Features Of The American Society

2 In the stories “New York Day Women” by Edwidge Danticat, “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid and “In the American Society” by Gish Jen, the authors show a picture of an American society through their short stories they narrated. All three stories are about the relationship between immigrant parents and their first-generation child in an American society. In both stories, the mothers are trying to pass on their culture to the younger generation. They expect their child to follow their ways of living while trying to ignore that their daughters have grown up in a different culture. This will eventually lead them to have different perspectives and thoughts that they would naturally adapt to their culture. Kincaid, Jenn and Danticat illustrate the challenges and racism faced by immigrants and multicultural issues between immigrant parents and their first-generation children in the American society.

There are many multicultural issues in the American society like failing to acknowledge individual differences, making efforts to educate themselves and setting their biases aside. Kincaid’s story is a perfect example of failure to acknowledge individual differences. Throughout the whole story; the mother is the only one talking and giving out set of instructions and restrictions she expects her daughter to follow otherwise she will be viewed as a slut in the mother’s belief. 3 “Always squeeze bread to make sure its fresh; 4 but what if the baker won’t let me feel the bread? 3 You mean to say that after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won’t let near the bread?” (Kincaid 38). This quote emphasizes Kincaid’s message about the culture clash that results from failing to acknowledge individual differences. In the story, the mother failed to acknowledge Kincaid’s opinion even when she tries to express herself (what if the baker won’t let me feel the bread). Kincaid illustrates how negatively it can affect the bond between an immigrant parent and their first-generation child. If a parent is strict with his or her child in the American society that is known to be the land of opportunity and freedom, will create a space between them and the child will not be comfortable to express herself to her mother and that’s if she is even given a chance to express herself. According to Pamela “The story provides a warning to the reader regarding the dangers of being overbearing on children.' Living in an immigrant community in the United States, many teenagers are separated from their families simply because they have different perspectives with their parents which led them to either move out or get kicked out.

As conveyed in the above description, the New York Day Women is an example of educating ourselves about different cultures. As Danticat takes a stroll in Manhattan during her lunch break; to her surprise saw her mother socializing with other people in downtown New York. She has never pictured her mom leaving their home because she thought her mom was too complex with her Haitian culture and not ready to adapt the American culture. She decided to hide and follow her mother while she walks through the streets in Manhattan. Danticat wrote some phrases that her mom used to tell her to show how strongly her mother embraced the Haitian culture. On her way back to work, Danticat made a vow after arguing with her mother that “tonight on the subway, I will get up and give my seat to a pregnant woman or a lady about Ma’s age.” Danticat’s promise was made through realizing that one can embrace his or her culture and still assimilate a different culture they now lived in. 5 According to Seicho “Seeing Suzette’s mother interact with the city is revelatory in the way it shows how one is capable of maintaining a clear identity despite the influence of a more modern culture.” Furthermore,

American society is a very diverse society. People should try to get familiarize with the different cultures around them to make adaption easier and beneficial for every individual. Everyone is extraordinary in their own specific manner. It is vital to acknowledge everyone for their identity or what they eat or how they dress. Contrasts are essential and ought to be respected. What is viewed as a norm in, a few sections of the world might be viewed as extreme in different parts especially parents born in a different country and culture?

The story In the American society by Gish Jenn, emphasizes the challenges' immigrant parents faced in American society. People migrate from different parts of the world to the United States to seek a brighter future. However, they often meet some challenges that they never anticipated. These difficulties can range from the language barrier, employment, culture shock and psychological distress. In American society, the author showed how value differences made it difficult for some Chinese immigrants to fit in the American society. In American society, the narrator shows some things that her father did that is potentially viewed as extreme in the American culture. Although the things he did are viewed as norms in the Chinese culture; Americans expect immigrants to conform to U.S. cultural norms. 6 “Our head waitress, Gertrude, claimed that he once even asked her to scratch his back” (Jen 7). Mr Chang loss all his employees simply because of his actions he presumed normal in the American culture. One should be aware of his /her actions when interacting with people from the different cultural backgrounds. The story in the American society also hints strongly at the racism that exists in the American society. Although the Chang family has managed to have financial privileges in the new society they lived in, they still failed to be fully accepted in their new society. Gish Jen elaborated on some racism immigrants faced in the American society. The story was written around the same time as the civil rights' act of 1964, where many Chinese were allowed to migrate to the United States to be with their families. This was also the same time where equality was being demanded by many young Chinese Americans. In the American society, the author revealed how Mr Chang was racially abused by a drunk American man (Jeremy) in an American culture event. He relentlessly kept demanding Mr Chang to translate a Chinese inscription about a handkerchief. When Mr Chang laugh it off, Jeremy became aggravated and started screaming “Who are you?” at Mr Chang. Mrs Lardner, who invited the Chang family, runs up to Jeremy and introduce Mr Chang. Jeremy then stoop so low by asking Mr Chang to remove his jacket and put on his polo shirt which he claimed that he was overdressed. However, Mr Chang stick to his pride and throw both the polo shirt and his jacket which was forcibly removed by Jeremy in the swimming pool.

In conclusion, immigrants have always faced challenges and struggles with assimilating many new experiences from a different culture.

Culture is the art and other manifestations of human intellectual achievement regarded collectively. Learning a new culture is about learning to be comfortable with something uncomfortable. People should manage to put themselves in a situation which is uncomfortable for them to become comfortable with it. People should try to view the behaviors of others, not based on what it means in their culture but what it means in the culture of others. Culture plays a crucial role in people lives, they should try to work with others to make everyone comfortable expressing themselves culturally regardless of where ever they are in this world.

Works Cited

1. 7 Danticat, Edwidge.” New York Day Woman.” Compact literature. 8 Kirszner, Laurie G. and Mandell, Stephen R. New York: 7 Cengage Learning, 2016. 349-350. Print.
2. Jen, Gish. “In the American Society.” Living Literature, 2008. New York. 9 Kincaid, Jamaica.” Girl.” Compact literature. 8 Kirszner, Laurie G. and Mandell, Stephen R. New York: 7 Cengage Learning, 2016. 139-140. Print.
3. Rosenthal, Pamela. 5 “Analysis of Jamaica Kincaid's ‘Girl.’” Panmore Institute, 15 Aug. 2018, panmore.com/analysis-Jamaica-Kincaid-girl.
4. Seicho. 2 “‘New York Day Women’ Analysis.” 'New York Day Women' 10 Analysis, 1 Jan.1970, seicho-seicho.blogspot.com/2012/03/new-york-day-women- analysis.html.