

Conflict as a literary device in fiesta 1980 by junot diaz essay examples

[Family](#), [Parents](#)



Fiesta 1980 by Junot Diaz is a story that is told in the first person by a young Latino boy. It presents the records of a family unit of immigrants from the Dominican state driving to a celebration in Bronx which is in New York City and the events that took place during the celebration (Junot, 2012). The narrations of the events that took place during the party are interspersed with various family memories as presented by the narrator, Junior. This family is made up of parents Mami and Papi and their two sons and one daughter. As the story begins, this family is in its new home in Northern New Jersey. The protagonist who is also the narrator of the story has inquisitive master gestures which include recurrent vomiting. A master signal denotes an instant of emotional implication which helps in alerting the audience that there is an important thing transpiring. However, Junior's vomiting gestures are not always overt. The story is interesting because the protagonist only experiences carsickness in his father's green van. Junior does not have troubles with other cars but only gets vomiting issues in Papi's van. This shows that there is conflict between Papi and Junior. There are various literary devices that have been used in this story. However, conflict appears between different characters in the story. This paper will thus discuss the conflict as a literary device that has widely been used in the story Fiesta 1980 by Junot Diaz.

The story is written with conflict in order to show the differing views of the characters. For example, the conflict between Papi and Junior is shown through Junior's vomiting in his father's van. Junior says " I never had troubles with other cars", Diaz, pp 27. Later, the story reveals that Junior had met his father's mistress while he was in a trip in the van. This makes

readers to understand that the narrator associates the van with the devastating emotional distress of learning about his father's unfaithfulness. Whenever the narrator gets into his father's van, he is reminded of his disturbing encounter. Although he tries to reject the memory of meeting his father's mistress in the van, Junior finds it hard. He physically tries rejecting whatever he can and this portrays a conflict of interest between Papi and Junior. Through the use of Spanish language, Junior calls his father's mistress "sucia" which literary means a dirty woman. This corruption of names is also used when referring to Papi and this enhances the theme of conflict in the story.

Another evident of conflict in this story is between the two sons. Junior and Rafa have conflicting views about their father's unfaithfulness. While Junior is very angry with his father's conduct, Rafa supports his father. Rafa demeans Junior orally while punching him in order to disgrace him. This is because, just like his father, Rafa feels strong and their strength simply means their ability to control other people in the family. Papi's unfaithfulness is a source of bewilderment rather than resolution for Junior. This is because, Junior is confused between following his point of view of life and following his father's view. Junior thus keeps struggling with his father's extramarital affair. "The family alliances in Junior's family divide along gender lines", (Diaz, pp 29). This shows that the family is facing conflict between different members. In this connection, Junior's vomiting is a physical demonstration of his confusion about gender duties in the family and traditions. Moreover, the conflicts between Junior and Rafa are evident because of the way they talk to one another. For example, when Rafa frowns because he does not want to go

o the party, Junior frowns back but Rafa tells him “ Don't you mirror me”, Diaz, pp 29. This shows that the two boys are in conflict. In addition, when they are eating during the party, Junior talks evil to another kid because his father has prevented him from eating and Rafa tells him “ Don't talk that in front of people”, Diaz, pp 30. Although these two sons are in conflict, there is still a strong bond between them. They also depend on one another for support and comfort from one time another. For example, Junior frequently looks at his brother to measure his expression in order to gain some acknowledgement.

Another evidence of conflict in this story is when Papi beats Junior warning him against vomiting when they will be going for the party. When Papi comes back from job, he finds that Mami and the kids are ready to go to the party. Papi tells Mami “ You didn't let him eat, did you? “ (Diaz, pp 30). This shows that Papi and Junior are in conflict because of Junior's vomiting behavior. Papi promises to beat Junior if he vomits in the car on their way to their aunt's house. In addition, Papi and Mami are also in conflict because Mami has let Junior feed and she knew very well that eating before the journey will cause him to vomit in the car. However, Junior says that no one could blame Mami for allowing him to eat before the journey because she was getting ready for the party and dressing his sister Madai. Junior says “ I should have reminded mum not to feed me but I wasn't that type of son”, Diaz, pp 32. This shows that there is a conflict between the members of the family because of Junior's vomiting habits. No one in the family is happy with Junior's habit of vomiting in the car. However, this vomiting is an insult to Papi because of his infidelity. The conflict between Papi and Junior is an

example of oedipal conflict because both Papi and Junior are competing for the mother's love. Junior shows disgust to his father's behavior because he can recognize his mother's suffering. In this story, conflict is used in order to show how family members have differing points of view on various issues. The other example of conflict in this story is between the two sons and their father. This conflict is geared by the fact that the sons feared their father and could not say anything that he did even when they knew very well that it was wrong. For example, Papi takes Rafa and Junior to his mistress's house on various occasions. However, the boys wanted to tell their mother but they were afraid of hurting her. They were also afraid of their father's reaction if they dared tell their mother about the mistress. This clearly indicates that there is a conflict between the sons and their father's behavior. Whenever they accompany their father to his mistress's house, they take that as their special time with the father though they don't like his infidelity. Junior says that " Papi had this one look, furious and sharp, that always left me feeling bruised", pp 34. This indicates that Papi and Junior were always in conflict. In addition, Junior also explains that he was always in trouble with Papi. " It was like my God-given duty to piss him off and to do everything that he hated", said Junior. However, Junior says that the conflicts between him and Papi never used to bother him too much. Due to these conflicts, Junior had written an essay at school entitled " My Father the Torturer", pp 37. However, the teacher had dismissed the essay thinking that Junior was kidding but the truth is that he was not always happy with his father's behavior. This shows that there was a great conflict between Papi and Junior.

Mami and the sons seem to have a life that is free from conflict. In most

cases, the two sons do not have differing views with their mother. However, the relationship between Mami and his sons later becomes a source of conflict because the sons have to conceal their father's unfaithfulness. The two sons have been brought up in a dysfunctional family (Junot, 2012). This has made the two boys to experience trauma and grow up different from other children. The behavior of the parents has affected these two sons as well as their sister, Madai. For example, Madai is too scared to open her eyes when her father is pulling Junior's ear. Junior says " being around Papi all the time, Madai's life had become a major-league wuss", pp 40. In addition, whenever her father lifted his voice, Madai's lip would start trembling. This shows that the three children have been brought up in a dysfunctional family which is full of conflict.

Moreover, the story also has conflict as shown when Papi denies Junior the permission to eat some of the food laid on the table during the party. There is conflict between what Junior loves eating and what his father allows him to eat. Junior is forced to watch as his uncles, aunts, cousins and other family members eat the well cooked foods (Junot, 2012). This is because, if Junior attempts eating these foods, his father would beat him. In addition, Mami and Papi are also in conflict about because of Junior's vomiting. When Papi says that Junior should not eat some foods at the party, Mami cannot stand up against

Papi. However, Junior's Tia Yrma sneaks him some of the food that his father has warned him not to eat and this causes him to vomit on their way back. This conflict shows that Junior is being starved by his father not only on the side of food but also for sympathy. Mami's inability to defend Junior without

facing a similar consequence also shows that there is conflict in the family. Junior says “ Papi’s voice was loud and argumentative”, pp 92. Even when he was in the kitchen during the party, Papi’s words could be heard without listening carefully. However, Mami was cool and one had to listen properly to get her words. This shows contrast between the two parents.

The narrator has used conflict in order to keep the story going. This is because, the entire story is built along the family’s conflict which is caused by Junior’s vomiting habits. This vomiting which is an expression of disgust for his father’s infidelity has kept the story going up to the end. In this connection, the narrator has sufficiently used conflict as a literary device in order to build the story Fiesta 1980.

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