“An Attempt to Hold a Mirror to Zaffar Kunial’s ‘The Word’”

By Saurabh Anand
Description of the Artwork

Every time I listen to “The Word” (Kunial, 2018), I see my image in it too. Some way or another. I grew up in Delhi, India, but my father was an immigrant from Moradabad, a small city in Uttar Pradesh, India, which he called home. Because our homes, literacies, and languages (and styles within them) differed, we often shared a terse relationship during my teens. Now that I think about it, I regret it, as Kunial (2018) expresses in his poem, it was primarily because of me, a typical way of being for most children in their growing up years.

Listening to the poem invites me to critically activate my "prior knowledge, increased attention, and better subsequent recall" (Ainsworth et al., 2021, p. 62) and draw personalized imagery of the poet's father and my father's immigrant lives, their struggles, and tensions as my act of acknowledging them and apologizing to my father for my behavior in the past for all those moments when I thought my parents knew nothing or less, for overly focusing on what we did not have rather than what we had, and judging them, even though all of these were unintentional.

I believe drawing this visual gave me another outlet to reflect, anoint, express, and acknowledge my subjectivities and learn from them.

References


Link to Zaffar Kunial’s “The Word”: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P87bOpCzn6o
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