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12 September 2014

English 1101 D309

Discussion Questions (America & I)

1. Yezierska’s initial impression of America was seeing America as the land of opportunity. America is a place of freedom where she can express herself freely in her work, unlike Russia, where she was oppressed and denied to express her works.

2. Yezierska aspired to work the living job of fullest self-expression. By self-expression, she wanted to express her feelings, thoughts, or ideas, in writing, art, music, or dance. Yezierska must first settle down in America and find work to get the money to pay for these dreams she had.

3. I think Yezierska’s “Americanized family” didn’t treat her fairly because she worked day and night taking care of their home. She also did many chores such as scrubbing floors and washing clothes. When the month was over and it came time for them to pay her wages, they denied her wages because they felt she wasn’t worth paying. They told her she was useless without learning English, and that she should be grateful for keeping her in their home with a comfortable bed. I feel Yezierska still deserved the wages because she needs her own money so she can use those wages for her own needed expenses.

4. The best part of Yezierska’s second job at Delancey Street was that she had the evenings and nights to herself. She ended up losing her job because the old woman in charge of the workers in the basement made the workers stay more and more hours when it became busy. She bought up the workers with tea, or herring on black bread. Yezierska became fed up with working for so many hours and denied to work anymore to the old woman. The old woman then fired her for speaking back to her with terrible boldness.

5. The work Anzia prefers to do is to write, Anzia wants to become a writer. The thing that is stopping her is that she knows how to read and write the English language but she can’t put it into words that she wants. Anzia doesn’t know how to form her ideas and put it on paper.

6. I agree with the author’s argument that immigrants should receive free room and board because there are immigrants that are strong and willing to work. They come to America for a reason, and that is to live out the “American Dream.” Immigrants should be given free room and board for a reasonable amount of time, until they can actually support their own selves and live out a life on their own.

7. Yezierska learned that the Pilgrims didn’t look for understanding and sympathy when they came to America. They moved on and pressed forward in their efforts of persistence. This knowledge transformed Yezierska’s ideas to succeed in America by showing that she should press forward with efforts of persistence and to not look for sympathy or understanding. She should move on her own and persist in what she believes in. I agree with this assessment because I also follow this sort of idea of persisting on your own when no one else can help.

8. The author utilizes the concepts of “hunger” and “appetite” in her thesis profoundly by showing that Yezierska “hungers” for doing something she desires to do, and that something is to become a writer. The desire of becoming a writer is what makes her “hungry” in America. Yezierska’s “appetite” is the longing to write her ideas and feelings on paper, but she doesn’t know how to form her ideas and get it on paper.