's the same aspects. Family is the most important thing. Food is a thing. And I mean, I really liked that aspect of growing up in San Antonio I'm Filipino-American, but then also with my friends that are Hispanic that I've met.

N

Nasriya Witt 44:31

Great. Thank you for sharing. When you were at university, did you participate in any community events or organizations? How did you build community when you were away from home?

T Therese Marie Quinto 44:48

Right, so actually, because I went to UTSA, I live mostly at home. I really wanted to get away though, but I was encouraged to stay home. So since UTSA is a commuter campus, I just would have my classes, I'd go home. I did try to connect with some of the Christian communities just to see what it was like, and they were friendly. I tried going to this Filipino organization, it was kind of like a sorority or fraternity vibe, but with Filipinos. But, again, I think this is just me being sometimes like, "No, I'm good." I went, and I should have maybe tried it more than once, but I went, and they had this thing, kind of like a big brother, big sister, kind of organization. So I would be paired with an ate, like an older sister who'd show me the ropes of UTSA through a Filipino-American experience. And I was like, "Nah, I'm good." I don't know, it's just me Nasriya, personally. I was like, "Nah, I'm okay". But they were really nice. They were very friendly. It was all good. I was just like, "I'm okay."

T Therese Marie Quinto 46:01

Actually, where I connected more - and I think this is just me liking food. One of my really good friends from University, she's actually Thai. But I met her in the VSA, Vietnamese Student Association club, because I was walking by, and I was like, "Oh, what is this?" They were grilling meat on an open thing. It was one of those days where all the organizations are selling stuff. And I was like, "This is so legit. What is this?" And she was selling stuff with these other people. And they're like, "Oh, it's a bánh mì." I didn't really eat a lot of Vietnamese food up to that point. I was like, "Huh." And they were like, "Well, it's a French bread," because Vietnamese is like French, whatever. So I was like, "Oh, that's really interesting. I've never tried one before." Because at home, it's just Filipino foods, all the American food, but then we mostly stick to Chinese buffets. Because again, my family can't decide, and there's a lot of them. So I was like, "Oh, what's this?" They're like, "Oh, you want to try one? It's a bánh mì." And I was like, "Oh, that's cool."

T Therese Marie Quinto 47:04

And so from then on, I was pretty much getting a little bit of exposure to Vietnamese cuisine through my friend Emmie. But it's funny, as I talked and hung out with her more, she's actually Thai. But I'm not sure if they even had a Thai organization. But she's like, "Oh, I have some friends that are in this organization. I was like, "Why are you here, because they're not even Thai." But she's like, "No, they're cool." And I was like, "Yeah, they're cool." So because of her, I think I was more exposed to Vietnamese food. I feel like in a way I connected more. Again, it's probably just through food, through food and just meeting people, I guess, that would invest time in me and vice versa, more like the relationships rather than the organizations themselves, because of what name they had.

N Nasriya Witt 47:55

Yeah. That makes a lot of sense to me. When you're used to making friends, but from so many different backgrounds, it becomes about other factors rather than the backgrounds. Do you keep up with any traditions and practices, and if so, what are they?

T Therese Marie Quinto 48:18

Do you mean of like being Filipino or being Catholic? Or is it a mix of that?

N Nasriya Witt 48:25

A mixture of that would be perfect.

T Therese Marie Quinto 48:28

Okay. So probably one of the biggest ones - because my family is very heavily Catholic, I go to church on Sundays, but then sometimes when I don't go, I'm like, "Oh my goodness." I really feel it. And then I have to sometimes think, "Is this because this is what I believe, or is it because it's been impressed upon me?" So there's that, and then I feel like, for myself, prayer is important. I don't know how to describe it. There's some things that I do with some Catholics, praying the rosary is very important. And then also, there's another prayer that's the Divine Mercy prayer at 3pm. And I feel this is probably more from my visit to the Philippines in 2018. I met this lady who's also my tita, but she's one of the ladies that raised my mom from a younger age, and she never got married. And when it turned 3pm, Divine Mercy, 3pm, everything like that, it's because some Catholics are like, "Okay, this is the time that Jesus died." So when it hits 3pm, they call that the Divine Mercy hour. So that's when you want to either start or pray the Divine Mercy.

T Therese Marie Quinto 49:51

So I think when we first arrived, my mom had just come from - she hadn't visited since her father's death to the Philippines until I arrived and visited with her and my dad. And then we were unpacking, and it was super hot and humid there. And there was only one fan. And then we were unpacking everything from the US, because when people come back to visit family, it's not like the people in the Philippines are gonna take care of us. I mean, they do, obviously, because you're family, but if you're coming from the US, you have to bring your - you're called a balikbayan. You're revisiting, you're coming back, so you bring things from America, like candies and sweets and things that they want, or things that they wouldn't have, goods and stuff. But then once it hit 3pm, we were in the middle of unpacking, and she's like, "Oh, Divine Mercy hour," and then she's up. She's the elder, right? She's there. And we're like, "Okay." So then we stopped, and I was like, "What's happening?" And then we just started praying the Divine Mercy.

T Therese Marie Quinto 50:52

And then I think maybe that's where - I must have had been exposed to that prayer before

that point, but I feel like because of that moment, where she was like, "No, this is very important," set a precedent that even when I'm vacillating in my faith, and then I hear from other people, maybe they don't have to be Catholic, but they're like, "Oh, Divine Mercy." It hits 3pm. It reminds me of what that meant to manang Dolly. Well, my aunt Dolly. I wouldn't call her manang, that was more of my mom. It's a respectful title. But I would call her something else, because she's not the person who raised me. There's another word for it. But I guess off the top of my head, that's what I would think of tradition-wise.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 51:46

I guess there's other things. If I'm ever talking to an older Filipino person, and maybe if I either don't know them too well, or even if they're just older than me, you always want to say, "po," which is - I don't know the English translation for it, but you end your sentences with "po" because it's showing that you're respecting them as the elder, for instance, if you're talking in a sentence. Or if you have an aunt or an uncle, or even if they're not related to you, but they're an older person, you call them tito or tita, because it's a respectful title. Off the top of my head, that's what I think.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 52:29

And then there are other things, but I think I've found that with some cultures, that's what they do hospitality-wise. If a guest comes to my parents' home, or if someone comes to my home now, you don't leave them empty-handed. You have to give them - even if I'm inviting someone over for a barbecue, or my boyfriend's cooking something, we make sure they leave with a packed plate full of food to go. Yeah, you feed them when they're here, but you make sure that they leave with food to go. Or if a guest comes, you want to feed them, offer them what you have, because it's the right thing to do. Sometimes, even if I don't really know the person that well, but they're coming, and you're surprised because you didn't plan for guests to come, you're like, "Oh crap. Oh man, do I have things I could feed them, drinks I can offer?" And you try to offer the best that you have, but you're like, "Oh my goodness, I didn't plan for this." Things like that are important.

N

Nasriya Witt 53:32

Makes sense. So I'm gonna pivot a bit and ask questions related to race relations and political opinions. So have you experienced any unfair treatment? What happened, and why do you think it happened?

T

Therese Marie Quinto 53:49

I personally don't think - I don't really remember me experiencing any unfair race relations or anything like that. Probably the one that I most remember - and it's a really minor incident, but I still remember it up 'til now, is when I was a kid. And Christine and I were in the lunch line, and I think we were probably either first through third grade, somewhere in between there. And then someone called her Chinese, which is not offensive, it's totally okay, but we're not Chinese. And he called her Chinese. She got upset. And this was in the lunch line. I kicked him in the shin,

and then I ran away. Now that I think about it, I'm like - but she was upset, and so I was like, "You know what? Whatever." And so I kicked him. Now that I think about it, I'm like, "Being Chinese," one, there's nothing wrong with that.

T Therese Marie Quinto 54:46

So it's not being unfair in this. I'm thinking of other things now. It's not being unfair, but a lot of times people would see my name, my last name is Spanish, Quinto. But then they'd be like, "Oh, so it's a Hispanic person," and they'd look up, and they'd see me, and they're like, "You're not Hispanic?" Or they'd see me without seeing my name, and they're like, "Are you Chinese?" And then they'd see my name, and they're like, "What?" And then they'd be like, "You're not Hispanic or Mexican, right?" And they're like, "Ah," and then some people who know, they're like, "Oh, you're Filipino, right?" I'm like, "Yeah." But I don't think I've actually had really unfair treatment per se.

T Therese Marie Quinto 55:33

My mom was telling me one time. I'm trying to remember the third city she worked in, because she worked in Brooklyn, she worked in New Rochelle, and then she worked in Kingston, there we go. Her shortest contract that she did was in Kingston, because she and some of the nurses felt a bit of racism from some of the nurses that worked there, and so she felt uneasy. So she was like, "I want to pick up a contract elsewhere." But she was telling me, I think, a long time ago, and I don't know the story fully well, but one time she was trying to get a plane back from some place. And either they wouldn't let her off the bus - I think it was in Texas - off the bus or off the plane. She was like, "Hey, I have to get home," something, something. I think they had thought she was an illegal immigrant or something, and they wouldn't let her off. She was like, "No, I have to catch this plane at this time because of yada yada." And she was like, "I have a contract at this hospital." And they were like, "No, we need to see your ID," and she's like, "You can literally call my supervisor. I've been in the States for this long." And she was really mad because she was about to miss her plane or something. And how they were treating her was as if she hadn't been living and working here for a while. That really upset her, because she was confused for an illegal immigrant. And other than that, I mean, I personally haven't been haven't experienced any racial discrimination like that before.

N Nasriya Witt 57:23

Has any historical event had an impact on your life?

T Therese Marie Quinto 57:35

Other than 9/11, other than the January 6 storming of the capitol, I mean, other than those two things that I can think of.

N Nasriya Witt 57:48

Could you elaborate on how those affected your life?

T

Therese Marie Quinto 57:54

So when I was a kid, I saw the the twin towers fall when I was in elementary school, and all I understood was about how terrorism and stuff like that. And I don't think I really understood until I was leaving college, and then when I was working with Catholic Charities, and then later on when I joined the youth mentorship programs. I got upset because I was like, "Why are people who are Muslim being discriminated against? I don't think it's fair, because obviously, there's bad people -" Okay, so it was a mix. When I was a kid, I was like, "Okay, some bad stuff happened." And then the part of me that's American is like, "I'm really glad," when these extremists when they found - was that Osama bin Laden or Saddam Hussein? - when they found him hiding in the hills, and they had taken them out. I was like, "Okay, good. We don't have to be concerned." And then interspersed with I feel like that part of me from college, but also the part of it's not cool that we're discriminating against people that are coming or visiting or whatever, from Muslim countries because it doesn't mean that everyone who, who's Muslim is an extremist.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 59:18

And I think just part of that was because of my aunt Marie, the one that's the oldest sister of my mom's siblings, she's very open-minded. I mean, not that my mom isn't, but in the sense of the way that she explained things to me was more like everyone has a different way of worshiping. Because my mom is very much like, "Okay, just Catholicism. That's it." And then with my aunt, she was a lot more open-minded, which I took to listen to from her. And so when I joined the youth mentorship program, and I had one of my mentees, and I don't know, I guess it's other than feeling incensed about when we had that ban of people coming from different Muslim countries during that whole anti - I was just like, "This is just another anti-sentiment." They have anti-semitism sometimes or when they had the anti-Russian people, anti-immigrant. I was like, "This is literally just another cycle of people being xenophobic in American history," and I was mad about it. Even though I only have one Muslim friend that I know about actively that I'm still friends with on Facebook. And I was just like, "I don't understand why we have to dislike people just because they're different."

T

Therese Marie Quinto 1:00:48

And then when I had my friend who was my mentee, there was a point where I was concerned because of the different, again, what seems to be anti-Muslim sentiment recently, or that I saw. I wanted to bring her to a country concert, and this is me, maybe it's just me being stereotypical, and then also living in Texas. I was like, "Okay, I want to bring her to a country concert, if she's okay with it, with their sisters." But because they're veiled, I was like, "Are people going to look at her?" I was concerned not because she's wearing a veil like, "How are people going to stare?" No, I was concerned if they would be racist. I was concerned for her safety. I asked my boyfriend, I was like, "Okay, if I bring her to this place, do you think they're gonna be mean or anything?" I didn't want her to feel any negative kind of way, and I also didn't want to bring her to a place where - I live in Texas, but I'm not uber like, "Oh yay, country concerts," but I like country now a little bit more. But I guess I was just concerned with how the

heightened political tensions at that time. I was like, "I want to keep her safe. I wonder if she's gonna be okay." So I didn't bring her to the concert, but I was just being cautious. But then I was also like, "What if she doesn't like country music?"

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:02:07

But I guess when I was a mentor in that program, it made me think from a different perspective, other than educational, which I was trying to help her learn English, but then maybe from more - not a parent perspective, but a friend. I didn't really think of it until that point of what it would be like to - is she gonna be safe? What kind of discrimination she might be experiencing. I wanted to shield her from that, or I wanted to keep her from that. I don't know how to describe it. Do you know what I mean?

N Nasriya Witt 1:02:53

Yes. You felt responsible for her, and with that came considerations about her identity.

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:03:01

Yeah. I'm proud of her. And I know this is going off, but I wanted to expose her to some of the culture that we have here. But then I was also not sure about how open-minded people are. But when I think about it on the flip side, part of what I like about San Antonio is, in my opinion, it is pretty diverse generally, and I think of it as a small community in a big city.

N Nasriya Witt 1:03:42

What do you see as your identity? Do you identify as American, Texan, Filipino-American, all of the above?

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:03:54

It's weird, I never really thought of it like that. I mean, I'm Filipino-American. I know I'm from Texas. Sometimes when I bite into a bean and cheese taco, I'm like, "I'm so glad I was born in San Antonio, so I can wake up and eat breakfast tacos." I feel like I'm just myself. However, I feel like a lot of who I am is influenced by my parents and again, food, and probably my faith, and how I grew up, and the people I've met is very influenced by that. So I feel like a lot of that is also growing up in Texas. And my friends that are either from Mexico or Hispanic, being introduced to that. I really like Mexican food or Tex-Mex. It's not actually just Mexican food, it's Tex-Mex food. I haven't really thought of it that deeply, honestly. It's more like, I really like Filipino food, but I definitely know that I'm American. Because not just the language I speak, but because when I go to the Philippines, my mom's showing me where she grew up, where my grandparents are buried, but then I know I'm different, because I don't exactly look how my cousins look, and I don't talk how they talk, and I don't know the landmarks like they know the landmarks, if that makes any sense.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 1:05:33

I have to also realize that because my mom tells me a lot. She wanted to stay in the US because of when I was born, she was like, "I want my child to be raised in the US because of opportunities they'll have." And sometimes I have to remind myself I need to be grateful for the privileges I was provided. Sometimes there are times when I think of what if I was born in the Philippines? What would my life be like? And it's not as if it's a sad thing. I'll be able to speak Tagalog better. Maybe I'd be slimmer, because I wouldn't be eating so much junk food and stuff. Sometimes I just think of it like that. For instance, when patriotic songs come on, I also feel that same kind of sentiment. I feel emotional about it, because I am American, is what I mean. But then, I don't even know the Philippine anthem. I don't. And when I grew up, when we were still saying the Pledge of Allegiance, back then I knew the Texas flag pledge. And it's funny, because one of my friends who moved a lot because she's military, she's like, "What? You guys were doing a pledge to the Texas flag?" I was like, "Yeah, you didn't have that for your state?" She was like, "No." I was like, "Oh, that's just Texans, then?" And so I also know that there's sometimes part of being Texan, there's an inflated sense of pride, which I tried to think about and mitigate. I'm not the person who's like, "Oh, Texas is the best." I'm just grateful that I was born and raised here, because I realized that and because I was told that a lot, I need to make the most out of my opportunities.

N

Nasriya Witt 1:07:42

Yes, thank you for sharing. I have one last question. But before I ask this, I wanted to know if there was anything else you'd like to share for this interview. So anything else that you think is important related to what we've been discussing so far.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 1:08:02

I had one while we were talking, but I forgot, and I was really trying to remember

N

Nasriya Witt 1:08:21

You can take your time, there's no rush.

T

Therese Marie Quinto 1:08:30

I was trying to remember what I was - So this is kind of random. Just a side story. I can't remember if I told you, Nasriya. But one time I came home from middle school, and back in middle school, I would eat five, six, seven meals. I was a really hungry kid. But I came home, and I saw what I thought was a huge plate of egg rolls. I was like, "Yay!" So then I grabbed it and bit into it. And then I was super - not disgusted, I was just upset because it wasn't what I was expecting when I bit into it. I was like, "What is this? It's sweet." And my mom was like, "Therese, that's a turon." And I was like, "What's turon?" At that point, I hadn't eaten one before. Turon is plantain that's ripe that's rolled in brown sugar, deep fried, and then you also roll it in egg roll wrapper, so it looks just like an egg roll, it's just a little bit bigger, and it's a

dessert. And I was mad because I was expecting meat or something. And it wasn't 'til later when I went to the Philippines with my mom, and they had the street vendors, and they were selling - they call it there banana cue, but it's turon. I was like, "Okay, so this is what it is."

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:09:59

And I guess sometimes that's how I feel about some things. Still sometimes I learn a little bit more about my mom and my dad's experience when they told me the details, and even when my grandma would tell me what it was like, coming from the Philippines, how hard it was back home to now living here. But now she's retired and moved back with her kids in the Philippines. But I guess it's just an interesting experience, because I think life would have been different if I lived in the Philippines, or if I was born in the Philippines. But then also, I'm grateful for the experience I have here.

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:10:57

When I went on that mission trip before to visit the Philippines, we had gone to this really poor part of Manila. It's one of those other small little areas, and it's called Tondo. It was, and I think it still is one of the poorer parts of Manila. And I was meeting a guy who was our tour guide, and he was showing us these people who had built their houses on the Bay of Manila literally over rocks that were where the tide comes in. And they could build a house up there. They could build a house over those rocks within a month. And essentially, they're squatting. When I was visiting, I wanted to help, part of this mission trip. And then I also realized part of being American - I don't know if it's just me being Filipino, and the service aspect, or me wanting to get back and reconnect with my culture. But also, I was wondering if it's kind of like that. And I don't mean to say it like this, but like white privilege. Like, "Oh, I'm better than you, let me help you."

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:12:13

But then he said something that stuck with me. And he was like, "I'm showing you these houses not because - I don't want you to come here and think they need your help, because they don't. They're Filipino, and they're people, and they have dignity just like you. I think a part of it is you can come here, and you're working as a part of these projects and stuff. But they have dignity. They're working very hard. Sure, they have different socio-economic - they're living in a different way. But it doesn't mean that they need your help in the sense that they don't need your pity." Like that. They just deserve your respect like everybody else. And I think that's what I think about when I think of my cousins that are from the Philippines, or sometimes when we interact. And it's not super culturally, socio-economically charged conversations like that. But I guess what I mean is sometimes it helps reframe my thoughts when I'm thinking it's not just about me being born in America, or either being closer or more towards my culture. It's just more a reminder of how we should treat other people who also other Filipinos or whatnot. Okay, sorry, what was your last question?

N Nasriya Witt 1:12:48

The last question then: since this interview will be archived for people to listen to in the future,

is there a takeaway message you'd like to share with whoever will listen to this in the future?

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:14:04

I think I was gonna say something cliché, like your culture is what you make of it. But then when I think of it, it really is what you take, what you edit, what you want it to be. And then I also, somehow I think being Filipino-American, or being a part of your culture, I think somehow it can also bring comfort. For me, that's what I feel like. If I'm stressed out, it's not like I always gravitate towards Filipino food, per se, as my comfort food, because it's definitely hamburgers and stuff like that or comfort American foods. But something I realized is that my culture is very important to me, because when I'm trying to find a life partner, he doesn't have to be Filipino, per se, but I found out I want to share that with my future person. I want them to either be open to it or be interested to try it, because it's a big part of my life. So I think if your culture is important to you, depends on how deep you want to go into it. But I always feel like there's nothing wrong with diversity, and that's part of why I like being in San Antonio, because I love trying Lebanese food, I love trying Indian food, I want to try all the different African restaurants that we have here. This is because I like food too much, Nasriya, but you know this already. I loved meeting my friend Emmie because of the Vietnamese food, and then I also love Thai food. I mean, there's nothing wrong with experiencing other people's cultures and then also appreciating your own.

N Nasriya Witt 1:16:08

That's really beautiful, and I absolutely agree with that. So if there isn't anything else that you'd like to add, I can go ahead and stop the recording now.

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:16:20

Okay.

N Nasriya Witt 1:16:20

All right, sounds good, bye.

T Therese Marie Quinto 1:16:25

Okay, bye.