Reading Assignment

I have read the Adichie, Trask and Anzaldua’s essay. For the first one which was written by Adichie, the main idea is that some people have already have an idea of who you are before even see you. For the second essay which was written by Trask, the history of the Hawaii island was written by the people who were not live on the island rather than those who are native Hawaiian. For the third essay, Anzaldua describe her own story of guarding the Chicano language which represent the identity of those people who were born in the United States but speaking Spanish.

I find a common idea in the three essays that is when one’s own culture are misrepresented by others, we feel very uncomfortable. Especially in the essay written by Trask, we can feel a sense of anger which is easy to understand. Once natives who lived in the Hawaii island lead a tranquil life without any concerns are invaded by whites. They could no longer live in such a peaceful condition. Their lands are deprived by these invaders. A lot of natives died because of the disease which carried in by these invaders. However, these truths are obscured by those American historians who write the Hawaii history based on the wrong assumption. The king was bad. The natives were in depression and uneducated. The whites came here to help them to establish their new life. All of these ridiculous idea were taken for granted by the historians because these ideas are consistent with their imagination. In my opinion, they did know what they said is not absolutely correct. They know their ancestor did something bad to these Hawaii natives. They intentionally make this period of history as vague as possible which will make them feel better and induce less controversial discussion in the society. None of these historian actually spent time on learning native language. Does that mean they think they do not know how to do history research, or they do not know the importance the role of learning native language plays when doing the history research? I think the answer is no. They did not do that just because they did not want to know the truth of this period of history which may make them feel guilty. It is the same as some people did in China. It is not strange that Trask seems angry about what happens. That’s why she wrote the essay. She wanted to let all of us know what happened in Hawaii. And let more people concern if they are also taught the story by the other people. Everyone have the right to know the true history. We must respect history because history is a mirror everything will happen again and again in different forms.

Then I want to talk about the speech given by Adichie. Adichie came from Nigeria. She describes a bunch of stereotypes she had and she encountered. Her roommate at university is a very typical example. Once I have read an essay about an Asian student lived in an American host family. This family firstly shows a lot of enthusiasm, trying to tell everything to the Asian student. However, the family hostess found the student is totally different than what she thought. Firstly, the hostess accepted the Asian student just because she wanted to show the greatness of America. However, then she found the student knows everything she showed to him which made her very disappointed. For Adichie, the roommate also asked her some very stupid question. In my opinion, this is a kind of stereotype which caused by so called single story. Since both the hostess and the roommate receive such kind of education that America is the greatest country in the world, and Asia and Nigeria are poor. There is an idiom in China: the person who knows nothing is innocent. In these two cases, the hostess and roommate do not know much about the world outside. However, it is very embarrassing to see this kind of things happening. The question arises that who should take responsibility to this? I think that’s why there are a lot of talk shows which are similar to this one. It is not the only way to diminish the stereotype, but through media it should be a very efficient way to let everyone know how ridiculous some stereotype is.

Finally, I want to talk about the Anzaldua. She mainly talked about the important of the language. Most people see language just as a tool using to communicate. However, language is also a symbol of identity and culture. Just like there are a lot of good poems written in Tang Dynasty which can only been read in Chinese. If I translate these poems into English, everything will be changed, and no one can feel the typical feeling it expressed. In the essay, the author describes how she protect the Chicano Spanish which is considered an identity for those who were born in US but speak Spanish. I notice a detail that she had spent a lot of time talking with a lot of professor to make her research area to Chicano Spanish. It means that she is very proud of her culture which is deserved to be learned by us. However, this essay is not that related to the above two.

I have talked about the three essays. Every essay uses a different angle to illustrate their own concerns. However, all their concerns are about culture. As an international student, we should pay attention to the cultural difference. We may encounter some stereotypes or notice teachers are talking something wrong about our homeland. If we just let them go, we do not get progress. We should take them as chance to learn more and it is also a good thing to express what we learned to those domestic students, which will help them get rid of such stereotype.