

Essay on bread givers by anzia yezierska



**ASSIGN
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Bread Givers Essay: Sara's Identity In the book " Bread Givers" by Anzia Yeziarska a young girl from poland grows up in america. Set in the 1920s conditions for immigrants living in the United States were tough, not to mention living in the lower East side of Manhattan, New York. Reb Smolinsky the father of Sara in this book really tries on impressing his beliefs onto his children for he is very set on his traditional ways. This becomes a very prominent underlying to the story as Sara grows throughout the book moving from her fathers beliefs to her own.

This clash between the " old way" of doing things and her new american life style Sara breaks free from this conflict in finding her own identity in this new world. By doing so Sara really connect and Identifies with three main factors in her life independence, educationandhard work. With these three basic elements in Sara's life she really transitions into her own being and self identity. Throughout most of the beginning of the book Sara is oppressed by her father's tyranny that drives her to crave independence.

After her father demolishes the lives of Sara's three other sisters she " began to see that Father, in his innocent craziness to hold up the Light of the Law to his children, was as a tyrant more terrible than the Tsar from Russia" (Yeziarska, 64-65). As this is just the beginning of Sara's unrest with her father it is none the less the beginning of the end for their relationship. Because she does come to the end of her patience with her father. With him constantly beating her her down she would never be able to vocalize or blossom into her own ideas or beliefs.

He would constrict all of her self identity out if she was unable to break free from him. " I'm smart enough to look out for myself. It's a new life now. In

America, women don't need men to boss them" (Yeziarska, 137). Sara finally speaks her mind along with realizing she is able to break free from tradition and be independent in this new world. America had really shaped her ideals and helped to create that pathway to break away. As she is independent she discovers herself through the freedom of being on her own. As seen when she is finally in freedom on her own. " My hands clutched at the knob. This door was life.

It was air. The bottom starting-point of becoming a person. I simply must have this room with the shut door" (Yeziarska, 159) Having her own place would create the birth spot for her dreams and aspirations. By now having her own place she is able to cut herself from her family and their hold on her opinions. She is able to break free and now allow her the freedom needed to discover her identity. As she clearly states when she says " starting-point of becoming a person", this defines her. Education makes its impression on Sarah when she immediately connects and realizes her dream of becoming a teacher.

Giving education a high value in her life. " A school teacher-! I saw myself sitting back like a lady at my desk, the children, their eyes on me, watching and waiting for me to call out the different ones to the board, to spell a word, or answer me a question. It was like looking up to the top of the highest skyscraper while down in the gutter" (Yeziarska, 155). When she imagines what this one girl had done she realized that's what she wants. This teacher symbolizes a better life for Sara, a life Sara is determined to achieve. The only thing keeping her from achieving this is education.

Education becomes what she believes to be the only gateway to the better life she wants. I becomes what defines her as her and changes her status. Finally starting her way to her dream she goes to school. While there she gets her dream and love of education rekindled. " There was one in the school who was what I dreamed a teacher to be- the principal, Mr. Hugo Seeling. He kept that living thing, that fame, that i used to worship as a child" (Yeziarska, 270). The passion she describes here is what directly comes from her and her desire. She puts teaching and education on a pedestal just like hr father puts his faith.

She strives to get that same identity with education as a teacher as her father does with the Torah and his religion. Even Fania compares them saying " Come, Bessie. Let's leave her to her mad education. She's worse than Father with his Holy Torah" (Yeziarska, 178). This shows how strongly Sara really takes education in her life. Just like the Torah is her fathers identity this is hers'. Sara even when she was young believed in hard work. She wouldn't hold herself to a lower standard even if it was easier. When she goes to buy herring from Muhmenkeh the elderly women offers to give them to her free.

In which Sara replies " No--no! I'm no beggar! I want to go into business like a person. I must buy what I got to sell" (Yeziarska, 21). Even as a young child Sara refuses to take the easy route and accept this charity. She wants to earn it for herself and rise above the life of a beggar. To not let herself be defined and lumped with the poor low lives that don't take the initiative to do better in life. This hard work is what fuels her to achieve her dreams. As

wonderful as living and being on her own is Sara quickly figures out how hard it is.

Because in order to pursue her dream she must work hard in order to support herself while going to school. Not to mention give herself time to study and understand what she is learning in order to move on in school. "As you had to shut your eyes to the dirt, so you must shut your ears to the noise. A quietness within me soothed my tortured nerves. I turned to my books on the table, and with fierce determination to sink myself into my head, I began my lesson again" (Yeziarska, 164). She pushes herself through this hard time unlike most people in hard times that just give up.

Instead she pushes onward and later on sees the reward of her hard work. Through these hardships they mold her more and more into who Sara Smolinsky is and becomes. Without this determination and freedom of thought she would never have created her identity for herself. There are many other factors throughout the book that take its toll on Sara's life and shape the way she changes. Although these three are the most strongly associated with how she identifies herself because these are all characteristics that are unique to her. By the end of the book Sara has fully embraced these and discovered herself.