

Group Question

Whole group: Did reading the chapter and listening to Ms. Phillips change your attitude or future behavior in any way?

Ijung Park

When we thought about the reading and Susan Phillips' lectures at the same time, we could see the difficulties in various fields facing them to live as an immigrant in the United States. It was found that the various factors they overcame as immigrants in the United States, such as language barriers, downward revision of jobs, cultural barriers, and longing for their hometown, gave them difficulty in living their lives.

In addition, various perceptions of immigrants in the United States were also found. Susan said there were preconceived notions and dislikes of the United States at the time of writing the book, and the people in the book also claimed that Americans wanted to tell their stories because they had no idea of the difficulties and suffering immigrants face.

And we could see that the environment in which Americans lived was very different from the people in the book. In the case of Nara, who immigrated from Armenia, war with Azerbaijan over Nagorno-Karabakh broke down the economic system of Armenia and immigrated to survive in an uninhabitable environment, but it can be seen that it was difficult for Americans to understand immigrants because they were far from worried about the survival.

Nathaniel Wu

After Susan Phillips guest lecture, I decided to interview my mother, Jing, an immigrant woman from China. She had decided to immigrate to the United States shortly after she had graduated from college. My mother was in attendance at the Tiananmen Square Massacre in 1989, where her good friend was jailed and my dad's good friend was killed. Motivated by both her desire to travel and also the political turmoil of communist China, she came to the United States.

At the time, she chose America because it was the best country in the world – no other country was even close to its development. In her generation, the American dream was everyone's dream. However, going to graduate school in the US proved to be a very difficult goal. Jing ended up immigrating here on a full tuition scholarship to UofSC, one of the only schools that sponsored international students (especially those who weren't visiting researchers). Coming here on her own and being very limited financially, my mom persevered. After she built a foundation here, my dad also immigrated and they were able to start a family and give their children an American life.

At the end of her story, I asked her if she had any regrets and if she would do anything differently if she could. She answered that it would be hard to tell right now. On the surface level, my mother missed out on a lot. Today, most of my parents' peers and old friends and family are very wealthy. By coming to the United States, my parents missed the largest ever economic boom in China. But if they had never come to America, their lives would have been considerably different, and they would not have had access to the liberties they enjoy today.

Zoe Lu - 705534819

I think listening to Ms. Phillips' talk and reading/ watching the video on her book did change my attitude in some ways as it made me realize just how privileged I am to be able to live in the United States. For most people, we subconsciously know that we are privileged to have gotten to grow up in the United States but hearing and reading about the experience of immigrating directly from immigrants helps put things into perspective and makes you think about the things you might not think about on a daily basis and how grateful we should be. Additionally, when hearing and discussing the questions Ms. Phillips asked the class, it was interesting to think about some of the questions since I never really thought about it myself such as choosing a word to describe what it means to live in America. Hearing other people's response made me think deeper about the question and I realized that if I were to be put on the spot to answer that question I probably wouldn't have been able to give an answer quickly since I've been so privileged to grow up in America that this wasn't really a question I thought much about. Listening and reading the book also truly showed just how hard

immigrants have it as well as the impact that it had on children of immigrants as well. Both my parents were immigrants but they never talked much about the hardships they had to face moving to a whole new country. Unlike the women in the book, my parents didn't immigrate to the United States because of war or bad circumstances back home. They just chose to immigrate for the plentiful opportunities that their home country couldn't have offered. Though my experience with immigrant parents does not quite resemble those in the book, this book allowed me to have a deeper appreciation for my parents, as immigrants, and for all immigrants who come to the United States with hopes of building a better life.

Jasper Peng - 705358694

Attending Susan Philip's lecture and reading her book was a profound reminder of the immense privilege my family and I have as first-generation immigrants in the United States. The immigrant experience in the United States is a testament to resilience, determination, and the ability to transform challenges into opportunities. Education emerges as a cornerstone for many immigrants, serving as a vital avenue for surmounting hurdles. By prioritizing learning and seeking scholarships, they gain essential skills to break barriers and forge meaningful lives in their new homeland. Entrepreneurship becomes another pivotal path where immigrants draw from their cultural backgrounds to establish businesses, contributing to local economies and creating a sense of community. Tight-knit support networks within immigrant communities offer emotional aid and guidance, empowering newcomers to navigate unfamiliar systems and secure employment.

Language acquisition and cultural adaptation are significant challenges, but immigrants overcome them through ESL programs and community initiatives, fostering social integration and employability. Immigrants preserve their cultural heritage while embracing American customs and enriching the nation's diversity. Their unyielding perseverance and work ethic drive their success, showcasing their strength in unity and diversity.

My reflection on the immigrant experience deepened after attending Susan Philip's lecture and reading Thuyga's story. Their narratives were stark reminders of the privileges my family and I enjoy as first-generation immigrants in the United States. Thuyga's journey from Vietnam to the U.S. highlighted the transformative power of education, emphasizing the value of knowledge amid adversity. Her determination to contribute to her homeland's reconstruction resonated deeply, reflecting the enduring spirit of immigrants seeking a brighter future. These stories reinforced the importance of empathy and understanding, compelling me to advocate for a more inclusive society. They underscored our collective responsibility to foster a world where everyone, regardless of their background, can thrive and realize their dreams.

Arielle Davis - 205067824

I was happy to hear Susan Phillips, the author, share her intentions behind the book. I think any piece of art should be able to stand on its own when conveying a certain message but, hearing the creator's desire adds an additional nuance to the perception of the piece. When discussing the book chapters with Phillips and my peers I got more emotional than I think was appropriate. After class, some students somewhat jokingly supported what I had said during the discussion. Still, I don't think getting worked up was very helpful. I had read chapter three about Ana and Juanita so I was already angry. I was very appalled by what the two women had to endure. Hearing Phillips talk about Jing made me feel worse. That's not to say their stories were all bad, but I was certainly exuding more negativity than I'd like. I think going forward, I hope to address further discussion in the course without emotional bias. I felt embarrassed. In a course where the entire premise is to discuss diversity, I should behave more maturely.

Returning to the book's content, I think both the chapter I read and the guest lecture led me to investigate the benefits of living in the United States (since I had focused on the cons previously). I spoke about it with my family, some of whom work for the government and discussed the odd complacency of the general public. In addition to conspiracy theories, we talked about what it meant for the everyday American to not have had a war at home in over fifty years. It is a privilege to live without fear of political

turmoil, drafts, and battle, one that was heavily emphasized when reading about Ana and Juanita in El Salvador's corrupt government. Going forward, I think it might benefit me to consider the positive fortunes of living in the United States because it may provide me with a better outlook on my own life rather than a pessimistic one.