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What does it mean to be brave? Most people believe someone who is brave is someone who can act without batting an eye. They are heroic. However, not all heroes wear capes! In fact, failure does not mean weakness or imperfection. In *American Like Me: Reflections on Life Between Cultures*, Resha Saujanji employs rhetorical strategies to reflect on the past, present, and future as a way of defining and creating change to what bravery means to her, as well as for immigrants and young American girls worldwide.

First, Saujanji considers her parents' role in her own bravery, demonstrating how the trait can evolve and be passed down, ultimately helping her to find her own identity. To begin, she juxtaposes her life with that of her Ugandan Indian parents. When they moved to the US after being exiled, they had little money. This forced them to give up what little they did have, like their identity, just to fit in. Saujanji creates a comparison, writing that her parents' community, careers, language, and names were "the steep taxes they paid to make a better life for [her]" (Saujanji 67). Due to their succumbing to external pressure, Reshma addresses the underlying assumption that this was a sign of weakness. Instead, she says that this was an act of bravery. In fact, this was a catalyst for Resha's own definition of bravery. Adding on to this, her writing employs powerful syntax. She chooses to end her piece with a standalone thought by stating that "[her parents] changed their name so [she] wouldn't have to" (81). By expressing this as its own paragraph, her words embody her parents' actions, strong and bold. Furthermore, she repeats this sentence multiple times throughout her writing, calling to its importance and evoking a feeling of appreciation in the audience. She builds in this appeal to pathos by using diction, such as "sacrifice," "pride," and "freedom". This choice of words defines her tone further,

welcoming those who are reading them to reflect on their own background. Lastly, Saujani talks about her own identity. She uses her name as a symbol for who she is as a person and the experiences that shape her. She recognizes that her parents had to give up theirs for her, but just as Reshma refuses to sell her culture short, she also refuses to shorten her name. By including this, she proves how bravery can mean different things for different people and in different situations.

Next, Saujani includes first-hand accounts of her own experiences, which disprove the misconception that bravery is a result of success and achievements. To do this, she first includes an anecdote from her first campaign. Though she had a promising, well-paying job at a Wall Street law firm, she said she “longed to make [her] life more about helping to build communities and improving the future of this country” (4-6). Not only was taking this leap of faith brave, but the perseverance she maintains even when losing spoke even more about her character. By reflecting on a time in her life where she felt humiliated, she builds her credibility, earning her audience's trust by putting herself in their shoes. This further proves how true bravery comes hand in hand with imperfection. Upon this experience, she realised how “American girls are often raised to value perfection over bravery” (21-21). But really, she makes it clear that their ability to persevere and make hard choices plays a grand role in exhibiting this trait as well. Next, Reshma utilizes an analogy. She mentions how the bravery needed to start a diversity club at her local high school was similar to the bravery it took to run for a position in the House of Representatives. By comparing the two, Saujani makes her audience aware of the fact that acts of bravery come in all sizes. It doesn't have to be heroic. Instead, it is something that grows over time, like a muscle. This metaphor demonstrates that bravery is something that develops with use, not something that is simply “achieved”.

Lastly, Saujani expands her definition of bravery to a future of American girls and immigrants through her organization, Girls Who Code, teaching them to embrace imperfections and redefine bravery as change. As Reshma changes her focus, she employs shared values.

Instead of saying “I,” she widens her scope to address her audience. She also takes on a motivational and inspiring tone, which is reminiscent of a big sister giving advice to a younger sibling. In this case, her advice stems from coding. For her, “building something from the ground up, using trial and error, failing and starting over” is a direct analogy for what her experiences have taught her about being brave. From creating this organization, which is both a symbol and a solution for the fear of failure, she can teach young girls that perfection has no role in being brave. In fact, she gives them the opportunity to “flex” their bravery muscle by granting them the opportunity, one that is especially rare for women in computer science fields. Not only does Saujani extend this invitation to a future generation of children, but she also exhibits it herself in her solution. Her word choice when expressing that “after the election, [she] had the gall to start a national non-profit” is especially telling. She doesn't say she wanted to start a non-profit, or that she decided to, but that she had the gall to. The one word expresses the defiance and strength Saujani has in order to act again, despite having lost her campaign. Furthermore, by mentioning her lack of background in coding, Reshma breaks boundaries, conveying how bravery is not mastery, but the choice of action, even when uncertain.

Saujanji strengthens her idea of the true meaning of bravery using rhetorical strategies to expand on various periods of her life. Reshma personifies bravery as a living force that experiences growth through your lifetime, instead of something that is simply acquired. Additionally, she brings forth the truth that beauty looks different for many people. For some people, it's giving a class presentation, for others, it is trying to assimilate in a new country, or for some, it is running for political office. However, no matter what it looks like, Saujani proves to her audience the importance of risk-taking. She redefines bravery as something more profound than perfection, giving the space for young American girls and immigrants to determine what bravery means to them.