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### Reflection about Susan Philips's Talk

Individual :

Natalie Nguyen:

Mrs. Susan Phillips book and film is bound to have a great impact on who ever reads it. It made us realize that when many people migrate over, they are giving up a tremendous amount. Many of the women were very proud of their careers in their motherland (such as teacher and doctors) but had to give that up when they migrated to America. They faced difficulties with the language and felt inferior at time, even though in their mother tongue they were experts in their fields. While many of them had to migrate over to find better lives for themselves and their families, many miss the lives that they use to have previously.

Katelyn Nguyen:

Through Susan Philips's talk, I was able to view a new perspective on life in general. Susan's interviews shined light on the various hardships these women had to endure to maintain a normal life. It allowed me to realize the many aspects of life that I take for granted. Another aspect of her speech allowed me to realize the many sacrifices my parents had to go through in order to move to the United States. Susan had posed the question "what does being an American mean to me". I couldn't help but think about my parents and all their sacrifices that were made to give me a better life opportunity whether that was pertaining to school, work, and even related to the government. The first word that I think of when I think of being an American would be opportunity. Both of my parents are Vietnamese-Americans and at such a young age they were forced to leave their family, friends, and life behind. Actually being able to hear from these women and their experience only reminded me of the many stories my parents used to tell me about their own experience. In particular, I had read the chapter pertaining to Vietnamese immigrants. Her life experiences emphasized how she was forced to deal with the many stereotypes that Vietnamese immigrants had to withhold. This was seen through gender roles,

education, and even through patriotism for one's country. It seemed as if life during this time had members living according to set rules. However, after Susan's talk I was able to realize that everyone has their own struggles and how common war is.

Tian Qiu:

At Ms. Susan Philip's talk, I was able to get more understanding in other chapter including chapter 2. She points out more dimensions such as political factions and social-economical and cultural differences. These are critical and continuous factors that even impact immigration still today. The Q&A section had chance to access other chapter's content that is undiscovered. During her section about describing the Chinese women, her suffering in career and social path reminds me of those moment of hard time in China. Generation both suffer and benefits with all dimensions of changes, and small changes in society would be such a unavoidable huge impact to any individuals. It is almost impossible to believe how any individual make brave decision in facing a complete new environment and survive to become same as back then or even better.

Ethan Vuong:

The evening following Ms. Phillips' speech, I took time to really think about the sacrifices that immigrants make when they choose to migrate to a new country. It was really eye-opening to learn that many of these immigrants completely changed their careers upon arrival in the United States. Come to think of it, it makes complete sense why they had to do that. If I were a doctor in Vietnam and all I knew how to speak was Vietnamese, I could only imagine how difficult it would be try and find a job practicing medicine in the U.S., where English is the dominating language. The stories of the women in Ms. Phillips' book sound a lot like the story of my mom, who is a Vietnamese immigrant. Unfortunately, my mom is really busy right now with travel, so I do not have the opportunity to interview her right now; I definitely will when she gets back from her trip. Like many Vietnamese immigrants, she really wanted to keep family together. Considering that the majority of my mom's side of the family still live in California goes to show that this is a common value shared among her family and families like the Ana's from chapter 2 of the book. Ms. Phillips asked me in class what my thoughts were on what it means to be American. To be honest, I gave an answer that didn't really reflect how I actually

felt because I was kind of put on the spot and didn't know what to say. To answer that question now, I think that being American means to have the freedom to form your own perception of what it means to be American. In countries like North Korea, the concept of "what it means to be North Korean" is highly regulated by the government. To be North Korean is to be loyal to the Kim dynasty and conform to their societal standards. In America, we can practice individuality. America places a strong emphasis on individual freedoms such as the freedom of religion, assembly, speech and press. This culture allows us to decide whether or not being American means to be patriotic or whatever else one can come up with.

Emily Zhang:

I thought Susan Philips' lecture was eye-opening. We hear time and time again about immigration to the United States and the difficulties that come with it, but we forget that each and every immigrant has a different and unique story that they bring here. We forget that these are real people with real lives, and not just some statistic we read online. I had read the chapter where Ana and Juanita immigrate to the United States to escape the war in El Salvador, but seeing the video played at the beginning of the lecture really gave a voice and appearance to the words I was reading. The video also showed the lives and professions the women in the book had before coming to the United States, and I could really see how much pride they had in their work. Some were doctors, and some were teachers like Ana. I started thinking about it during the lecture, but I could never imagine how hard it must be to give up everything you know. Further into the lecture, I thought it was especially interesting when Mrs. Philips called on us, the students, to engage and speak about our thoughts and opinions. She wanted to hear the story of our parents immigrating to the United States. My parents both immigrated from China to New York in the 1990s, so it made me reflect on everything that had sacrificed to come here. This was very similar to Ana's story of immigration for her family. One of my favorite moments from her speaking during the lecture was when she asked us what being American meant to us. Immediately, immigration and freedom of speech came to mind. Since we all come from different backgrounds, we are able to exchange a diversity of thought even if we don't agree with each other. We have the freedom to do that. In the future, I will try to talk with my parents more about their experiences immigrating to the United States, to learn and listen to their stories.