

The importance of trust in human relationships



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The underlying theme in the story *Desiree's Baby* by Kate Chopin and the poem *In Response to Executive Order 9066* by Dwight Okita is that of trust (or lack thereof). Both works of literature leave a lingering poignancy in the mind of the reader, probably because all can relate to the concept of trust as it is central to all human relationships. The thesis of this essay is: the two works in discussion can be taken as moral lessons for those of us who tend to distrust fellow humans, either due to lack of goodwill or prejudice or false beliefs. The following paragraphs will weigh up points in support of this thesis as well as those countering it.

The distrusting characters in the two literary pieces – Armand Aubigny and Denise O'Connor – should respectively be judged based on the cultural mores of their time as well as their age. In the case of Armand Aubigny, a white propertied man and a slave owner, his display of shame and shock upon discovering his baby's mixed race heritage is not out of order in nineteenth century United States. In fact, his reaction was properly anticipated by Madame Valmonde, the foster mother of Desiree, who, upon making the same discovery, reacts in much the same manner as Armand. Moreover, since Desiree's parentage was not known and she was a foundling under Madame Valmonde's care, Aubigny had reason to believe that he was withheld information.

In the case of Denise O'Connor, at the age of 14 years, she could hardly be expected to show mature consideration before coming to conclusions about her friend Ozawa. When the national government itself is proclaiming distrust over a select demography of the population, it is unreasonable to expect a young girl of 14 to have an awareness outside this indoctrination.

Hence, the distrust shown by Armand Aubigny and Denise O'Connor toward their wife and friend respectively should be evaluated in these socio-political backdrop. By doing so, we could possibly sympathize with their feelings of insecurity rather than ostracising them for being mean and prejudiced.

Having considered the conditions under which Aubigny and O'Connor behaved the way they did, we should also look at the hurt and despair they caused to others. At the age of 14, young Ozawa must have found it extremely distressing to have been rebuked, snubbed and treated as a criminal by her closest friend Denise. Even if some members of the Japanese American community had been spying for the benefit of a war enemy, it is totally not acceptable to include children in the suspects' list, let alone the entire community. The rounding up of Japanese Americans during the Second World War is a real event, albeit a disgraceful one in American history. Hence the poem by Dwight Okita has socio-historical significance. And the lesson we can take away is this: the government's distrust of a section of the population is a gross violation of basic rights of its citizens. And Denise's adverse reaction toward Ozawa is just one example of the unfairness of it. Similarly, Armand Aubigny's cold and hostile reaction to his wife's suspected racial heritage, eventually turns out to be misplaced. In the last paragraph of the story, it is revealed that it was his mother who is of the slave class. This leads him to realize what a big mistake he had made in ordering Desiree to leave the house and later striking a bonfire with her clothes as fuel.

In both the cases of distrust, the victimizers were the ones who acted and felt indignant toward the victims. With the unraveling of more information, it <https://assignbuster.com/the-importance-of-trust-in-human-relationships/>

comes to light that the aggrieved were the perpetrators of injustice and not the other way around. Hence, the lesson from both works of literature is that distrust toward other human beings, either because of political, historical or social reasons, seldom holds any value. If anything, such attitudes will eventually come back to haunt the perpetrator. Whilst Armand Aubigny and Denise O'Connor can both be forgiven for their imprudent behavior (considering the social mores and milieu of their lives), they sure serve as valuable lessons for future generations.

Works Cited:

Dwight Okita, In Response to Executive Order 9066, Reading Literature and Writing Argument, Fourth Edition by Missy James and Alan P. Merickel. Pearson p. 187.

Kate Chopin, Desiree's Baby, Reading Literature and Writing Argument, Fourth Edition by Missy James and Alan P. Merickel. Pearson p. 98-102.

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