Date

Name

Class

Instructor

**Thematic connection**

It is common for every individual to feel worthless once in a while. Every individual feels unfathomable emotion at some point but what differs is how one handles it. Everywhere within the society, people are always judging from one’s parents, family as well as close friends. Judgment for one’s parents is inescapable as every parent aspires to see their children prosper and become prominent. As a result of this, parents end up pushing, judging and following up with their children to ensure they take the right path. Its common for every parent to want the best for their children especially a girl child since women within the society are highly undermined. However, pushing your child to be the best is not always the best as it deprives them of being themselves which might bring about dire consequences for your child. This is clearly depicted in the poem “suicidal note” by Janice Mirikitani and the book “the Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid.

In both stories, we come across two young girls who experience their parent’s instinctual nature and this becomes a common theme in both texts. An excellent example is seen in the poem “Suicidal Note” where an Asian American college undergraduate decides to commit suicide through jumping from her dormitory window all because she could not make her parent proud and happy. The young woman leaves behind a suicide note which is now read as a poem by the reader to try and understand why she opted to kill herself. In her last thought, the college student says that the pressure to become a successful individual she underwent from herself as well as her parents were extremely overwhelming. This is clearly depicted as the poem begins by elaborating harsh feelings connected with failure. It begins with phrases like, “..not good enough….not pretty enough….not smart enough…” which clearly shows just how much the girl was struggling to fit in and surpass her parent's expectations (Mirikitani). All through the poem, these phrases are repeated which shows how the young girl was feeling worthless. “ The Girl” on the other hand which was written by Jamaica Kincaid is a story containing a set of instructions given to a young girl by her mother with the hope of making her understand the rules of womanhood present in the Caribbean society. All these instructions that are laid down by the mother are related to topics such as cooking, relations, house chores among others. Though required by any growing girl, these instructions are extremely demanding and make it hard for the girl to become herself. Despite the young girl not having reached adolescence, which would have been the right age to begin nurturing the girl, the mother believes that her present behavior will result in her living a life of promiscuity. The mother believes that a woman’s reputation, as well as respectability, will determine the quality of woman one becomes. According to the mother, if the girl has domestic knowledge then she can be saved from ruins. As a result, it becomes hard for the girl to be herself and make decisions of her own due to her guardian’s instinctual nature and frequent demands.

Another thesis that is common in both stories is stereotype. There are various ways stereotype can be imposed in a person including children. In the story “The Girl” by Kincaid, the directions, as well as the ideas the mother offers to her daughter, are highly discriminatory of women in the community resulting to stereotype. For instance, the mother clearly tells the young girl not to play marbles similar to boys as her main obligation is doing household chores. This clearly depicts that the mother strongly believes that there exist various things a female individual cannot do and is not supposed to undertake them and these stereotypes developed a gap between the sexes. The mother within the story acts an idea that females should be limited to their homes while men can go out as they please without restriction. The same idea is presented in the poem “Suicide note” when the pupil apologizes for not meeting their expectations and being what they dreamt she would be. While apologizing she states how hard she had worked and despite it all, she was still not good enough. She goes on to say she wished she was a boy as she believes the parents would be proud. According to her, she strongly believes that if she had been born as a male child, she would live life to the fullest while making her parents proud. This clearly shows that the girl had been made to believe that being a male child was more than enough to make her parents happy. The society around her had made her believe that once you are a male child there is nothing you cannot handle including your struggles.

Though both parents in the two stories wanted to empower their daughter to be successful and amazing women, there is a differing approach in which they use. For instance, in the story “The Girl” the mother goes on without fearing to give her daughter both positive and negative advise all in the name of empowering her daughter. Throughout the story, the mother offers a lot of information regarding what a woman’s obligations are such as cooking, house chores, among others (Kincaid). She also offers information on what a female child shouldn’t do such as swatting like a male child while playing marbles or even walk bareheaded when the sun is up. However, while trying to empower her daughter to be respectable the mother goes to the extent of showing her daughter at a tender age how to make medicine to abort a pregnancy. No mother in her right mind can show her daughter how to abort a pregnancy all in the name of making her a respectable woman in society (Madden). This is not vivid in the poem “suicide note” as all that the daughter is taught is to always work hard and become successful. This is vivid when the daughter writes that despite working hard and trying to meet her parent's requirements, she still feels not good enough. In the poem, “suicide note” the parents used education to empower their daughter and make her respectable while in the story, “the girl” the mother was ready to use any tactic to empower her daughter including showing her how to abort a pregnancy.

From the above discussion, it's accurate to conclude that parents can sometimes be overwhelming to their children even when they mean well. In the story “the girl” all that the mother wanted is to ensure her daughter was ready to face all the challenges that come with being a girl child. She wanted her daughter to be a respectable woman in society as well as know her place within the society. As a result, she decided she was going to mold her daughter at a very young age and lead her to the right path and despite meaning well, all she did was restrict her daughter from being herself. In the poem “Suicide note” the parents also wanted to ensure their daughter would be successful through her education. They pushed her to always work hard so as to be successful and make them proud. However, this push is what resulted in their daughter committing suicide as she always felt she was never good enough. All that the parents wanted was to secure a good future for their child through pushing her to work hard but all they got was a daughter who committed suicide for feeling worthless. At all times parents should always be aware of the extent to which they push their children as this might lead to dire consequences such as suicide.

Works cited

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