

Funny in farsi essay



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In the book *Funny in Farsi* by Firoozeh Dumas, there are five concepts from our textbook, *Lives Across Cultures: Cross-Cultural Human Development* by Harry W. Gardiner and Corrine Kosmitzki. Three of the concepts are components of Firoozeh Dumas' developmental niche such as the psychology of her caretakers, the customs of her child care, and the social settings of her daily life growing up. The other two concepts are individualism and ethnocentrism. Dumas' developmental niche is apparent throughout her memoir.

The psychology of her caretakers, her parents, is shown in one light when Dumas tells about her summer camp experience. Her father was cheap yet generous at the same time. He came from a hard childhood, having his parents pass away at an early age so he instilled hard work and the value of money in his children. He felt that spending \$500 for two weeks at camp was expensive but it must have meant the camp was beyond exceptional. On the other hand, when he took her shopping for supplies, the clearance aisle was his target for the bare necessities, nothing frivolous allowed.

Throughout her life she took note and spoke on his penny-pinching schemes, but also on his charities and generosity to those less fortunate than him. Another component of her developmental niche that was depicted in the memoir was that of culturally regulated customs of child rearing. Her mother and father's enduring belief in education, especially in the case of formal learning, is very distinct in her stories. One example is the story of Dumas' aunt, who had been denied education in Iran after sixth grade.

Dumas' father called his sister the smartest and most resourceful child in the family. While the men in the family were allowed to become engineers and doctors, her aunt was only allowed to marry. Her father said that it was " an injustice to deny a mind like that education. " He made sure that education was prominent in Dumas' life, and he said she must get a degree from a university, even if she never used it. He instilled in her the importance of education early in his child's development. Another significant concept shown in the book was Dumas's social component of her developmental niche.

She illustrated the importance of not only her immediate family but her extended family as well. In the chapter, " It's All Relative", she points out that her native Persian language has many precise words for relatives. There is not just one word for cousin, but eight words. The names for aunt depend on if it is her father's sister or her mother's. This is an example of how her Iranian culture values family. An example of how her family values each other is her description of the conventions and norms of her family.

They are thoroughly supportive of one another, attending every graduation, baby shower, birthday, and house warming party. Her father and siblings have burial plots together so that they are never separated. Life is lived with everyone being connected and concerned for not only each person's well-being, but happiness as well. She says her " relatives form an alliance that represents a genuine and enduring love of family..." Individualism is shown in the story of Dumas's father trying to forcefully and exasperatingly teach her how to swim.

His method of teaching was not matched for Dumas' way of learning. Lesson after lesson and she could not swim, she merely sank. On her own and in her own time, she decided to swim. She went against her father's collectivist approach to learning a skill with the rest of her family; she was determined to do it by herself. Many times in the book there are stories of judgment on the Iranian culture. Dumas had to deal with ethnocentrism even at a young age. She talks about an Iranian hostage situation during the Iranian revolution that took place while she was living in Newport Beach.

People would dismiss Dumas when they found out she was Iranian, and her mother went as far as to tell people she was from Turkey instead. Her father was actually denied employment because of his ethnicity. One company took back their job offer after seeing his passport they said, " Sorry...We thought you were an Arab. " After the revolution, the judgments died down. Dumas said that through everything her parents never complained. Her father would only say, " It is a waste to hate. What a waste. "