Immigrants issues

Most of the times our first impression about a person may lead into a preconceived opinion **How does people feel like when they are judged based on stereotypes?** The stand-up comedy film *Homecoming King* written and performed by Hasan Minhaj and directed by Christopher Storer for Netflix, is the story of Hasan’s personal experience as the son of Indian Muslim immigrants. He discusses his childhood growing up in mostly white Davis, California, where he lived alone with his dad while his mum was still in India. “*What kind of Asian are You?”* is a political spoken wordwritten by the poet Alex Dang from Portland Oregon, and he has Asians roots. Dang has competed at the National Poetry Slam . Alex is currently the Portland Grand Slam Champion 2015. **Both authors hint at the stereotypes, misunderstanding and shame that immigrants experience regarding their culture. *Homecoming King* focusses on the conflict between the values and perceptions of immigrants against the American culture, while *What kind of Asian are you?* shows that stereotypes and prejudices may cause individuals to be ashamed of their own identity. Ultimately, as a society we should be aware of the difficulties that being an immigrant experiences.**

Despite their similarities, the two sources show some differences. In the spoken word *Homecoming King,* Hasan Minhaj introduces his personal experience as the son of Indian Muslims immigrants in America. He uses common language and comedy to make it closer to the general public. Comedy is an effective tool for engage people and connect with the message. Although he is treating a serious theme that affects him, he does not want to a have a serious tone and negative mood, instead he wants to make it more fun for the public, therefore he is constantly making use of jokes in order to create a comfortable atmosphere to hear it in which share his reflections and experiences. He focusses on the conflict of values and perceptions that his dad experiences regarding to his home country, India. His dad had a very conservative and traditional view of life, which collides with the liberal and individualist American perception. An example would be when he firstly did not approve that his son felt in love with an Hindus girl: “Dad, I love her, she loves me. Isn’t there something bigger that unites all of us outside of race, color, creed, class? This is America” *(King )* He still had the prejudices that there were in the Islamic India about Hindu’s culture. He had a traditional idea of marriage, a religious ceremony in which the family influenced the decision of the spouse, while the American marriage was more open to different couples. Because his dad did not fit with the American values, he wanted to avoid conflicts. Hasan’s dad did not feel safe sharing opinions and tried to hide their identity and culture, “Okey Hasan, whatever you do, do not talk about politics and do not say you are Muslim” *(King )* this demonstrates he was ashamed of showing his own identity.

On the other hand, Alex Dang’s slam poetry is notably different to the comedy show explained before. Dang uses clear and strong words in a short time and a powerful tone to make people to get into a political and emotional message and reinforces it throughout the poem with allusions. The poem shows the effects that stereotypes about a culture have on the identity of individuals of that culture, particularly focusses on his Asian culture; firstly, stereotypes **categoriz**e individuals, as is evidenced when he says, “I have played many a Far East stereotype: awkward math genius, cold calculated Kung Fu expert” (Dan). Probably all of us have heard this kind of prejudices about Asian culture and make us have a wrong perception about what it really means to be Asian:“*I really can't believe that's Asian!”* (Dang) this may cause individuals whose identities do not fit with the general perception, to be **ashamed** of their own personality. Dang argue even he does not follow the stereotypes of being Asian, but he does not mean he is not, he feels like Asian because is a very important part of his personality and he is **pride** of who he is and his roots, “And I still feel pride, I still feel heritage, I still feel Chinese, I still feel Vietnamese, I still American and I still feel” ( Button). He does not leave his roots and keep his American identity.

As a society we should make sure immigrants live in a comfortable atmosphere where they feel safe to show their own identity, and trying to introduce them into their new environment with different language, lifestyle, culture and values, so we can guarantee the total integration. By this way, situations that Hasan’s family lived when they were threated and insulted because of race, could be eliminated and prevented. This situation caused Hasan’s family to be closer, having less contact with white people being aware that there could be any racist situation. They did not want to interfere in anybody’s life, causing isolation. Society should make an effort and to promote people show their culture and identity so immigrants can feel comfortable and safe. Also, try to improve, language skills of immigrants so they do not depend of others to express themselves. People should be more empathetic with people who is a situation of learning another language, understand the problems that suppose to speak a non native language and make an effort when someone is showing difficulties while speaking. Some of the situations of categorizing and individual could be prevented if people understand that this individual could be experiencing difficulties to find the words, and may be their identity is completely different. When an immigrant perceives he is not being understand, may cause to be ashamed or scares to express himself and hide his real personality so it is important to encourage an individual when we found he is having difficulties to talk. All this would create a better environment in which the individual can express himself as he is preventing of misunderstanding and showing his real identity.

Both sources hint in the idea that immigrants can feel ashamed of their roots and do not feel comfortable showing their identity, as well as categorized based on stereotypes about their culture. But is the first source which has a more powerful argument, when talks about differences of values and ideas, immigrants find a huge difference in traditions and lifestyle regarding to their home country and this is the biggest deal when an individual decides to move from his home country. Is the society who must do an effort to make the best possible environment in which the individuals can express themselves safe, free of stereotypes. In conclusion immigrants may have some difficulties while they are trying to fit in their new environment when they see their values and perceptions are contradicted, and they feel ashamed of their own identity. Stereotypes can also cause individuals to do not want to show their personality. When they finally feel comfortable, they feel pride of who they are.

References

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