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In Johnnetta Cole's speech, there were three elements that really stood out to me. First was that there is no longer a barrier due to race when running for office yet racism still exists. This is very interesting to me because it is true in some sense but I don't believe that everyone in America has accepted that Obama is our president and a portion of those people don't accept him purely because of his race rather than due to his political beliefs. It's a sad fact that it's true but hopefully our country can make more strides against that in the future. Second is that racism is learned and we have to find out where we've learned it. This seems very simple but I find that sometimes people don't realize that they are prejudiced. It is not hard to figure out where racism is learned but it takes time to unlearn it and make sure that it is not taught to the next generation. Lastly, she mentioned that while we are not all privileged in every area, we should locate the power and privilege we do have within ourselves. I thought that this was very inspirational because everyone does have some sort of power or privilege, whether or not it exists in every aspect of our lives is a different question entirely.

Shamara Hernandez speech discussed limits. I thought her speech was very easy to relate to because people, especially MIT students, constantly put others down when they do not fit into the mold that those around them fit into. People expect MIT students to be studying science, math or engineering and when some one decides to study something else here that they are passionate about, it is often looked down upon by others.

Derek Ham focused on being a torch bearer. There are many people in our lives who bear torches for us and in turn we should do our best to bear torches to other. Throughout history, people have expanded what is possible for future generations. I have had many people who have acted as torch bearers in my life and I think that as I grow older I have realized that I am acting as torch bearer for others.

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